

## **Broadcast Message from Pastor Craig Toth on Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020**

This is Palm Sunday, a time when the church normally takes a day to re-enact the coming of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem some 2000 years ago, when people along the road spread palm branches in front of Jesus. This an act of honor, of respect. It was done for royalty. This was Jesus' crowning moment.

But, as we now know, it would not last. Soon would come the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. Soon would come the trial and crucifixion. But for this moment, all was good, celebration was in the air.

We can relate to this story in many ways. Our county was doing well economically just weeks before this pandemic hit America. Like Jesus, we have the chance to show more than ever what it means to obey his words when he told his disciples, "Come, follow me."

### **Scripture Reading for the Day: Matthew 21:1-11**

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 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. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "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." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 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!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

**The following reading from Matthew's Gospel shows Jesus telling his disciples how to be first in his kingdom.**

### **Matthew 20:20-28**

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant,<sup>27</sup> and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

### **So, what can we do in the middle of this pandemic?**

First, be safe. Don't touch your face until after you have washed your hands thoroughly. Our government officials and health care professionals have told us to stay at home. Go out only when you absolutely need to.

Prayerfully support those who must with the public in the work: health care professionals, police officers, firefighters, grocery store and other workers, to name a few. We should also pray for our government officials that they will make the best choices going forward.

We should remember that many people who are not sick with the coronavirus are now beginning to suffer due to loss of business and loss of jobs. Let's do what we can to keep our local food relief agency's shelves well-stocked. Stay in contact with your family and friends.

### **Closing Prayer: The Priestly Blessing, from Numbers 6:24-26**

The LORD bless you and keep you;  
 the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;  
 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.