

Welcome to this act of worship. If you have a palm or wooden cross or just a cross drawn on paper, you may find it a helpful focus in this service.

Call to worship Shout Hosanna!

Jesus is coming Shout Hosanna!

He's riding on a donkey Shout Hosanna!

Open the gates. Shout Hosanna!

Open the ancient doors Shout Hosanna!

Don't be afraid Shout Hosanna!

Wave the branches Shout Hosanna!

Spread out your coats Shout Hosanna!

Peace in heaven Shout Hosanna!

Glory in the highest heaven Shout
Hosanna!

Hymn StF 264 Make way, make way Make way, make way

For Christ the King

In splendour arrives

Fling wide the gates and welcome Him

Into your lives

Make way! (Make way!)

Make way! (Make way!)

For the King of kings

(For the King of kings)

Make way! (Make way!)

Make way! (Make way!)

And let His kingdom in

The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance

The blind shall see

And those who mourn with heavy hearts

Who weep and sigh

With laughter, joy and royal crown

He'll beautify

We call you now to worship Him

As Lord of all

To have no gods before Him

Their thrones must fall!

Graham Kendrick

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He comes the broken hearts to heal

The prisoners to free

Prayers

Praise & thanksgiving – *using or just imagining a palm cross.*

Hold the cross vertically at its base, and think of the branches waved by the crowd – praise God for Jesus the king.

Hold the cross on the palm of your hand, and think of Jesus carrying the cross – praise God for Jesus, bearer of our sins.

Hold the cross by its horizontal bar and think of Jesus nailed to the cross – praise God for Jesus who died for us.

Finally, hold the cross vertically again, and see it is empty – praise God for Jesus our risen Saviour.

We lift up our voices in glad hosannas, acknowledging Jesus as King of kings & Lord of lords.

As we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem to cries of celebration, help us to welcome him afresh into our hearts and lives today. Amen.

Confession When we have been silent and not praised you.

When we have been distracted and not welcomed you,

When we have not noticed your presence in our lives and in our world,

When we have felt defeated and not trusted you
When we have not laid our cloaks at your feet but have laid them at the feet of others.
Forgive us Lord, renew us and bless us with your humility, your courage and with the fellowship of others.
Help us to live with you as King in our lives, guiding and directing all that we are, all that we do.
In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer Please pray using whichever version you prefer

Reading **Luke 19: 28-40** *As you read this familiar reading, imagine yourself into the story. Where is Jesus and where are you? How do you respond to him?*

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"

³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it."

³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

Sermon

The Passover festival was fast approaching and God's salvation plan is reaching its climax. The prophecy in Zechariah, which heralded the coming of the longed-for Messiah, was being fulfilled in Jesus. Zechariah 9:9 reads

'Rejoice greatly O daughter Zion! Shout aloud O daughter Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey'

Jesus made a very definite claim when he mounted that donkey....not the mount of a conquering warrior come to overthrow the forces of oppression & evil by force but one who came as King, in peace and proclaiming peace.

There is nothing accidental about Jesus' final journey.

For a while we can join with the jubilant company of disciples as they walk beside Jesus down the hillside of the Mount of Olives. Zechariah's prophecy was unfolding before their

eyes and we can sense the disciples' excitement as they make these connections for themselves and break into shouts of praise to God as the holy city spreads out before them. What they thought might happen when they arrived in Jerusalem we don't know but perhaps they thought Jesus would come up with something spectacular.

So what about the cloaks? Luke doesn't mention palms at all, only cloaks, laid on the donkey & on the ground for donkey to walk over. In 1st Century Palestine, for the ordinary person, his cloak was probably the most expensive & most treasured possession & yet here are the disciples laying them down in praise & honour of Jesus as Messiah. It symbolised their willingness to follow Jesus as King, but we already know that that willingness soon evaporated when, at the scent of danger, the disciples fled as the crowd turned against Jesus. Jesus was very soon to lose his own clothes, including his cloak and not many hours after that, the flesh of his humanity too, by his death on the cross.

Meanwhile, during Jesus' trial, he has other clothes placed upon him.... A purple robe & a crown of thorns, whilst the soldiers mock & beat Jesus, hailing him as a king.....a king who appears powerless to overcome the forces that surround him. The irony is huge, for Jesus, the only one who had the right to be called 'King of the Jews', refuses to retaliate with violence or force. He will not take his kingdom that way.

So Jesus, who willingly gave up the glory of heaven's cloak at his birth, to become our salvation, finally lays down for us his earthly cloak of humanity as well. On the cross Jesus is left naked, utterly vulnerable and exposed to the worst that the world could lay on him...the weight of all our sin in the agony of crucifixion. All this so that humanity might receive God's cloak of life & love that never wears out, lasting even into eternity.

Does God not long for his people to be wrapped in this cloak, made known to us in Jesus? The cloak of justice & peace, of love & service?

What are we willing to lay down to honour Jesus as our Lord and King? Our most precious and valuable possessions?

Today, what cause or person would you be prepared to get your best coat dirty for, to devote your time and energy to?

Can we follow Jesus' example in proclaiming God's way of love, peace, acceptance and forgiveness in our everyday lives?

Although we may proclaim Jesus as Lord and King, we fail and desert him many times but we have forgiveness through our faith in him, by his death and resurrection.

That forgiveness and mercy is complete gift.....we cannot earn it, we don't have to be good enough to deserve it. God freely offers it to all who turn to him in true repentance, all who acknowledge their need of him.

In response to God's forgiveness our hearts overflow with love & gratitude.

And so we cast our cloaks at Jesus' feet, proclaiming, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Amen

Prayers for others

On this Palm Sunday, as we hold the cross in our hand, we focus on Jesus.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you came in humility to show us what love is really like. Teach us how to love like you do. We pray for all those we are called upon to love: our families, friends, colleagues and neighbours, and especially anyone who we don't get on with. We remember now, any who we have been asked to pray for...

Blessed is the King who comes in God's name, **May he bring blessings to his people.**

We pray for all those in our world who are downtrodden, forgotten, unloved and homeless.

Blessed is the King who comes in God's name, **May he bring blessings to his people.**

We pray for the world's leaders and rulers, asking you to give them humility and wisdom.

Blessed is the King who comes in God's name, **May he bring blessings to his people.**

Lord Jesus, go ahead of us this week into all that we do, be with us in every situation.

Blessed is the King who comes in God's name, **May he bring blessings to his people.**

Lord Jesus, as we walk with you through the darkness of Good Friday to the triumph of Easter, help us to learn something new about you this week that will spur us on to a deeper relationship with you. We ask all these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed is his name. Amen.

Hymn StF 277 My song is love unknown

1 My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?

2 He came from his blest throne
salvation to bestow,
but such disdain! So few
the longed-for Christ would know!
But oh, my friend, my friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend!

3 Sometimes they crowd his way
and his sweet praises sing,
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then "Crucify!" is all their breath,
and for his death they thirst and cry.

4 Why? What has my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,

he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these
themselves displease and 'gainst him rise.

5 They rise and needs will have
my dear Lord made away.
A murderer they save,
the Prince of life they slay.
Yet cheerful he to suff'ring goes
that he his foes from death might free.

6 In life, no house, no home
my Lord on earth might have;
in death, no friendly tomb,
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heav'n was his home
but mine the tomb wherein he lay.

7 Here might I stay and sing;
no story so divine,
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.
This is my friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend

Blessing & sending May the humility of Jesus, the kingship of Jesus, and the love of Jesus, Sustain and inspire you today and throughout this Holy Week, and remain with you always. **Amen.**