

Palm Sunday - March 29, 2026

## Call to Worship

Lenten travelers, the journey to the cross begins with a procession into Jerusalem, a demonstration of Jesus' saving power.

We come to praise Jesus, the Messiah, the One who saves!

The crowds line the path and shout "Hosanna! Save us!" as Jesus rides in, not on a mighty war horse, but on the backs of a donkey and a colt.

We come to call on Jesus, the Messiah, the One who saves!

The city murmurs, wondering who this person is who demonstrates power through humility, strength without tyranny.

We come to witness Jesus, the Messiah, the One who saves!

Lenten travelers, will you come on the journey to Jerusalem, following a Messiah who saves us to live after the pattern of the kingdom of God, not the kingdoms of this world?

We come to follow Jesus, the Messiah, the One who saves!

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, September 2025.  
[Discipleship Ministries | Palm/Passion Sunday, Year A - Liturgical...](#)

## \*Hymn

*Hosanna, loud hosanna*

218

1. Hosanna, loud hosanna,  
the little children sang;  
through pillared court and temple  
the joyful anthem rang.  
To Jesus, who had held them  
close folded to his breast,  
the children sang their praises,  
the simplest and the best.
2. From Olivet they followed  
amid the shouting crowd,  
the victor palm branch waving  
and chanting clear and loud;  
Messiah, God's anointed,  
rode there in humble state,  
"Hosanna in the highest!"  
rang out their praises great.
3. "Hosanna in the highest!"  
that ancient song we sing,  
for Christ is our Redeemer,  
the Lord of heaven our King.  
Oh may we ever praise him  
with heart and life and voice,  
and in God's joyful presence  
eternally rejoice!

"Hosanna, loud hosanna." Words by Jennette Threlfall,  
This version © The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1996.

## Prayer of Adoration

God of majesty and mercy,  
we worship today, as the Cross looms larger on the horizon.

We praise you for Jesus, the Ruler who came in humility to free us from captivity. He came in mercy to free us from the sins we recognize in ourselves, and the sins we easily overlook.

He came to show us the full extent of your mercy, love and justice.

So we praise you for your kindness and the strength you show to lift our burdens and shoulder them for us in Christ Jesus.

We come in humility, knowing you have given us your all, to worship you as Creator, Christ and Spirit. Amen.

## Call to Confession

We come before God with our longing and our anger, with our hope for a better world and our confusion about how to get there.

Trusting in God's steadfast love, we pray.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. The Palm/Passion Sunday. March 29, 2026. Year A.

## Prayer of Confession

336

**Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

Gracious God,

the world you love is restless and aching.

We cry out against violence that passes for order,

against power that grinds the poor into dust,

against fear that is wielded like a weapon against the vulnerable.

We lament the widening gap between those who have too much and those who cannot get enough.

We bring you our anger at injustice, our exhaustion from waiting, and our grief for all that has been lost.

The earth itself groans— fields stripped bare, waters poisoned, forests burned— and we wonder what kind of world we are handing on.

Hear the cries of your people, O God. Do not turn away from our sorrow.

**Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

We confess that we are not only wounded by this broken world, we are also shaped by it.

We want deliverance, but only on our terms. We want justice, but without cost.

We want a kingdom that looks suspiciously like our own small empires.

We shout Hosanna, but we do not always listen when Jesus refuses our weapons.

We wave branches, but we hesitate to follow when the road turns toward the cross.

We confess the sins we know, the sins we excuse, and the sins we dress up as virtue.

Forgive us, O Lord. Prune what is false.

Plant what is true. Teach us to walk the way of Christ.

**Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear the good news. Blessed is the One  
who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

In Jesus Christ, God meets us in the street and on the road.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

In Jesus Christ, a new world is already taking root. Thanks be to God.

## Prayer for Understanding

God of courage and comfort,  
as we follow the stories of Christ's journey to the Cross,  
inspire us with the courage to follow him even when others turn against him.  
And comfort us, knowing that you will walk with us through every challenge,  
just as you walked with Jesus who is your Living Word. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. The Palm/Passion Sunday. March 29, 2026. Year A.

## Scripture Readings

### ❖ Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 *A Song of Victory*

<sup>1</sup> O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good;  
God's steadfast love endures forever!

<sup>2</sup> Let Israel say, "God's steadfast love endures for ever."

<sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

<sup>21</sup> I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

<sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup> This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

<sup>24</sup> This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

<sup>25</sup> Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!  
O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

<sup>26</sup> Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

<sup>27</sup> The Lord is God, who has given us light.  
Bind the festal procession with branches,  
up to the horns of the altar.

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

<sup>29</sup> O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good,  
for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Copyright © 1995 The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Used by permission of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Scripture text adapted or reprinted from the New Revised Standard Version bible, Copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

## ❖ **Matthew 21:1-11 *Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem***

<sup>21</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 fulfil 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."

*New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Message** Branches in the Road

No Kings Protests. Now that is an interesting place to start on a Sunday when we come waving palm branches singing our hosannas, with words in the scripture identifying Jesus as Lord, your king, and Son of David. Yesterday there were "No Kings" protests globally, but perhaps the largest gathering happened just south of us in Minneapolis where people have been vocal and taking action against the Trump administration because of their policies and the killing of two people on their streets last fall.

This was not the first "No Kings" protest, this also happened just a few months ago. However, the continued policies of the Trump Administration and the war against Iran have made it so the energy around this has not waned. Millions of people once again turned out, particularly in the US, to demonstrate through their actions their frustration with a man who would like to name himself ruler of all.

It is against this backdrop that we hear scripture describing its own event of people gathering in the streets. There is no way for us to know how large this crowd was. We know it was not enough for the heavy hand of the Roman government to quell the parade in the moment, as any threat of unrest would have brought the soldiers in to deal with

the situation. Instead, we are given this hopeful story. We can be sure people hadn't really figured out who this Jesus was because they ask, even as they got caught up in the event, "Who is this? (v10).

Let's get into this moment. Jesus had spent the last three years teaching, healing and feeding people. And for the last while he and the disciples have been making their way toward Jerusalem, Jesus has been dropping cues about the fact that he will die. People, particularly the disciples, haven't necessarily picked up what he has been laying down, but after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, all of this will make sense to them. For now, all of this is still unfolding.

And Jesus asks his disciples to do a strange thing, to go to the village ahead of them saying that they will immediately find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. He tells them to untie the animals and bring them back. If anyone says anything, they are just to say the Lord needs them. And it appears that no one argued with the request. That act becomes a fulfillment of scripture from Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."<sup>1</sup>

And this is something that is important. Jesus doesn't come out of nowhere. There are Old Testament scriptures that Christians recognize as being fulfilled in Jesus, as in Psalm 118 where we read, "The Lord is God, who has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar."<sup>2</sup>

In the time of Jesus, of kings and emperors and power of empire, the recognition of someone as a king could threaten your life. Or being called a king or the son of God made you a threat. In the end that threat to power did take Jesus to a cross, but for now the crowd, however large or small it is, is empowered, hopeful, and brave. And it is important to note that there would have been many people watching this spectacle from the sidelines, not quite brave enough to commit and not fully understanding what was going on. Even the people caught up in the laying of cloaks and branches from the trees, shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David!" likely didn't fully understand what they were a part of. In fact, it says right there in scripture, "<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."<sup>3</sup>

Can you imagine the whispers, the questions, the turmoil? Think on any protest you have seen on a screen in recent months. Protests are not quiet, they are loud, and regardless of where they are happening in the world and whether organized or spontaneous, crowds and protests are unpredictable. There are always risks. Risk of being caught up in something that cannot be controlled, risk of arrest, and in some cases, risk to life.

---

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations taken from, *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

When we enter into our sanctuaries, wave palm branches and sing on Palm Sunday, we get rather sentimental, but this is dangerous stuff. Even now, in our own day and age not many people are willing to say, Jesus is my Lord or Jesus is King. We hold back, we fear judgment, ridicule, or at the very least a sideways glance or roll of the eyes.

It would be safe to say that most of us have never said the words that Jesus is Lord or Jesus is King outside of a worship service. And when we walk out these doors those phrases slide off our being. We almost shake them off as we return to our work a day world. We are Christians when we come to church on Sunday, but Jesus just doesn't hold the same power when we leave this time together.

But as the people in the crowd in Jesus' time asked each other, "Who is this?" I ask you, "Who is this Jesus to you?" Just as the people laid their cloaks and branches in the road as Jesus entered the city, do you...do we as a church, lay down our lives for Jesus? Do we offer ourselves to Jesus?

Who is this Jesus to you? I can't answer this for you. Each of us must come to our own determinations and conclusions. This church has to determine who Jesus is and what metaphorical cloaks and branches we will lay down for Jesus as we seek to be the people of God today and in the weeks and months ahead.

At this moment we are looking at the celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but if we look ahead the scriptures reveal a quick turning of the tide. Jesus headed to the temple and overturned tables and drove people out who are desecrating the temple. He kept teaching, but authorities were watching and waiting in the wings ready to pounce at the first opportunity, and greed will provide that. Judas will go to the chief priest and temple authorities and make a deal. They will arrest Jesus and try him. He will die. This story gets worse before it gets better.

Through it all, where are you? When you hear this story and come to the table of Maundy Thursday, or the crucifixion of Good Friday, where are you? There is no judgement from me here. Only a question...Who is this? Who is this Jesus that for over two thousand years we have proclaimed as our King. In a time when and where earthly kings, authorities, or rulers try to control by coercion and domination, do you see the difference between Jesus as Lord, and King, and the power and domination of people on earth?

May you already know that answer. Jesus came in the power of grace, love, and forgiveness. Jesus is King. Jesus the King that comes in the power of feeding the hungry, caring for the most vulnerable, loving us because we are each and every one made in the image of God. Jesus' power is love. Love is our power because of Jesus.

Who is this? This is Jesus. This is love personified. This is the grace of God outpoured on all people. This is God with us. This is our King!

"Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!" Amen!

## Prayers of the People

God of courage and compassion,  
as we follow Jesus toward the Cross this holy week,  
we give you thanks that he faced his enemies with courage, not violence.

We are grateful he loved us enough to die for us,  
bearing every pain and sorrow others inflicted.

In Christ we trust that your love has power in every situation,  
even the most troubling or tragic.

Hear us as we bring to you the people and places facing  
trouble and tragedy this day:

We pray for all struggling with poverty, sickness, or grief,  
and any feeling overwhelmed by things beyond their control.

Stay with them day by day and restore their hope and health.

We pray for people and places facing violence, war and corruption,  
and all who fear for what this day may bring.

Grant them courage and protection, and restore their hope and peace.

We pray for those who challenge tyranny, brutality and injustice,  
and all who raise their voices for the vulnerable and victimized.

Give them strength and restore their hope and freedom.

We pray for all who face persecution because of racism, belief or identity,  
and for each one who has been shamed or humiliated by someone more powerful.

Assure them of their value as your children and restore their hope and dignity.

Hear us as we pray to you in silence for those situations close to our hearts this day.

Bring your grace to restore hope and healing wherever they are needed.

God of courage and compassion, thank you for your love that never lets us go  
and hear us as we pray the words Jesus taught us:

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. The Palm/Passion Sunday. March 29, 2026. Year A.

## Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen**

## Invitation to the Offering

Today we are reminded that Christ offered his life on the Cross for our sakes.  
Now it's our turn to offer God our gifts in gratitude,  
trusting God to use them to create new life in Jesus' name.

You are invited and encouraged to financially support St. Andrew's ministry through our website, [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#)

**\*Hymn**

*All glory, laud, and honour*

**214**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. All glory, laud, and honour<br/>to thee, Redeemer, King,<br/>to whom the lips of children<br/>made sweet hosannas ring!<br/>Thou art the King of Israel,<br/>thou David's royal son,<br/>who in the Lord's name comest,<br/>the King and blessed one.</p> <p>3. All glory, laud, and honour<br/>to thee, Redeemer, King,<br/>to whom the lips of children<br/>made sweet hosannas ring!<br/>To thee before thy passion<br/>they sang their hymns of praise;<br/>to thee, now high exalted,<br/>our melody we raise.</p> | <p>2. All glory, laud, and honour<br/>to thee, redeemer, King,<br/>to whom the lips of children<br/>made sweet hosannas ring!<br/>The people of the Hebrews<br/>with palms before thee went;<br/>our praise and prayer and anthems<br/>before thee we present.</p> <p>4. All glory, laud, and honour<br/>to thee, Redeemer, King,<br/>to whom the lips of children<br/>made sweet hosannas ring!<br/>Thou didst accept their praises;<br/>accept the prayers we bring,<br/>who in all good delightest,<br/>thou good and gracious King.</p> |
|---|---|

"All glory, laud, and honour." Words (Latin) by Theodulph of Orleans. English translation by John Mason Neale. Public domain.

**Benediction**

May the God who stirs hope in restless hearts  
send you into this week with courage.  
May the Christ who rode into the city  
walk with you on the road that leads to the cross.  
May the Spirit who grows new life in worn-out soil  
keep you faithful when the cheering fades.  
Go in peace. Walk in faith. Amen.

**Postlude**

Grounded and Growing—Journeying from Lent to Easter A - Year of Grounded and Growing  
by Ron Rienstra. As Published on the Reformed Worship website January 2026