

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

April 2nd, 2023

The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday

A Service of the Word and Holy Communion



Palm Sunday Worship Art

Unique crayon and digital worship art

by Stushie

a Scottish pastor, ministering in East Tennessee

Stushie Art - Stushieart.com



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a just world for all

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The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday
Service of the Word and Holy Communion

The week that changed the world continues to change our lives!
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WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

This liturgy of silence and story combines Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-11) and Passion Sunday (Matthew 26:14 - 27:66). Using passages adapted from The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation, this liturgy provides the opportunity for lay leaders to share the story from the Gospel of Matthew. Some readings conclude with a statement "Come..." to respond to the story in silence or song. Following the story of the Last Supper, there is a brief service of Holy Communion.

Welcome and Announcements:

Prelude- Betty Funk

***Call to Worship**

One: Breath of Life, you animate us.

Many: We come before you are seeking revival from within.

One: Holy One, when you speak, great things happen.

Many: Empower us to make great things happen.

One: Matchless One, you bring good things to life.

Many: We desire to bring good things to life too.

*** Hymn – NCH 216 – All Glory, Laud, and Honor vv. 1, 2, & 4**

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

Author: Theodulph of Orléans, 9th century

Translator: John Mason Neale, 1854; alt.

Word alterations © 1993 The Pilgrim Press

Tune: ST. THEODULPH (VALET WILL ICH DER GEBEN) 7.6.7.6.D.

Composer: Melchior Teschner, 1615

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**1 All glory, laud, and honor
to you, O Christ, we sing,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.
The people of the Hebrews
with palms adorned your way.
Our praise and prayers and anthems,
we offer you this day.**

**2 The company of angels
is praising you on high;
and we with all creation
in chorus make reply.
The people of the Hebrews
with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before you we present.**

**4 As you received their praises,
receive our prayers today,
whose justice and whose mercy
and sovereignty hold sway.
All glory, laud, and honor
to you, O Christ, we sing,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.**

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY

Sixth Sunday in Lent/Palm Sunday

Meditation

(Silent time)

One: As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of illness and disease in the world.

(a candle is extinguished)

Lenten Candle Prayer

One: Let us pray

Many: Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own past. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbors; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.

Hymn - NCH 207 - Just As I Am (v. 2)

Just As I Am

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1836; alt.

Tune: WOODWORTH L.M.

Composer: William B. Bradbury, 1849

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**2 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I co**

***Call to Reconciliation**

We sing, we wave our branches, we shout 'Hosanna.' Then, we turn away, to go back to our old ways, our old lives, our old sins. But God is in the business of granting forgiveness and filling us with new life. Let us confess to the One who comes to fill us with grace,

***Prayer of Confession**

With eager hearts and open hands, Holy One, we welcome Jesus, until he refuses the power we offer him, choosing to become our servant. We pick up the faith we had laid on the ground before him, and put it back on the shelf where it belongs. Our pride keeps us from being able to follow him all the way to Calvary.

Hosanna, Steadfast God, save us! Help us to let our fears, our doubts, our faithlessness slip from our lives to fall at your feet, so we may stand with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who comes in your name, in your glory, in your grace to save us. Amen.

(Silent Prayer)

***Assurance of Pardon/Forgiveness**

One: Tell the daughters of despair, proclaim it to the sons of sadness:

Christ has come to save us!

Many: **Hosanna! We will give our thanks to God, who comes to bring us grace, hope, life.
Hosanna in the highest. Amen.**

LITURGY OF THE PALMS

A Reading from the Psalms – Psalm 118:1-2, 19–29 (Responsively)

We begin with the Liturgy of the Palms on this Palm and Passion Sunday, with passages from Psalm 118, a call to worship in the temple. The psalmist calls upon the people to praise God as they enter the gates of the temple. The people, rejected by the world, have become the chief cornerstone, the foundation of God's work on earth, so that all peoples might know the Creator God. The psalmist leads the community in worship as they approach the altar, calling upon God to save them, and giving

thanks for God's steadfast love. Part of Psalm 118 focuses on the entrance to the temple, and the rejection of the stone that has become the chief cornerstone—a phrase the Gospel writers later use as an image for Jesus.

118 1 O give thanks to God, for God is good;
God's steadfast love endures forever!

2 Let Israel say,
"God's steadfast love endures forever."

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to God.

20 This is the gate of God;
the righteous shall enter through it.

21 I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

22 The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

23 This is God's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This is the day that God has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save us, we beseech you, O God!
O God, we beseech you, give us success!

26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Most High.
We bless you from the house of God.

27 The Most High is God,
and has given us light.
Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God, I will extol you.

29 O give thanks to God, who is good,
whose steadfast love endures forever.

***Blessing of the Palms**

O God, who in Jesus Christ triumphantly entered Jerusalem, heralding a week of pain and sorrow, be with us now as we follow the way of the cross. In the events of defeat and victory, you have sealed the closeness of death and resurrection, of humiliation and exaltation. We thank you for these branches that promise to become for us symbols of martyrdom and majesty. Bless them and us that their use this day may announce in our time that Christ has come and that Christ will come again. Amen! Come, Christ Jesus!

The Palm Parade – Matthew 21:1-11

Matthew 21 tells of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The writer of Matthew's gospel, while Jewish, was not as familiar with Hebrew poetry and misinterpreted Zechariah 9:9 in his understanding of the humble leader riding on a donkey. Therefore, Matthew wrote of Jesus riding on a donkey and its colt, rather than understanding the second line of "on a colt, the foal of a donkey" as an emphasis of the first line, "humble and riding on a donkey." The crowds cried out "Hosanna, save us!" as Jesus entered the city, and the crowds quoted Psalm 118, "blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Most High." Perhaps this misunderstanding of Zechariah helps us understand why the crowds and the disciples misunderstood Jesus, and their expectations of God's anointed one. They were looking for answers. So, they went to Jerusalem. They gathered in the streets to make a way for peace. On one side of the city, there was another procession. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, rode into Jerusalem with an army of horses, armored soldiers and waving banners. On the other side of the city, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus had sent two of his disciples to go into the village and find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; they were to untie it and bring it to Jesus.

21 :1 As they approached Jerusalem, entering Beth-Phage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent off two disciples with the instructions, "Go into the village straight ahead of you, and immediately you will find a tethered donkey with her colt standing beside her. Untie them and lead them back to me. 3 If anyone questions you, say, 'The Rabbi needs them.' Then they will let them go at once."

4 This came about to fulfill what was said through the prophet:

5 "Tell the daughter of Zion,
'Your Sovereign comes to you without display,
riding on a donkey, on a colt—
the foal of a beast of burden.' "

6 So the disciples went off and did what Jesus had ordered. 7 They brought the donkey and her colt, and after they laid their cloaks on the animals, Jesus mounted and rode toward the city.

8 Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while some began to cut branches from the trees and lay them along the path. 9 The crowds—those who went in front of Jesus and those who followed—were all shouting,

"Hosanna to the Heir to the House of David!
Blessed is the One who comes
in the name of the Most High!
Hosanna in the highest!"

10 As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred to its depths, demanding, "Who is this?"

11 And the crowd kept answering, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee!"

Many: Come, join in the parade, you who need answers, you who come looking for peace.

***Hymn – NCH 213 – Hosanna, Loud Hosanna**

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

Author: Jennette Threlfall, 1873; alt.

Tune: ELLACOMBE C.M.D.

Source: Gesangbuch der herzoglichen Württembergischen katholischen Hofkapelle, 1784

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**1 "Hosanna, loud hosanna,"
the little children sang;
through pillared court and temple
the lovely anthem rang;
To Jesus, who had blessed them
close folded to his breast,
the children sang their praises,
the simplest and the best.**

**2 From Olivet they followed
amid a cheering crowd,
the victor palm branch waving,
and chanting clear and loud.
The one whom angels worship
rode on in lowly state,
and glad to see the children,
slowed down the donkey's gait.**

**3 "Hosanna in the highest!"
That ancient song is ours,
We hail our great Redeemer
and sing with all our powers;
"Hosanna, Christ, we praise you
with heart and life and voice.
Hosanna! In your presence
forever we'll rejoice!"**

THE PASSION STORY RE-TOLD

The Last Supper - Matthew 26:14-30

26 14 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came up to Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover for you?"

18 Jesus told them to go to a certain person in the city and say, "The Teacher says, 'My appointed time draws near. I am to celebrate the Passover in your house.'" 19 The disciples did as Jesus ordered and prepared the Passover supper.

20 When it grew dark, he reclined at table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating he said, "The truth is, one of you is about to betray me."

22 They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, “Surely, it is not I, Teacher?”

23 Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will hand me over. 24 The Chosen One will go as the scriptures foretold—but woe to the one by whom the Chosen One is betrayed! It would be better for that one never to have been born at all.”

25 Then Judas, who was betraying Jesus, said, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?”

Jesus answered, “You have said it yourself.”

26 During the meal Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to the disciples. “Take this and eat it,” Jesus said. “This is my body.” 27 Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them. “Drink from it, all of you,” he said. 28 “This is my blood, the blood of the Covenant, which will be poured out on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 The truth is, I will not drink this fruit of the vine again until the day when I drink it anew with you in my Abba’s kin-dom.”

30 Then, after singing the Hallel, they walked out to the Mount of Olives.

**Many: Come, Find your place at this table, you who need answers,
you who came looking for peace.**

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to Christ’s Table

Come. Come and find your place at this table.
Come without answers.
Come without knowing peace.
Come without preparation.
Come. Come to find a place here.
This is the table Christ prepares for us.
This is the feast God imagines –
here peace can be found in a simple meal.

Communion Prayer

One: God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks for the peace of God.

Many: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

In the streets,
In our homes,
Here beside this table,

We give you thanks,
O Holy One.

We give you thanks for giving us a story.
Even when we do not understand its meaning,
Even when we doubt it happened this way,
Even when we want to rush ahead to the end,
We know that you have given us this story
in which to live and move and have our being.
We remember that your story did not begin with this parade,
but began when you came to move over the waters of creation.
We remember the tragedies that came to your people.
And we know that you were not silent.
You gave your people a story.
You gave your people a rainbow.
You gave your people a song.
You gave your people peace.
Gather here with us now, O Holy One,
Speak to us through this bread and this cup.
Remind us of all the stories we've ever heard about you.
Imbue these symbols with your peace
So that we might find your peace within ourselves

Words of Institution

***Sharing of the Bread and Cup**

***Prayer of Thanksgiving**

O Holy One, there are no words to describe the mystery of this bread and cup. There are no sighs too deep to reveal what we feel in sharing in this feast. Thank you for gathering us together to remember that you are always present among us. We lift our hearts in prayer, toward your Spirit and pray the Prayer that Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer (using "debts" and "debtors")

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory,
forever.
Amen.**

THE STORY CONTINUES

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial - Matthew 26:31-35

26 31 Jesus then said to them, "Tonight you will all fall away because of me, for scripture says, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 32 But after I have been raised, I will go to Galilee ahead of you."

33 Peter responded, "Though all may fall away because of you, I never will!"

34 Jesus replied, "The truth is, before the cock crows tonight, you will deny me three times."

35 Peter said, "Even if I must die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

-Silence-

The Garden of Gethsemane – Matthew 26:36-46

26 36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane and said to the disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray." 37 Jesus took along Peter, James and John and started to feel grief and anguish. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death. Please, stay here, and stay awake with me."

39 Jesus went on a little further and fell prostrate in prayer: "Abba, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. But not what I want—what you want."

40 When Jesus returned to the disciples, he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you stay awake with me for even an hour? 41 Be on guard, and pray that you may not undergo trial. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

42 Withdrawing a second time, Jesus prayed, "Abba, if this cup cannot pass me by without my drinking it, your will be done!"

43 Once more Jesus returned and found the disciples asleep; they could not keep their eyes open. 44 Jesus left them again, withdrew somewhat and prayed for a third time, saying the same words as before. 45 Finally Jesus returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping? Still taking your rest? The hour is upon us—the Chosen One is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Get up! Let us be on our way! Look, my betrayer is here."

**Many: Come. Rest in the garden,
you who are weary, you who don't have any answers.**

The Betrayal and Jesus Arrested – Matthew 26:47-56

26 47 While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived—accompanied by a great crowd with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Judas had arranged to give them a signal. “Whomever I embrace is the one,” he had said; “take hold of him.” 49 He immediately went over to Jesus and said, “Shalom, Rabbi!” and embraced him.

50 Jesus said to Judas, “Friend, just do what you’re here to do!” At that moment, the crowd surrounded them, laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

51 Suddenly, one of those who accompanied Jesus drew a sword and slashed at the high priest’s attendant, cutting off an ear. 52 Jesus said, “Put your sword back where it belongs. Those who live by the sword die by the sword. 53 Don’t you think I can call on my Abba God to provide over twelve legions of angels at a moment’s notice? 54 But then how would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen this way?”

55 Then Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I a robber, that you have come armed with swords and clubs to arrest me? Every day I sat teaching in the Temple precincts, yet you never arrested me.” 56 All this happened in fulfillment of the writings of the prophets. Then all the disciples deserted Jesus and fled.

**Many: Come. Run into your fears,
you who need answers, you who came looking for peace.**

-Silence-

Jesus Before the Council of Religious Scholars and Elders - Matthew 26:57-68

26 57 Those who had seized Jesus led him off to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the religious scholars and elders had convened. 58 Peter followed at a distance as far as the high priest’s residence. Going inside, Peter sat down with the guards to await the outcome.

59 The chief priests, with the whole Sanhedrin, were busy trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put him to death. 60 They discovered none, despite the many false witnesses who took the stand.

Finally two came forward 61 who stated, “This man has declared, ‘I can destroy God’s sanctuary and rebuild it in three days.’”

62 The high priest rose and addressed Jesus, “Have you no answer? What about this testimony leveled against you?” 63 But Jesus remained silent. The high priest then said to him, “I order you to tell us under oath, before the living God, whether or not you are the Messiah, the Firstborn of God?”

64 “You have said it yourself,” Jesus replied. “But I tell you: soon you will see the Chosen One seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

65 At this, the high priest tore his robes and said, "Blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? You yourselves have heard the blasphemy. 66 What is your verdict?"

They responded, "He deserves death!" 67 Then they spat at his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped Jesus, 68 saying, "Play the prophet for us, Messiah! Who struck you?"

Many: Come. Listen to what God might be saying.

Listen to what God might be doing

that doesn't fit with everything that you have been taught about this world.

Listen for God to speak.

- Silence -

Peter Disowns Jesus - Matthew 26:69-75

26 69 While this was happening, Peter was sitting in the courtyard. One of the attendants came over and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean too, weren't you?"

70 But Peter denied it in front of everyone. He said, "I don't know what you're talking about!"

71 When Peter went out to the gate, another attendant saw him and said to those nearby, "This one was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 Again he cursed and denied it: "I don't know him!"

73 A little while later, some bystanders came over to Peter and said, "You certainly are one of them! Even your accent gives you away!"

74 At that, Peter began cursing and swore, "I don't know the man!"

Just then a rooster began to crow, 75 and Peter remembered the prediction Jesus had made: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." Peter went out and cried bitterly.

Many: Come. Join those who wander through courtyards, court rooms, streets and gardens.

Join the crowds who have come looking for answers,

looking for peace.

Judas Hangs Himself - Matthew 27:1-10

27 1 At daybreak, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took formal action against Jesus to put him to death. 2 They bound him and led him away to be handed over to Pilate, the governor.

3 When he saw that Jesus had been condemned, Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, felt remorse. He took the thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders, 4 and said, "I have sinned! I have betrayed innocent blood!"

"What's that to us?" they answered. "That's your affair!" 5 So Judas flung the money into the sanctuary and left. Then he went off and hanged himself.

6 The chief priests picked up the silver, observing, "It's against the Law to deposit this in the Temple treasury, since it is blood money." 7 After some discussion, they used the money to buy Potter's Field as a cemetery for foreigners. 8 That is why that field, even today, is called Blood Field. 9 On that occasion, what was said through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

"They took thirty pieces of silver,
the price for the One
whose price was set
by the children of Israel,

10 and they paid it out for Potter's Field
just as the Most High commanded me."

-Silence-

Jesus Before Pilate - Matthew 27:11-26

27 11 Then Jesus was arraigned before Pontius Pilate, the governor, who questioned him. "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus replied, "You say that I am."

12 Yet when Jesus was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no reply. 13 Pilate said to Jesus, "Surely you hear how many charges they bring against you?" 14 But Jesus did not answer Pilate on a single count, much to the governor's surprise.

15 Now, on the occasion of a festival, the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner, whomever the crowd would designate. 16 At the time they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you wish me to release for you? Barabbas? Or Jesus, the so-called Messiah?" 18 Pilate knew, of course, that it was out of jealousy that they had handed Jesus over.

19 While Pilate was still presiding on the bench, his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man. I had a dream about him last night which has been troubling me all day long."

20 But the chief priests and elders convinced the crowds that they should ask for Barabbas, and have Jesus put to death. 21 So when the governor asked them, "Which one do you wish me to release for you?" they all cried, "Barabbas!"

22 Pilate said to them, "Then what am I to do with Jesus, the so-called Messiah?"

"Crucify him!" they all said.

23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" Pilate asked.

But they only shouted louder, "Crucify him!"

24 Pilate finally realized that he was getting nowhere with this—in fact, a riot was breaking out. Pilate called for water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, declaring as he did so,

"I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours." 25 The whole crowd said in reply, "Let his blood be on us and on our children." 26 At that, Pilate released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus whipped with a cat-o'-nine-tails, then handed him over to be crucified.

-Silence-

The Soldiers Mock Jesus - Matthew 27:27-31

27 27 The governor's soldiers took Jesus inside the Praetorium and assembled the whole cohort around him. 28 They stripped off his clothes and wrapped him in a scarlet military cloak. 29 Weaving a crown out of thorns, they pressed it onto his head and stuck a reed in his right hand. Then they began to mock Jesus by dropping to their knees, saying, "All hail, King of the Jews!" 30 They also spat at him. Afterward they took hold of the reed and struck Jesus on the head. 31 Finally, when they had finished mocking him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes and led him off to crucifixion.

-Silence-

The Crucifixion of Jesus - Matthew 27:32-44

2732 On their way out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon, whom they pressed into service to carry the cross. 33 Upon arriving at a site called Golgotha—which means Skull Place—34 they gave Jesus a drink of wine mixed with a narcotic herb, which Jesus tasted but refused to drink.

35 Once they had nailed Jesus to the cross, they divided his clothes among them by rolling dice; 36 then they sat down and kept watch over him. 37 Above his head, they put the charge against him in writing: "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." 38 Two robbers were crucified along with Jesus, one at his right and one at his left.

39 People going by insulted Jesus, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "So you are the one who was going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Save yourself, why don't you? Come down off that cross if you are God's Own!"

41 The chief priests, the religious scholars and the elders also joined in the jeering: 42 "He saved others but he cannot save himself! So he's the King of Israel! Let's see him come down from that cross, and then we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God rescue him now, if God is happy with him! After all, he claimed to be God's Own!" 44 The robbers who had been crucified with Jesus jeered at him in the same way.

-Silence-

The Death of Jesus - Matthew 27:45-56

27 45 At noon, a darkness fell over the whole land until about three in the afternoon. 46 At that hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" 47 This made some of the bystanders who heard it remark, "He is calling for Elijah!" 48 One of them hurried off and got a sponge. He soaked the sponge in cheap wine and, sticking it on a reed, tried to make Jesus drink. 49 The others said, "Leave him alone.

Let's see whether Elijah comes to his rescue."

50 Once again, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, then he gave up his spirit. 51 Suddenly, the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies was ripped in half from top to bottom. The earth quaked, boulders were split 52 and tombs were opened. Many bodies of holy ones who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 After Jesus' resurrection, they came out of their tombs and entered the holy city, and appeared to many.

54 The centurion and his cohort, who were standing guard over Jesus' body, were terror-stricken at seeing the earthquake and all that was happening, and said, "Clearly, this was God's Own!"

55 A group of women were present, looking on from a distance. These were the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee as ministers to him. 56 Among them were Mary of Magdala; Mary, the mother of James and Joseph; and the mother of Zebedee's children.

-Silence-

The Burial of Jesus - Matthew 27:57-61

27 57 When evening fell, a wealthy man from Arimathea named Joseph, who had become a disciple of Jesus, 58 came to request the body of Jesus; Pilate issued an order for its release. 59 Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in fresh linen 60 and laid it in his own tomb, which had been hewn out of rock. Then Joseph rolled a huge stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. 61 But Mary of Magdala and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

-Silence-

The Guard at the Tomb - Matthew 27:62-66

27 b62 The next day—the one following the Day of Preparation—the chief priests and the Pharisees called at Pilate's residence 63 and said, "We recall that, while he was still alive, the impostor made the claim, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 Therefore, please issue an order to keep the tomb under surveillance until the third day. Otherwise, Jesus' disciples might go and steal his body and tell the people, 'Jesus has been raised from the dead!' This final deception would be worse than the first."

65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go and secure the tomb as best you can."
66 So they went to seal the tomb and post a guard.

-Silence-

We Respond

Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings

Kindred, God is good, and God's steadfast love endures forever and ever. Because of God's enduring love, we cherish and give thanks for every good gift in our lives. Today, on this day God has made, we come to share out of the abundance of God's love and light among us so that

the world may know this boundless love that knows no end.

The Offertory – Betty Funk

***Presentation of Offerings - Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Blessing of the Gifts**

O God of Welcome and Waving Palms, as the crowd offered to you their praise and the palms on the road, so we share these gifts out of the abundance you have provided. May they be for the healing salvation and work of justice you are bringing about in the world through your unending love. Amen and Amen.

Choral Hymn – NCH 547 - Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound Dedicated in loving memory of Elaine Hambrecht Lukacs

**Author: John Newton, 1779; alt. (vv. 1-4)
AMAZING GRACE (NEW BRITAIN) C.M.
Arranger: Edwin O. Excell
Source: Columbia Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829
Bob Bucklew, Keith Konet, and Barbara Rossington
Accompanist: Betty Funk**

GOING FORTH

*** Parting Hymn – NCH 223 – What Wondrous Love Is This**

What Wondrous Love Is This

**Author: Anonymous
19th century, United States; alt.; First published in Mercer's Cluster, 1836
Tune: WONDROUS LOVE (CHRISTOPHER) 12.9 12.12.9
Source: Appendix to Wm. Walker's Southern Harmony, c. 1843
Harmonization © 1993 The Pilgrim Press
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**1 What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this!
that Christ should come in bliss
to bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the heavy cross for my soul!**

**2 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,
to God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am,
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
while millions join the theme, I will sing.**

**3 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on!
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
and through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and through eternity I'll sing on.**

***Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Now we will set aside our palm branches,

**Many: to go and serve at God's side
in a broken and fearful world.**

One: Now we will pick up our cloaks
and follow Jesus wherever he leads,

**All: to learn from those the world ignores,
to be touched by the grace within them.**

One: Now we will sing songs of wonder,

**All: as we work alongside the Spirit,
sustaining those who are weary with peace and hope. Amen.**

***Postlude – Betty Funk**

* * * * *

Credits

- (1) The Introduction to the service, the "Come" statements following some of the readings - and the Communion Liturgy, are adapted from *No Answer: Prayers for Palm-Passion Sunday*, written by the Rev. Elsa A. Cook, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, a budding spiritual director and wandering interim minister. She writes liturgies and shares her thoughts on cookingwithelsa.org. Copyright 2021 Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.
- (2) Call to Worship, Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings, and Blessing of the Gifts are adapted from *Open the Gate: Service Prayers for the Palm/Passion Sunday*, written by The Rev Dr. Chad Abbott, Conference Minister for Indiana Kentucky conference of the First United Church of Christ, he resides in Indianapolis Indiana. Copyright 2023 Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.
- (3) Lenten Candle Liturgy -Sixth Sunday in Lent is adapted from Lenten Candle Liturgy, contributed by Jeanyne Slettom, and posted May 27, 2015, on the website, Process & Faith. <https://processandfaith.org/lenen-candle-liturgy/>
- (4) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Worship Resources for April 2nd, 2023*, written by the Rev. Mindi Welton-Thomas, and posted March 23rd, 2023, on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lution.org/>.
- (5) Call to Reconciliation, Prayer of Forgiveness, Assurance of Pardon/Forgiveness and Commission and Benediction are adapted from *Alternate texts Liturgy w/communion from April 2nd, 2023-Palm Sunday A* written by the Rev. Thom M. Shuman, and posted March 27th, 2023, to his blog, *Lectionary Liturgies* <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
- (5) Permission to stream music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License #A-736636. All publishing

Ministers, *All of Us*
Scott Rosenstein, *Pastor*
Betty Funk, *Pianist and Music Director*
Keith Konet, *Council President*
Beverly Wurm, *Administrative Assistant*



NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

God is Still Speaking...

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

Tithes and Offerings - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

Zion United Church of Christ
c/o Keith Konet
1039 Bridlewood Drive
Copley, OH 44321

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm

Beverly began a part-time position with us. She is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W.14th) /home. The days and hours are:

Monday – 9am – 1pm
Wednesday – 10am-2 pm
Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: zionchurchtremont@gmail.com or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile).

Palm/Passion Sunday, Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter



Image: from Lessons: Jesus from Palm Sunday to Easter Morning, Rotation.org

Palm/Passion Sunday

Catholic and Protestant communities celebrate Palm Sunday. (The Orthodox Christian community celebrates later as they follow the Julian calendar.) This marks the beginning of Holy Week, historically the most sacred time of year for Christians.

Palm Sunday recalls an event in the Christian Scripture (The New Testament) of Jesus entering into Jerusalem and being greeted by the people waving palm branches. For Christians, it is a reminder of the welcoming of Jesus into our hearts and of our willingness to follow him.

The service on Palm Sunday also includes a reading of the Passion, that is, the story of the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In today's church, great care is given to make sure that the story of the death of Jesus is not presented in an anti-Semitic manner. Jesus' death is seen by Christians as salvation and as a reminder of how prophets are often killed when they stand for justice and peace.

Holy Week

'Holy and Great Week') is the most sacred week in the liturgical year in Christianity. For Catholics and Protestants, it begins with Palm Sunday and concludes on Easter Sunday. For all Christian traditions it is a moveable observance. In the Western Christian Churches, Holy Week falls on the last week of Lent or Sixth Lent Week. Holy Week begins with the commemoration of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, marks the betrayal of Jesus on Spy Wednesday (Holy Wednesday), climaxing with the commemoration of the Mystical or Last Supper on Maundy Thursday and the Passion of Jesus on Good Friday. Holy Week concludes with Christ's rest in death and descent into Hades on Holy Saturday. It is believed Jesus rested in death from the ninth hour (3 pm) on Good Friday until just before dawn on Sunday morning, the day of his resurrection from death, commonly known as Easter Sunday. This marks the beginning Week of the season of Eastertide, with its first week being known as Easter Week (Bright Week). (from *Holy Week* entry, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Week)

Holy Thursday (sometimes referred to as **Maundy Thursday** after the Latin mandatum or command to love one another) is a day when Christians commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus. In some traditions, there is the washing of the feet of various members of the community to recall a gesture of Christ at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples. This is a sign of the need to do more to love one another and to serve all people, especially the poor.

Good Friday is a solemn day on which Christians recall the death of Jesus and its promise of hope and new life. In some traditions a wooden cross is set up and people spend time meditating before it.

Other people make the Stations of the Cross a devotion that recalls the journey of Jesus on the Via Dolorosa (Way of Sorrows) in Jerusalem to Calvary where he was crucified. (In Jerusalem the place of Christ's death and resurrection is commemorated inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.)

The Good Friday Tenebrae Service (Service of Shadows) is at Zion Chapel and on the Zoom platform on Friday, April 7th, 7:00 P.M.

Many Christians keep this devotion but also see in the suffering of Jesus a reminder to be more concerned for the suffering of people in today's world. For many Christians, this day is also a day of fasting and penance.



Easter

Easter Sunday is the greatest feast in the Christian calendar. While our society puts a major emphasis on Christmas, no other day is traditionally as sacred for the Christian community as Easter. This is the day Christians commemorate the resurrection of Christ.

In some traditions, the services begin the night before with the lighting of a new fire and the blessing of a large Easter candle. Water is blessed and many are baptized. But for all Christians, this is a day to renew one's faith.

In the Catholic Church, there is a sprinkling of all people with the newly blessed Easter water as a sign of renewal of our baptismal commitment. In many Protestant communities, Easter is celebrated at a sunrise service early on Easter morning.

Easter usually ends with festive celebrations with special foods and Easter delicacies.

(adapted from *Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter*, Center for Spiritual Life, <https://www.brandeis.edu/spiritual-life/resources/guide-to-observances/palm-sunday.htm>)

Easter Sunday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ and our new life in the reign of God will be observed at Zion Chapel and on the Zoom platform on Sunday, April 9th with an 11:00 A.M. worship service.

An Easter brunch follows worship on April 9th. You may bring a dish to share (optional) – but join us for a meal of celebration and community!



In Memoriam: Elaine Hambrecht Lukacs (1943-2023)

We received word on March 26th of the passing of much beloved Zion Church member, Elaine Lukacs.

We are so deeply grateful for all of Elaine's gifts of hospitality, compassion, service, and love to us and to the wider community. We are thankful for the example of lived Christian faith she set for us and for many. Elaine will be deeply missed. We remember her gifts of hospitality and graciousness – delicious church lunches and dinners, beautiful Christmas and Easter flower ministries and Spring flower sale, her Hunger Center and Saturday Hot Meal ministries – along with service on our Church Council. We commend her spirit to God's Spirit trusting that God loves and cares for her deeply.

Elaine's Memorial Service was held at a Ripepi Funeral Home in Middleburgh Heights on Friday, March 31st, 2023. Rev. Scott Rosenstein officiated. Inurnment at Riverside Cemetery in Cleveland followed the Memorial Service.

Our deepest condolences and sympathy to her family: Karen, Annabelle, Penelope, Brendan, Michael, RJ and Kelly, Ed, and Joe - and their extended families and loved ones. We wish them peace, comfort, and strength in this difficult time.

Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community,
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For children separated from their parents at detention camps along our southern border.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and the United States.
- The people of Turkey and Syria: more than 50,000 people have died following two devastating earthquakes. Hopes of finding people alive have dimmed and experts fear the toll could rise sharply. Turkish authorities say some 13.5 million people have been affected in an area spanning roughly 280 miles from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east, and 186 miles from Malatya in the north to Hatay in the south. At least 44,374 deaths have been reported in Turkey, while 5,800 951 people have died in Syria. The US State Department has confirmed that 3 Americans are among the dead. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move

through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.

- The people of California profoundly impacted by the atmospheric rivers, flooding rains and winter storms and snow. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.
- Prayers for healing process for the surviving children, faculty, parents, and extended families of the Covenant School, a Christian school for Pre-K through 6th grade students in Nashville, Tennessee. A mass shooting there left three students and three adults dead.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 131 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of March 29th, 2023. In 2022 a total of 648 mass shootings. In 2021 a total of 693 mass shooting incident occurred across the US, in 2020 a total of 611, in 2019 a total of 417, with 337 incidents in 2018. While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit – and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States - We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.
- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the omicron variant and various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
 - Patti Augustine and family
 - Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad in Mapleridge Senior Living in Willoughby, OH*)
 - Betty Funk (*our Minister of Music*) receiving care in a medical rehab unit.
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob; friend of Elaine – health concerns*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara Reed, Nancy Moore's sister.
 - Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet - *prayers for recovery.*
 - Keith Konet and his brother who suffered a broken humerus from an injury caused by a fallen branch - he has undertaken rehab as he heals.
 - Marcia Leslie (*neighbor and friend – health concerns*)
 - The family and loved ones of Elaine Lukacs
 - Linda and James Mortach (*Elaine Lukacs' sister & brother-in-law*) & Linda's daughter
 - Patricia Matheny (*prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin*) Prayers for her family at the loss of her brother Keith Matheny who grew up in the Zion Church. Also the loss of a dear friend Craig Lucas.
 - Barbara Rossington (*move to a new senior housing community*)

- Henry Senyak (*resident community leader – cancer*)
- Debbie Webb (*Debbie has fallen a couple of times – in one fall she suffered a broken femur – and in a second recent fall, she broke a bone in her arm. She is recovering*)
- Beverly Wurm and family

UCC leaders grieve deaths in Nashville school shooting, urge gun reform now

by UCC Officers | published on Mar 30, 2023

The United Church of Christ National Officers publicly mourn the deaths of three children and three adults in a shooting March 27 at an elementary school in Nashville. The officers continue to call for immediate action through reasonable legislation to prevent gun violence and save lives.

“There is something deeply hypocritical about praying for a problem you are unwilling to resolve.”

Miroslav Volf, Public Theologian

Every child deserves to make it through the school day alive. The officers and national staff of the United Church of Christ mourn with those who lament the needless deaths of Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs, William Kinney, Cynthia Peak, Katherine Koonce, and Mike Hill, violently killed at The Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee.

We grieve for and with the families and friends of those who will never come home again. We lament the tortured thoughts and death of one who lost their way to love of themselves and others. We decry our complicity with providing legal and easy access to weapons no one needs. And we grieve a Congress that lacks the conviction to place the safety of our children and adult citizens above political aspirations.

We are in the third month of the new year, and 10,215 persons have died from gun violence in the United States since this year began. There have been 130 mass shootings, and 417 children have been victims of gun violence this year. We join our prayers with those ascending in this moment for these families, and those that ascended for the victims of every mass shooting from Columbine to Nashville. And we will continue to urge Congress and communities toward reasonable gun legislation, an already available response to our impassioned plea.

With Resurrection Hope,

The Elected Officers of the United Church of Christ

The Rev. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President

The Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister and Vice President

The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, Associate General Minister and Vice President

Pastoral Letter regarding attack on Community Church of Chesterland



March 27, 2023

Dear Living Water Association,

Greetings in the name of the One whom we know as Love!

Once again, our hearts break at the face of bigotry, homophobia and hatred. Last Saturday, Community Church of Chesterland UCC, one of our beloved congregations, experienced a violent attack on its church building. The sign of the church was destroyed. Outdoor light fixtures were broken. Molotov cocktails were thrown at the building. The miracle was that when this hate crime occurred, it was raining, which probably prevented the fire from catching, destroying the whole building.

Chesterland UCC is no stranger to violence. Chesterland UCC is proudly Open and Affirming. Its congregation includes a variety of persons from the LGBTQIA2+ spectrum. Its rainbow flag, which flies outside the building, is often stolen. Still, the congregation welcomes everyone, wherever they are on the journey and on the spectrum of sexuality, identity, and human experience.

This Saturday's incident is only one among many others around our nation. Congregations who are open and affirming are experiencing an increase in violent attacks of many kinds. We are facing profoundly painful moments in our life together. The senselessness of the violence and bigotry against LGBTQIA2+, especially transgender persons, is truly a menacing cruelty and brutal savagery.

Today, we stand with our beloved church, Community Church of Chesterland UCC. We stand in affirmation and support for each person's human dignity and worth. We stand believing that our LGBTQIA2+ siblings are beloved children of God. And, that our congregations provide extravagant welcome and hospitality, creating safe places for all God's children especially the marginalized and the dehumanized as an expression of God's inclusive love made known in Jesus Christ.

So let it be known that we absolutely reject violence. We are allies of, and affirm and support, our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, nonbinary and all humans unconditionally.

Rev. David Long Higgins
Conference Minister
Heartland Conference UCC

Rev. Nayiri Karjian
General Minister
Living Water Association

Rev. Michael A. Howard
Minister of Faith in Action
Living Water Association