



**April 13, 2025**

Melville United Church

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**Melville United Church**

**Palm Sunday**

**April 13, 2025**

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*Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson*

*Ministry of Music: Colleen Weber*

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Land Acknowledgement**

Let us take time to acknowledge the peoples who have lived on and stewarded these lands since time immemorial.

God, help us to be thankful, and to become better neighbours and stewards that we might continue to honour these lands.

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Call to Worship** (*adapted from the writings of Ann Weems*)

We're good at planning!

**Give us a project and we're off and running!**

"Go to the village and find a colt," he said...

**Negotiating with the owners was easy for us.**

And then came the parade...we're good at that too!

**We generously throw our coats down as Jesus passes by;**

**we wave our palm branches high in the air. It's all so good!**

It's in between projects and parades that we don't do so well.

**It's then that we forget our hosannas...go back to business as usual.**

To once again remember, we come to worship on this Palm Sunday.

**Hymn —All Glory, Laud and Honour VU 122**

1. All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!  
You are the King of Israel, and David's royal son,  
Now in the Lord's name coming, our King and blessed one.

2. All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!  
The multitude of pilgrims with palms before you went;  
Our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present.

3. All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!

To you before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise;  
To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

4. All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.  
Their praises you accepted, accept the prayers we bring,  
Great author of all goodness, O good and gracious King.

**Gathering Prayer:**

**God of love, all of life is contained in this day: joyful presence and a festive meal...love and betrayal...suffering and death. Upon this day lies both a parade and the shadow of the cross. As darkness deepens this coming week, give us strength and courage, that we continue to walk together, no matter where life leads. Amen.**

**Responsive Psalm — selected parts from Psalm 84 (VU page 800)**

***Sung refrain***

*How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O God of hosts, to me!*

How lovely is your dwelling place, God of hosts!  
My soul longs, even faints, for the courts of God.

**My heart and my flesh cry for joy to the living God.**

Even the sparrow finds a house,  
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young:

**At your altars, God of hosts, my sovereign, my God.**

***Sung refrain***

*How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O God of hosts, to me!*

O God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob.

**Behold, O God, our shield, look on the face of your anointed.**

Truly, a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

**I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

For you, God, are a sun and shield, you will give grace and honour,  
No good will you withhold from those who live the upright life.

**O God of hosts, happy are those who put their trust in you.**

***Sung refrain***

*How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O God of hosts, to me!*

**Hymn — Hosanna, Loud Hosanna VU 123**

1. Hosanna, loud hosanna the happy children sang;  
Through pillared court and temple the joyful 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 'mid an exultant crowd,  
The victory palm branch waving, and singing clear and loud.  
The Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,  
Content that little children should on his bidding wait.

3. "Hosanna in the highest!" That ancient song we sing,  
For Christ is our Redeemer; earth, let your anthems ring.  
O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,  
And in his humble presence eternally rejoice!

**Children's Time—A Holy Tail Puppet Show** presented by Kids Church. A delicious story about listening to God's word.

**Ministry of Music — Wave the Palms, Hosanna!** by Ruth Elaine Schram, sung by the Melville choir, accompanied by Kaillie Rawn, trumpet, and Colleen Weber, piano

**Gospel Reading: Luke 19:28-40** reader Mary Lloyd

After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'"

So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road.

As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

**Sermon: "A Lesson in Vulnerability"**

There's a question I invite us to consider this Palm Sunday morning: Are we willing to be vulnerable? If so, how vulnerable?

Truth is...we don't really like being vulnerable.

Medieval kings built moats around their castles so they didn't have to be vulnerable, and they let down their drawbridges only when they felt secure in doing so.

Most of us also have our own moats and drawbridges—whatever defense mechanisms we use

to keep safe.

We see something happening...but...it's really none of our business. Best just to go on our merry way.

An example. A couple of weeks ago, I was shopping at the Freshco grocery store near where I live. I had finished shopping and went to a cashier line. Ahead of me was a woman with a cart of groceries, and she was putting the groceries on the conveyor belt that takes them past the cashier so she can ring them up.

The grocery cart has a lower rack at the back. In that rack there was a case of bottled water. The woman finished putting her groceries on the belt, the cashier finished ringing them through, the woman paid her bill, and proceeded to load the cart up with what she had purchased.

I just had a few items to purchase, so the woman was still loading her cart with her purchases by the time I had finished.

You get my dilemma? Do I say something to the cashier? Do I say something to the woman? Or do I just consider that it's really none of my business...best just to go on my merry way?

Every bone in my body told me I should say something. But I didn't. But here's the thing: it still bothers me that I didn't speak up.

What do our ethical principles tell us we should do in that kind of situation? Perhaps more to the point, what does our faith tell us we should do in that kind of situation?

Not long ago, I drove past one of those religious billboards that you see every once in a while. In big, bold letters it said: "Are you ready to meet your maker?"

And I had this mental image of a motorist pulling up in front of the sign, straightening his tie and then driving on in confidence that his life was now secure.

But faith is a whole lot more than being sure your tie is fixed right. In other words, it's more than wearing the right clothes, or saying the right words. And faith has nothing to do with being sure about tomorrow.

Faith is quite the opposite. Faith means heading out into life with our faces to the wind. Not being sure of tomorrow but knowing that is where we must live.

In short, faith is about being willing to be vulnerable!

Have look at what faith meant to Jesus, Walking the dusty trails of Galilee with no particular place to call home. With no particular pillow upon which to rest his head at night. With no particular other people upon whom he could depend.

Faith meant being carried into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday by the cheers of the crowd, but knowing in the pit of his stomach that within 5 short days the crowd would be cheering someone else.

Faith meant having even your 12 closest companions desert you when the going got tough—one running away in betrayal, the other 11 in fear.

Faith meant crying out in Gethsemane's Garden, "Anything but this, God! Anything but this!

But then, after sweating those buckets of blood, saying, "Nevertheless, nevertheless, and rising up and trudging on up the hill. One man alone, against, the backdrop of the whole world. Vulnerable!

Being vulnerable is often a lonely thing.

Jimmy has brought his collection of marbles to school with him, and at noon hour Jimmy and his friends are playing with the marbles in the school yard, The school bullies approach and say, "Jimmy, we want those marbles. Give them to us.

Ask Jimmy how it feels to stand there, facing the bullies all alone, after the friends who were playing with him took off running.

As Edwin Markham he wrote in his poem, "They drew a circle and shut me out."

Do you know what that feels like?

When I was about 10, a new family moved onto a farm up the road. There were two boys in the family—John and Joseph. They came to our one-room country school. John and Joseph and I became friends.

Then others came to me and said that I really shouldn't be friends with John and Joseph. Why? Because they were Catholics. "You can't be friends with John and Joseph and also with us." These other boys drew a circle and shut me out.

That's how I learned at a very early age that life often forces us to make choices that will leave us standing in a corner all alone, Vulnerable!

But, for me at least, that's the great thing about being part of the church. Particularly at Easter. Because at Easter the church reminds us that we should hold no illusions about life.

Life has both Easter Sunday and Good Friday, and you can't get to one except by way of the other. Without the cross there can be no resurrection.

So, as we head into Holy Week, we're left with this question: In whatever circumstance of life we find ourselves, how vulnerable are we willing to be?

Are we willing to bear our cross when it's necessary, in order to get to Easter Sunday?

**Hymn: And on This Path      MV 8**

1. And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide.  
And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide.  
And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide.

Open wide! Open wide! Open wide!  
The gates are open wide!

2. So enter in, the gates of holiness are open wide.  
So enter in, the gates of holiness are open wide.  
So enter in, the gates of holiness are open wide.  
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide!  
The gates are open wide!

### **Sharing Our Joys and Concerns**

- **Birthdays**
  - John Cuming celebrates on April 14<sup>th</sup>
  - Lynne Lamb celebrates on April 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Rossie Rawn celebrates on April 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Alison Rainford celebrates on April 18<sup>th</sup>

### **Prayers of the people and the Prayer of Jesus**

#### **Offering Invitation**

#### **Offering Hymn: Praise God from whom all Blessings Flow VU 541**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures high and low;  
Give thanks to God in love made known,  
Creator, Word and Spirit One.

#### **Offering Prayer**

#### **Minute for Mission**

#### **Hymn: Ride On! Ride On in Majesty! VU 127 (tune 100)**

1. Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Hark, all the tribes hosanna cry.  
O Saviour meek, pursue thy road  
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

2. Ride on, ride on in majesty;  
In lowly pomp ride on to die.  
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin  
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

3. Ride on, ride on in majesty;  
The winged squadrons of the sky  
Look down with sad and wondering eyes  
To see the approaching sacrifice.

4. Ride on, ride on in majesty;  
In lowly pomp ride on to die.  
Bow thy meek head to mortal pain;  
Then take, O God, thy power and reign.

**Benediction**

The images are stark...and contrasting—

**A humble man rides a donkey...and yet, on the horizon storm clouds gather.**

Such is the unpredictability of life...

**In this noisy and uncertain world.**

As we leave now to take our place in such a world...

**May faith, hope and love be our constant companions.**

So be it.

**Amen.**

**Hymn — Go Now in Peace**

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.

God will go with you each hour ev'ry day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.

Know God will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.

Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there watching from above.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

**Postlude — The God of Abraham Praise YIGDAL. Setting by Michael Burkhardt**

**Welcomers:** Linda and Norm Porritt

**Counters:** Mary Lloyd, Lynne Lamb

**Worship Schedule**

April 18th	Good Friday	Rev. Tom Watson
April 20th	Easter Sunday	Rev. Linda Butler
April 27th	Actively Responding	Social Justice & Outreach
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> of Easter	Rev. Linda Butler

Council Meeting May 7<sup>th</sup> and June 4<sup>th</sup>. Please reach out to a Council member if there is a concern or question to be shared with Council.