

New Hope Lutheran Church  
Palm Sunday  
April 2, 2023



## **Introduction**

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

## **Processional Gospel:** Matthew 21:1-11

### *Jesus enters Jerusalem*

<sup>1</sup>When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." <sup>4</sup>This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup>Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup>they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>10</sup>When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup>The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

**First Reading:** Isaiah 50:4-9a

*The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church’s understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*

<sup>4</sup>The Lord God has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he awakens—  
awakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord God has opened my ear,

and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.

<sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord God helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;  
<sup>8</sup>he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.

<sup>9a</sup>It is the Lord God who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

**Psalm:** Psalm 31:9-16

*Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)*

<sup>9</sup>Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I <sup>l</sup> am in trouble;  
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat <sup>l</sup> and my belly.

<sup>10</sup>For my life is wasted with grief, and my <sup>l</sup> years with sighing;  
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones <sup>l</sup> are  
consumed.

<sup>11</sup>I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay  
to <sup>l</sup> my acquaintances;  
when they see me in the street <sup>l</sup> they avoid me.

<sup>12</sup>Like the dead I am forgotten, I out of mind;

I am as useless as a broken pot. R

<sup>13</sup>For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around;

they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.

<sup>14</sup>But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord.

I have said, "You are my God.

<sup>15</sup>My times are in your hand;

rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those  
who persecute me.

<sup>16</sup>Let your face shine up- on your servant;

save me in your steadfast love." R

**Second Reading:** Philippians 2:5-11

*Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.*

<sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God

as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup>he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—

even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 27:11-54

*In fulfillment of scripture and obedience to God's will, Jesus goes to the cross so that a new covenant in his blood may bring forgiveness of sins. Even the soldiers who crucify him recognize him to be the Son of God.*

<sup>11</sup>Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." <sup>12</sup>But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. <sup>13</sup>Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" <sup>14</sup>But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

<sup>15</sup>Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. <sup>16</sup>At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. <sup>17</sup>So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" <sup>18</sup>For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. <sup>19</sup>While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream

about him.”<sup>20</sup> Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed.<sup>21</sup> The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.”<sup>22</sup> Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!”<sup>23</sup> Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

<sup>24</sup> So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”<sup>25</sup> Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”<sup>26</sup> So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him.<sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,<sup>29</sup> and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”<sup>30</sup> They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head.<sup>31</sup> After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

<sup>32</sup> As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.<sup>33</sup> And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull),<sup>34</sup> they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.<sup>35</sup> And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by

casting lots; <sup>36</sup>then they sat down there and kept watch over him. <sup>37</sup>Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

<sup>38</sup>Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>39</sup>Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads <sup>40</sup>and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." <sup>41</sup>In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, <sup>42</sup>"He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup>He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" <sup>44</sup>The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

<sup>45</sup>From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>46</sup>And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" <sup>47</sup>When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." <sup>48</sup>At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. <sup>49</sup>But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." <sup>50</sup>Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. <sup>51</sup>At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup>The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. <sup>53</sup>After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. <sup>54</sup>Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

