

First Congregational United Church of Christ

Empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the help of God, we open our doors and hearts to all, in service and love as modeled by Jesus Christ.

Liturgy of the Palms



Liturgy of the Passion



*Sixth Sunday in Lent
Palms and Passion*

*The Lord's Day
Sixth Sunday in Lent
Liturgy of the Palms
Liturgy of the Passion
Palms and Passion
Nine o'clock in the Morning*

The Worship of God

Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by God's holiness; the nourishment of the mind with God's truth; the purifying of the imagination by God's beauty; the opening of the heart to God's love; the surrender of the will to God's purpose—all of this gathered up in adoration.

~William Temple

The Prologue

The texts for this Sunday of Palms and Passion are all over the map! We begin our liturgical roller-coaster ride with the cry of Hosannas and gifts of palm branches spread before Jesus, a regular fun house of messianic proportions. Yet we quickly descend into a tunnel that will become Jesus' own personal house of horrors. As for us, the multitude, it is as though we had entered a house of mirrors, everything distorted beyond recognition. We almost sympathize with the crowd that seems so confused about this king who would not be king. This ain't no amusement park! No wonder we are told that Pilate wanted nothing to do with it. Our Lenten journey takes a sharp turn today, as we celebrate the *Liturgy of the Palms* and endure the *Liturgy of the Passion*. God, give us the faith to see it to the end of this part of the journey and beyond.

The Welcome¹

The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you.

And also with you.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!

The Call to Worship²

This morning begins the Great Week of the Christian Year!

During Lent we have been preparing with works of love and self-sacrifice to follow Jesus to the cross and celebrate his resurrection!

With Christians throughout the world, we come together this week to call to mind, and to express in word and deed the crux of the Easter mystery, Jesus' passover from death to life!

Jesus entered in triumph into Jerusalem to complete his work as the One called Christ, even Messiah: to suffer, to die, and be risen to new life!

Today we commit ourselves to walk the way of the cross!

So that, sharing his sufferings, we may be united with him in his risen life!

The Gathering

On this day of Palms and Passion, we have gathered with a loud voice to praise the One whose mighty deeds we behold with our eyes!

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord, the One whose peace and glory extends to the highest heavens!

If we dared silence in these sacred moments, even the stones would shout the very praise of God!

This is the day of the Holy One! We will rejoice and celebrate God's goodness and lasting love, faithful forever!

Let us worship God, giving thanks for our rock and saving foundation!

The Introit

Sing Hosanna!

Michael Jothen

Chancel Choir

The Blessing of the Palms³

Passionate God, we thank you for these palms of passion, lovingly waved by these your passionate followers, disciples zealously revealing authentic, genuine devotion to Jesus, the one called Christ, even Messiah, our mentor and friend. By your blessing may these palms of joy be for us signs of the victory of your Son. May we who carry them in his name ever proclaim him as Christ and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; all this we pray in the name of our passionate Christ, the One before whom we bring our palms of praise.

Amen.

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 21:1-11

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to MATTHEW.

Hosanna in the highest!

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!" This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "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.'" 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!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!

The Collect

The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Holy One.

All praise to the God of Palms and Passion.

God of Palms and Passion, we have gathered with a loud voice and an educated tongue to worship the One whose word awakens us in the morning, to lift up the One whose mighty works we have experienced in our midst, the One whose peace and glory we proclaim to the highest heavens; awaken our ears this day to listen to your still speaking voice as only educated people do; like stones that would refuse to keep silent, we cannot contain our passion for the One whose goodness and faithful love lasts forever, the One who is our God, the One who helps us, removing all our shame; as we rejoice and celebrate, welcoming you into our midst on this high and holy festival day, this day that you have made, we humbly pray that you would open these sacred gates of righteousness, entering this sacred space that we might receive you and be blessed from this, the very house of God; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking spirit, one God now and forever.

Amen.

The Invitation to the Procession ⁴

Let us praise Jesus, our Messiah,

Let us join with the crowd that welcomed him to Jerusalem.

Let us process in peace.

Proclaiming the name of Christ!

*The Opening Hymn, No. 192 *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*

ST. THEODULPH

*The Prayer of Palms and Passion ⁵

God of Palms and Passion, you gave your Son, Jesus, our brother and friend, who freely accepted his cross, executed as a common criminal; give us the same mind that was in Christ Jesus that, sharing in his humility, we may come to be with him in glory, now and forever; all this we pray in the name of the One who is passion personified, Christ Jesus, the crucified.

Amen.

The Anthem

Let the King Come In!

Lloyd Larson

Chancel Choir; Susan Krivichi and Joy Turpin, Tone Chimes

*The Litany of Praise

O give thanks to the Lord, for the Holy One is good! God's steadfast love endures forever!

Let all Israel declare, "God's steadfast love endures forever!"

Glorify God, who opens to us the gates of righteousness, that we might enter, giving thanks to the Holy!

This is the gate of the Holy One! The righteous shall enter through it!

God answers our prayers, becoming our salvation! It is the Lord's doing!

On this festival day that God has made, let us rejoice and be glad, celebrating every sacred moment of it!

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless the Holy One from the house of God even as God has blessed us, for God's light has shined upon us!

O give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good! God's steadfast love endures forever! Praise the Lord!

*The Gloria

GREATOREX

*Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Comforter!
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end! Amen! Amen!*

The Call to Confession⁶

In Gethsemane, Jesus directed the disciples to watch and pray, but sadly, they succumbed to some much-needed, long overdue sleep. In addressing their own needs, emotional, mental, and physical, they were caught snoozing, simply unable to watch with Jesus in what turned out to be the worst possible moment. The disciples failed to be the supportive presence their master so desperately needed in that dreadful hour. Have we not also fallen asleep in the gardens of our own priorities? How constant and persistent is our prayer life? How eager are we to take the risks of trusting in Christ's leading? Will we betray rather than follow? God is waiting to hear from us. In the silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession⁷

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of Palms and Passion, we are prone to blame you when the hosannas die and the parade turns into a mob scene. We would heap our doubts on you, even though our indecisiveness adds power to those who shout, "Crucify!" We rebel against the risks of discipleship. Why raise our voices against the evil we see? One voice simply becomes one more victim. God of gracious goodness, we protest, but we know down deep that the victim of our silence is the sacrifice of love and a better way of life. Forgive our cowardice and help us to stand with Christ in a world that has forgotten humility and obedience to you, aiding and abetting a world lacking in civility and social justice. The true desire of our hearts is that we would be faithful. Why does following Jesus cost so much?

The Assurance of Pardon⁸

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of Palms and Passion. God does not forsake us. In times of terror and suffering, we are not alone. In Christ, we are strengthened as we watch and pray. We receive courage to love in the face of ridicule and to act for truth amid the oppressive forces of deceit. Love is at the heart of all creation, bringing us to new beginnings, to resurrection life in all its fullness.

Thanks be to God!

LITURGY OF THE PASSION

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

ISAIAH 50:4-9a

The Lord GOD has given me a trained tongue, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word! Morning by morning God wakens, wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught! The Lord GOD has opened my ear and I was not rebellious! I did not turn backward! I gave my back to those who struck me and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard! I did not hide my face from insult and spitting!

The Lord GOD helps me! Therefore, I have not been disgraced! Therefore, I have set my face like flint! And I know that I shall not be put to shame! The One who vindicates me is near! Who will contend with me? Let us stand in court together! Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me! It is the Lord GOD who helps me! Who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment! The moth will eat them up!

Listen to what the Spirit of the still speaking God is saying!
Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 31:9-16

BEGINNINGS

*Be gracious, Lord, for I, in anguish, your heartfelt mercy now implore!
The very heart within me planted can bear its grief alone no more!*

*My eyes have wasted all their crying, my life with sorrow melts away!
The loving thoughts of those around me in scorn and mem'ry fast decay!*

*Amid the pain of their denial, I come, O Lord, to you for grace!
My trust is in your steadfast mercy, I glory in your smiling face!*

The Witness from the Epistles

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Listen to what the Spirit of the still speaking God is saying!
Thanks be to God!

The Hymn (back page)

At the Name of Jesus

KING'S WESTON

The Witness from the Gospels, MATTHEW 26:14-27:66

The First Congregational Players

A Dramatic Reading of the Passion Narrative

Narrator ~ Barbara Helmick ~ Judas ~ Donna Adams ~ Jesus ~ Doug Malinsky
Peter ~ Joy Turpin ~ High Priest; Chief Priest ~ Marilyn Preisler ~ Pilate ~ Susan Krivichi
First Witness; Servant One ~ Kamie Kolb ~ Scribe One; Elder Two; Pharisee Two ~ Lori Hunter
Elder One; Pharisee One; Scribe Two ~ Steve Burrill ~ Servant Two; Bystander Two ~ Pat Fox
Bystander One; Passerby One ~ Chuck Kemp ~ Pilate's Wife ~ Donna De Pape
Soldier; Centurion ~ Joe Turpin ~ Passerby Two; Bystander Three ~ Cathy Palmer

The Music for Meditation

The Concerns of the Church
The Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

**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 Receiving of Our Gifts
The Offertory
*The Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Christ all creatures here below!
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!
Praise triune God whom we adore!*

*The Prayer of Thanksgiving
*The Closing Hymn, No. 196 *Go to Dark Gethsemane*
*The Extinguishing of the Altar Candles
*The Procession of the Light
*The Benediction and Blessing

REDHEAD

To our guests! At your choosing, we invite you to join us in a long-standing tradition at First Congregational United Church of Christ as we form a circle as one, joining hands and singing together our Fellowship Song.

*You are invited to stand as you are able.

THE CONGREGATION IS REQUESTED TO LEAVE IN SILENCE

Lector: Steve Burrill
Ushers: Kamie Kolb and Joe Turpin

*The color for the Sunday of the Palms and Sunday of the Passion is scarlet when purple is not used.
Scarlet is a deeper red reminding us of blood shed during this Holy
and penitential season, conveying the gravity of Jesus' execution by crucifixion.*

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for today's worship are given
by Mark and Tobi Johannsen "For the love and joy of our families!"***

Worship Notes:

¹⁻² Adapted from *the Book of Common Prayer*, the worship book of the Episcopal Church in the USA.

³⁻⁵ Adapted from *A Prayer Book for Australia*.

⁶⁻⁸ Reprinted by permission United Church Press from *Taught by Love: Worship Resources for Year A*, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 2002 by the Pilgrim Press.

Today's scripture lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Updated Edition.

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CHURCH STAFF

Timothy W. Shirley, Pastor

Debbie Brown, Church Administrator

Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education

Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music

Linda Brainard, Pianist

Norma Yaeger, Pianist

Christine Clough, Cleaning Service

CHURCH COUNCIL

President, Donna Adams

Vice President, Mark Johannsen

Trisha Moore

Cathy Palmer

Deb Stolze

Steve Burrill

Clerk, Norma Yaeger

Pastor Parish Relations, Tobi Johannsen

Women's Fellowship, Sharon Breit

Sanctuary Arts Group, Patti Roberts

Facilities, Donna Adams

Finance, Paula Hendrickson

Gifts and Endowments, Bill Marshall

Safety and Security, Carlton Schroeder

Scholarship, Ursula Charaf

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

April 2, 2023

Concerns of the Church

If you are able to volunteer to help with a ministry to the homebound or know anyone who could benefit from this ministry, please contact Tobi Johannsen.

We invite you to give *Easter Lilies* for worship on Easter Day, April 9th. Order forms are available at the back of the sanctuary.

We have a challenge before us as a congregation to raise \$1000 in matching funds for the **Weekend Backpack Program**. The congregation focused on this non-profit group for collections in January. They were thrilled with what we donated and were very appreciative.

Join us for “Low Sunday” on April 16th at 9:00 am in Fellowship Hall for coffee, eats, and an informal service of worship. We need volunteers to provide pastries, breads, muffins, donuts, fruits and/or cheese trays. Sign-up sheets are available on the back counter. **PLAN TO BE HERE!**

Prayer Concerns: As we worship today our thoughts are with Ruth Hibbard, Tom Helmick, Molly Jaeger, Gary and Bernice Gilbert, Marshall Patten, and Bernard Stanke. We continue to pray for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters.

April collection: We are collecting items for the **Tri County Council on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault**. A list of needed items is available on the table in the Narthex. Items can be brought to the church. Please contribute as you are able.

Please remember to bring your change to contribute to the *Melody of Compassion* fund, the proceeds of which go toward helping those in our community who are in need.

Just a reminder that the **Church Council** meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 6:00 pm in the Conference Room. Church members are welcome to attend. The next meeting is April 10th.

Scripture readers (Lectors) and ushers are always needed as well as readers for the Concerns of the Church. You may sign up by visiting our website or you may also contact Joy Turpin at joyfaithchapinturpin@gmail.com or 715-479-6560.

The *church budget* for 2023 is \$150,000! To date we have received pledges in the amount of \$113,580.00. Pledge cards are available on the table outside the Church Office door.

Don't forget! We have *Coffee Hour* every Sunday following worship. Please stop by for refreshments and some wonderful conversation! After all, fellowship is the spice of the steeple!!!

Please sign the “*Who's Who in the Pew*” pads noting the service you attended.

At the Name of Jesus

Caroline M. Noel

KING'S WESTON

Ralph Vaughan Williams

1. At the name of Je - sus ev - ery knee shall bow,
2. Hum - bled for a sea - son, to re - ceive a name
3. Bore it up tri - um - phant, with its hu - man light,
4. Chris - tians, this Lord Je - sus shall re - turn a - gain,

5
1. ev - ery tongue con - fess Him, King of Glo - ry now;
2. from the lips of sin - ners, un - to whom He came.
3. through all ranks of crea - tures, to the cen - tral height,
4. with His Fath - er's glo - ry o'er the earth to reign;

9
1. 'tis the Fa - ther's plea - sure we should call Him Lord,
2. Faith - ful - ly He bore it, spot - less to the last,
3. to the thrones of God - head, to the Fa - ther's breast;
4. for all wreaths of em - pire meet up - on His brow,

13
1. who from the be - gin - ning was the migh - ty Word.
2. brought it back vic - tor - ious, when from death He passed.
3. filled it with the glo - ry of that per - fect rest.
4. and our hearts con - fess Him King of Glo - ry now.