



March 29, 2026

Melville United Church
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Melville United Church
Sunday, March 29, 2026
Palm Sunday

Presiding: Rev. Tom Watson
Ministry of Music: Colleen Weber

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Land Acknowledgement

Lenten Candle Liturgy (Alison Rainford and Martha Duncan)

Lent 6: Jerusalem

*(the Christ candle, four purple and one pink candle
are lit prior to worship)*

One: The journey through Lent is coming to an end.

Jesus and his disciples are approaching Jerusalem.

Two: Our feelings may be mixed: there's excitement as palm branches are waved; there's also hesitancy because we know Good Friday lies just around the corner.

Three: Jesus dared to live God's way in the presence of his enemies. Jesus wanted his disciples to live passionate, justice-seeking, God-centred lives.

(the fifth purple candle is lit)

One: Let us pray:

All: God our hope, you call us to proclaim our faith in word and deed. You invite us to trust in your way and set before us paths of faithfulness. Sometimes, we hesitate to follow because we are fearful of where it may lead us. Sometimes, we grow weary of the journey and wonder about dropping out. O God, gift us with patience and perseverance. Amen.

Call to Worship

Choices: To keep quiet...or speak out about injustice.

Choices: To keep our heads down, mind our own business, stay out of trouble.

Choices: To be on the side of those who hold the political power...or stand for truth and goodness.

Choices: To turn a blind eye to things that hurt people...or go and stand with those who are hurting.

Choices: Stay in quiet Galilee...or go to Jerusalem and be in danger.

We know what choice Jesus made. Would we do the same?

Hymn — Hosanna, Loud Hosanna VU 123

***During the opening hymn, the children
will enter waving palm branches.*

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!

Gathering Prayer: God of love, all of life is contained in this day: joyful processions and a festive mood, love and suffering. Upon this glad day when palm branches are joyfully waved, there is also a shadow that crosses the parade. Be with us as we consider all the implications of the Lent and Easter season. Amen.

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!

Children's Pageant — "God's Promise"

Ministry of Music — "Hosanna, Blessed Is He!"

by Stephen Gourley sung by the Melville Choir

Reading — Matthew 21:1-3, 6-9 Reader: Allan Hons

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Meditation: "Going to Jerusalem?"

The scriptures say that on the day that we celebrate as Palm Sunday, Jesus went into Jerusalem.

What is Jerusalem?

- It is one of the oldest cities in the world.
- The part of Jerusalem called the City of David was likely first settled about 4,000 years prior to the birth of Christ, built in the shape of encampments of nomadic shepherds.
- It was attacked 52 times, and destroyed twice.

But in Jesus' time, Jerusalem was the centre of power in that part of the world. It was:

- The centre of political power. Under Roman rule.
- The centre of religious power. Under the leadership of the Temple officials.
- The centre of economic power. The place where injustice and corruption was concentrated. Where both political and religious leaders sought to control their spheres of influence by any means at their disposal.

We have this nice, neat image of Jesus riding peacefully into the city on a donkey. But make no mistake—this was not a peaceful parade, it was an act that defied everything that Jerusalem stood for.

In that sense, the Jerusalem into which Jesus rode is more than just a city...it's the place where truth confronts power.

So, if Jesus were to ride into the centre of political, religious and economic power today, where would that be?

The political Jerusalem of today would be:

Washington, D.C.

Moscow

Tehran

Any place where entrenched systems harm people, where the power needs to be challenged.

The Economic Jerusalem would be:

Wall Street

Silicon Valley

The Toronto Stock Market

Wherever Global financial summits take place.

The Social Jerusalem would be a place where suffering is concentrated:

Prisons

Refugee camps

Homeless encampments

Perhaps, though, if Jesus rode into a modern Jerusalem, he might not choose a capital city at all. He might ride into:

The places where the voiceless gather.

The places where the powerful refuse to look.

The places where truth isn't welcome.

The places where decisions are made that shape the lives of the most vulnerable in society.

The quiet corners where suffering huddles in the corner.

The neighborhoods where people feel forgotten or unseen while, at the same time, vast sums of money are allocated for weapons of war.

Jerusalem is wherever the world most needs to have someone with the courage to speak about love, and offer hope where there's no evidence of any.

You see, Palm Sunday is really not about geography—it's about courageously entering the places of power with humility and love.

Hymn — He Came Riding on a Donkey VU 124

1. He came riding on a donkey, he came riding into town;
Slow and easy, kind of lowly, he came riding with the dawn.
His disciples walked beside him, staying close, a little shy,
Not too sure where he would guide them, on to live or on to die.
But all the morning sang his praises, waking birds and dancing wind,
Here he is, the Son of David, riding on to take his throne.

2. Then the children gathered singing, shouts of laughter, bursting cheer.
In the streets their song was ringing: Hosannas filled the morning air.
Timid adults strained to see him, caught the Spirit, joined the song,
Spread their cloaks along before him, branches flashing in the sun.
So all the city sang his praises, waking streets and dancing crowd;
Here he is, the Son of David, our Messiah, Son of God.

3. In our fasting and our feasting, called to follow in his way;
Called to walk his road to Easter, called to live his cross today.
Hosanna to the Son of David, hosanna in the heavens above;
Blessed is he who comes to save us, blessed is he who brings his love.
Let us join to sing his praises, open hearts and souls to God;
He is with us, Son of David, God's Messiah, Christ the Lord!

Sharing our Joys and Concerns

- **Birthdays:**
 - John Duncan celebrates April 2
 - Lorri Wright celebrates April 3
- **Condolences:**
 - We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Graeme Chalmers who passed away March 26. Please keep the family in your prayers.

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

Hymn — Ride On! Ride On in Majesty VU 127, tune VU 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, powerful forces await him.

Such is the unpredictability of life...

In this noisy and uncertain world.

We will gather again on Good Friday...

To be part of the rest of the story.

But...for now...

May faith, hope and love be our constant companions.

So be it.

Amen.

Postlude — "Hosanna" by Paul Wachs (edited by John White)

Welcomers: Doreen and Larry Broome

Counters: Allan Hons, David Gohn

Worship Schedule

April 3 rd	Good Friday	Rev. Tom Watson
April 5 th	Easter Sunday	Rev. Karen Boivin
April 12 th	2 nd Sunday of Easter	Rev. Jeff Hawkin
April 19 th	3 rd Sunday of Easter	Social Justice & Outreach

Council Meeting Apr 8, May 6, & Jun 3. Please reach out to a Council member if there is a concern or question to be shared with Council.