**Westfield URC Palm Sunday 28th March 2021 Kath**

**Call to worship:**

Humble and riding on a donkey we greet Jesus this morning.

With the crowd we celebrate this day

Our Prince of peace, disturber of the peace, Saviour of the world

**Hymn No. M.P. 9 All glory laud and honour**

All glory, laud, and honour

to Thee, Redeemer, King,

to whom the lips of children

made sweet hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel,

Thou David's royal Son,

who in the Lord’s name comest,

the King and blessed One.

The company of angels

are praising thee on high,

and mortal men and all things

created make reply.

The people of the Hebrews

with palms before Thee went;

our praise and prayer and anthems

before Thee we present.

To Thee before Thy Passion

they sang their hymns of praise;

to Thee now high exalted

our melody we raise.

Thou didst accept their praises;

accept the prayers we bring,

who in all good delightest,

Thou good and gracious King.

THEODULPH OF ORLEANS (d. 821) CCLI 150801

**Opening prayer & Lord’s prayer**

Dear God

Forgive us for one minute shouting Hosanna

And the next keeping silent

Ride into our lives again today

Help us to travel with you

Help us to see others through your eyes

And to treat each other

As you would want us to

God of Palm Sunday

Good Friday and Easter Day

Be with us all as we travel again through Holy week

Help us to stay with you all the way Amen

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Notices, Mission prayer** Duty elder Glynis

**Dedication of offering**

**OT Psalm** 118 v1-2, 19 – 29

**NT Mark** 11 v1-11

**Hymn No. M.P. 307 I will enter his gates**

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart,

I will enter His courts with praise;

I will say, ‘This is the day that the Lord has made,

I will rejoice for He has made me glad.’

He has made me glad, He has made me glad;

I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

He has made me glad, He has made me glad;

I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

LEONA VON BRETHORST, 1976 © 1976 Maranatha! Music/CopyCare CCLI 150801

**Sermon** **Keeping Quiet? Shouting Out?**

We all like celebrations. Whether that is a birthday or wedding anniversary or another special event in the life of a family, a church, a community or even a country like the Queens Jubilee or the Pope’s Inauguration.

Whatever denomination, as Christians we celebrate Christmas and Easter, today Palm Sunday, Pentecost, which are all a part of the history of the whole Christian Church. In the same way, the Israelites had many great events in their history, many times of joy which they loved to remember and when they celebrated God’s goodness to them. Times such as the escape from Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, reaching the banks of the River Jordan from where they could look into the Promised Land, crossing the river and entering it, building the Temple in Jerusalem and bringing the Arc of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies and, after returning from exile, rebuilding the temple and the city too. Yet we have the Psalmist in his prayer for victory from which we read today written hundreds of years before the time of Christ pointing to a time when there would be another joyous moment greater than any previous ones. It would be seen as a sign from God that his special chosen one, his anointed one, had come to save his people and he would be welcomed by the people waving branches and singing, shouting his name and chanting ‘God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ Thanks and praise would be offered to God for the great things he had done and was still to do. It would be a celebration to match all celebrations and in our reading from Mark hundreds of years later we have his account of the event.

Jesus went ahead of his disciples towards Jerusalem. From Caesarea Philippi he had resolutely set his face towards the city knowing what he was going to face when he arrived and nothing was going to deter him or delay him any longer. It would soon be Passover and he knew that it was on this particular feast that the world changing events would happen. So he sent two disciples to Bethphage with the instructions to find and bring to him a donkey that had never been ridden. Questioned as to who they were and why they were taking the donkey the response Jesus had given them ‘The Lord needs it’ was sufficient to allow them to take the donkey with them. And so they threw their cloaks on this foal which had never been ridden before, they cut branches from the trees along the road, others spread their cloaks in the road in front of Jesus

and they all began to chant his name.

Not Jesus, he was the carpenter’s son from Nazareth but ‘Praise to David’s son, God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ‘Welcome to the anointed one, Hosanna, Save us we pray.’

Any such event with the noise of shouting and singing, the clamour of voices and branches being waved will draw others to it so the crowd grew as it approached to the point where to the watching Jews it seemed like the whole world was following Jesus into the city. There was such fear of the Romans believing it was an uprising, which they would see as a challenge to their authority and to which they would respond with great violence that we hear in Luke’s version of the story that some of the Jewish leaders told Jesus to tell his followers to be quiet. We have that amazing response from Jesus that if he did so and the people were quiet the stones on the ground they were walking on would continue the celebrations themselves.

That implies it was as if the whole of creation was celebrating Jesus arrival that day because it would lead to world changing events. However the Jews understood what was happening or how it would work out, for many of the crowd here was the one they had been waiting for, here he was coming in the week leading up to the Passover where they remembered their ancestors being set free from the Egyptians and he was coming to set them free from the Romans. No one was going to stop them welcoming him into the city. Through the gate that it was prophesised that the Messiah would enter.

Yet they were not able to grasp the fact that the use of a donkey set that triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem into a different context from one of confrontation or threat. A soldier, a warrior king would have come riding in on a horse but, despite the noise and everything else, here was Jesus coming as a servant, coming in humility, coming to offer himself for the sins of his people and coming to set them free in a way the Law could not do and a way they had not even dreamed about.

So, we have a mixed picture of euphoric Jewish pilgrims celebrating their Saviour alongside gloomy and despondent Jewish leaders feeling like they have failed and the whole world is following Jesus but it is not a picture that will not last. In only five days the pilgrims will shout to save a thief and murderer and condemn Jesus to die and the Jewish leaders will celebrate getting rid of the biggest threat to their power and authority. It will all seem to be an utter and complete failure, a disaster beyond comprehension, a heart breaking event that was unlawful, evil in the extreme and cast shame on the moral and religious outlook of the Jewish leaders and Pilate washed his hands of any responsibility for the whole thing.

Only one person truly understood what was happening and what would happen and he was going to make sure that the hatred of the Jewish leaders and the fickleness of the people would make the purposes of God come to pass.

Jesus followers made a lot of noise while not knowing what was happening so today when we know what we are celebrating we shouldn’t keep quiet about it but make sure our celebrations tell the world that it can be free when it opens its arms and its heart and welcomes the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Surely that is worth shouting about. Amen

**Hymn No. M.P. 790 You are the King of Glory**

You are the King of Glory,

you are the Prince of Peace,

you are the Lord of heaven and earth,

you're the Son of Righteousness.

Angels bow down before you,

worship and adore;

for you have the words of eternal life,

you are Jesus Christ the Lord.

Hosanna to the Son of David!

Hosanna to the King of kings!

Glory in the highest heaven,

for Jesus the Messiah reigns!

MAVIS FORD, 1978 CCLI 150801

**Prayers of Intercession**

Almighty God, we pray for our world
We pray for all who work for peace and justice
All who work to challenge injustice and change unjust structures
That they may be empowered by your love and your righteousness

Lord Jesus, healer of many
We pray for all who are sick in body mind and spirit
For all who work to care for them
And for all who research and produce new medicines, vaccines and methods of healing.
We pray especially for all who have been disadvantaged by the Covid 19 pandemic around the world.
And for all who are working to overcome obstacles of hunger, thirst, access to education, vaccines and employment
So that we may all come together equally at your table

Holy Spirit, Comforter,
Come to all who are lonely, who are separated from loved ones, who mourn the loss of family and friends
Come to the discouraged, the downtrodden and those who feel they have been forgotten
Reassure them of your great love for them
In a moment of silence we pray for those particularly in our thoughts this day (pause)

We ask all our prayers, spoken and unspoken through the precious name of Jesus Christ. Amen

**Shine share**

**Hymn We have a King who rides a donkey**

We have a king who rides a donkey

We have a king who rides a donkey

We have a king who rides a donkey

And his name is Jesus

Jesus the king is risen

Jesus the king is risen

Jesus the king is risen

Early in the morning

Trees are waving a royal welcome

Trees are waving a royal welcome

Trees are waving a royal welcome

For the king called Jesus

Jesus the king is risen

Jesus the king is risen

Jesus the king is risen

Early in the morning

We have a king who cares for people

We have a king who cares for people

We have a king who cares for people

And his name is Jesus

Jesus the king is risen

Jesus the king is risen

Jesus the king is risen

Early in the morning

**Discussion:** Waving or shouting? (What kind of King?)

**Hymn No. M.P. 744 We’ve a story to tell**

We’ve a story to tell to the nations,

that shall turn their hearts to the right;

a story of truth and sweetness,

a story of peace and light,

a story of peace and light:

For the darkness shall turn to dawning,

and the dawning to noon-day bright,

and Christ’s great kingdom shall come on earth,

the kingdom of love and light.

We’ve a song to be sung to the nations,

that shall lift their hearts to the Lord;

a song that shall conquer evil,

and shatter the spear and sword,

and shatter the spear and sword:

 For the darkness.....

We’ve a message to give to the nations,

that the Lord who reigneth above

hath sent us His Son to save us,

and show us that God is love,

and show us that God is love;

 For the darkness.....

We’ve a Saviour to show to the nations,

who the path of sorrow hath trod,

that all of the world’s great peoples ,

might come to the truth of God,

might come to the truth of God;

 For the darkness.....

Colin Sterne (1862-1926) CCLI 150801

**Blessing:**

We go out to follow Jesus our King and Saviour, May we share all that holy week brings with those we speak to day by day. Amen