

# MINISTER'S MINUTE

## Palm Sunday

### Morning Prayer

Creator, God,  
We ask you to be with us.

We pray for those who are ill,  
and for those we cannot be with  
as closely as we wish.

When we are afraid, help us to  
remember and be grateful for:

Water, which gives life.

The land, which sustains us and  
restores us to health.

The wisdom of Elders, who  
guide us.

Our young people, who deserve  
a bright future.

Our strength and resilience,  
which will bring us to a new day.

Help our leaders respond  
appropriately to the specific  
needs of Indigenous  
communities.

Help us to walk compassionately  
with all who are ill or afraid.

Help us to understand that we  
are all relatives.

In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.

*A prayer from the Indigenous  
Ministries and Justice Circle*



Jesus entered a Roman occupied city, Jerusalem, and from the other side, a Roman army with Pontius Pilate also entered. They had come to make sure that the people did not revolt. The Romans entered on horses covered in armour while the soldiers held shields and swords, but Jesus entered on a donkey. People received him with blankets and palm leaves.

What did it mean to be human in the midst of these two great forces: a force of love and peace vs. a force that came with death and war? What does it mean to be a human today? What are we fighting for these days? In the midst of all that is going on, not just here in our community, not just in the news, but everywhere, we are fighting for the things that keep us whole: the things that keep us at peace.

These past few weeks have been hard. On March 15th, we decided that we would no longer meet at the church for worship. It is like we have each been put into a long-distance relationship without having had the chance to discuss it. There has not been time to figure out our needs and whether or not everything is going to work. Long distance relationships require a lot of effort and communication. I had to look up some tips for long distance

## Sunday Scripture

### Liturgy of the Palms

#### **Matthew 21:1–11**

Jesus enters Jerusalem.

#### **Psalms 118:1–2, 19–29**

(VU p. 837)

The stone the builders rejected.

### Liturgy of the Passion

#### **Isaiah 50:4–9a**

The suffering servant struck and insulted.

#### **Psalms 31:9–16** (VU p. 758)

My times are in your hands.

#### **Philippians 2:5–11**

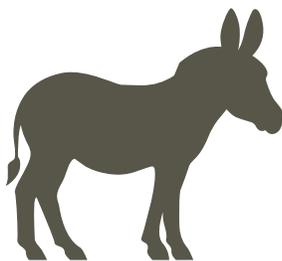
Let the same mind be in you as was in Jesus.

#### **Matthew 26:14–27:66** or **Matthew 27:11–54**

The passion of Jesus.

#### Fun Facts:

The meaning of hosanna is "save us."



relationships because truthfully, I am not great at them.

#### Tips for Long Distance:

Chat about what's really going on, sharing the good and the bad.

Send each other actual mail (something physical that you can give as well as receive).

Make plans for the future, even if it doesn't seem like there is a point right now. Have something to look forward to.

Our scripture comes from the perspective of Matthew. It takes us into a couple of key moments. First, we hear about the celebration and worship of Jesus as the people welcomed him. They welcomed him with the underlying mindset that he would be the one to take over from the Romans and free them from their oppression. However, that was never the humble king's intention. He wanted to win their hearts; to have them focus on something beyond the structures they had always known. The people wanted change in ways that were very human. And later, as the story goes, these 'fans' were so disappointed when he didn't do what they wanted. So, they turned on him.

The second moment we are taken into, is Jesus in the temple. In this passage, we see a very justice-oriented Jesus. This is one of my favourite moments. Here, in this story, we witness a Jesus who was not polite, not quiet, and not a bystander. Jesus knew that using a temple of God for money hoarding and bartering was not okay. Why? Because the money changers were taking advantage of those who had traveled long distances to celebrate Passover. And there were certain things that were necessary: like bread and an offering.

Here, Jesus was angry. Now, anger can actually be a good thing. Anger is often portrayed as a negative emotion, but the God who gave us our emotions, expects us to be occasionally frustrated. But in times when we feel angry, we are still able to choose how we express that anger. In the midst of today, we may be angry with others, frustrated, or short tempered, wondering what is going on in people's minds, but I imagine we are not going to go and flip tables ... are we?

In only a few words from our scripture, we can take a look at the realities that maybe have not yet changed for humans.

Maybe we are so stubborn and fixated on the things we have learned and formed routines around. Are these still the things that give a better life for all? I believe this passage is meant to teach us that the tables do need to be turned at times. Jesus could come and scold us, to tell us not to mix the use of religion with power over others instead of offering grace, mercy, and love. Jesus was furious that rich, selfish and powerful people were not going to come through for anyone but themselves.

Today, amidst the many suffering people, we still see glimmers of that: of selfishness and self-centered people. It is okay to be frustrated with them. It is the emotion that will leave us with a choice to make: the same choice that Jesus made when he entered the temple and told those inside that they had no business being there. I think the emotion felt in this passage comes from Jesus nearing the end of his life. He was desperately wanting to help them remove the barriers they had between themselves and God.

This is one of those chapters in history, today, with this pandemic, where we have a choice to refocus on what is right amidst the chaos. We have a choice to lift up those who are not comfortable right now. We always have a choice. We can choose the way our world works: not because some political or religious leader has made the rules. But because the power has always relied on people knowing what is right and what is wrong. We just forget that sometimes. Today, there are people who are so afraid, and it needs to be reminded, that we must treat our neighbours as ourselves.

It is fine to say, 'I would like some good news.' It is fine to say that we have been exhausted by the sadness, devastations, tears and sorrow on the news. It is okay to make room for some quiet time by turning the news off. Yet, once we take breaks from the unbearable parts, we must return to the vision of God's kingdom on earth: The Good News.

Entering Holy Week gives us a real opportunity to feel the joy of Palm Sunday, but also the anticipated grief of Good Friday. And the story doesn't end there. It may mimic the joy of being together today virtually, but anticipating the long wait to be back together. All of this is sandwiched together by our own Easter, when we finally are together again! It does not matter what you are praying for, someone else's God or our own; we are only here to love like there is no tomorrow.

As we do every year in ritual form, we walk with Jesus as he made his way through the crowds towards his last supper and ultimately his death. We must stop along the way to see the people full of hope. We must remember that even with the truth of his life ending, Jesus must have felt some form of hope in the people he was leaving (the potential for them to love). Now it is up to us to move on. We are on this earth and we must not let this chapter become something we will regret. So, let us make room for the good news as well as the bad in every choice we make. We do not have to see the good every single day, 24/7, but we also do not have to see only the negative. Looking at things in balance, God is asking us to keep turning the tables. Peace be with you as you try to do this. Amen.

Peace be with you, Rev. Emma

## Sunday Fun: Can you find Gwen the Wonder Dog?

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