

A Time Apart Worship
Rutland & Church of the Wildwood
Sunday, April 5, 2020

As a part of this worship experience, we will hold a Love Feast. This recalls the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry, and expressing the community and fellowship enjoyed by the family of Christ.... The Love Feast, also known as an Agape Meal, has often been held when the celebration of the Lord's Supper is not possible. Please have a cup of water and some bread ready for each person who is participating.

Call to Worship

from Psalm 118

As the people spread their coats and palm branches on the ground to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem, so we welcome him into our lives this morning. Give thanks to the Lord; enter the gates of righteousness! Tell everyone God's steadfast love endures forever! The stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. The Lord's works are marvelous in our eyes. The Lord is God, and he has given us light. With boughs in hand, we join in the procession! This is the day the Lord has made,
ALL: LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT!

Gathering Song – Hosanna, Loud Hosanna Hymnal #278

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!

Palm Scripture – Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethpage, 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 fulfill 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 he 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."

Prayers of Joy & Concern – During this time, let us pray for our loved ones, for those who are suffering, for our country and for the world.

Entry into Holy Week Scripture – Matthew 26:14-25

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him. On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

The Love Feast

The streets were crowded. A parade mood filled the air. Shouts came from deep in the heart.

Hosanna. Save us! Save us from lukewarm faith. Save us from callous indifference.

Save us from paltry hopes and petty dreams. Save us from unquenchable greed.

Save us from lazy habits and faithless commitments.

Save us from soft-mindedness and hard-heartedness. Hosanna. Save us.

We cry from the depth of our hearts and the very pit of our souls. Hosanna. Save us. Save us now.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

As we observe Palm/Passion Sunday, we are challenged to have the mind of Christ.

The mind of Christ, a person who emptied himself, a person who became the servant of all for the sake of the redemption of humanity, a person who humbled himself, even to embrace the death on a cross.

Friends, as we take part in this love feast as disciples of Jesus Christ and as we reenact what our Lord and Savior went through so that we may have life, may we not reenact it just as a tradition, but with true repentant hearts and minds, asking for God's forgiveness for all our sins. May we rededicate ourselves so that the world may see in us a true departure from our egos, prides, and all human sins, and an adoption of new humble spirits full of Christ's love, and the direction of the Holy Spirit. May we always have a longing to carry the cross, a desire to embrace that cross, and a willingness to die on it for our Christian witness.

The Lord's Prayer

Save us as we pray together in the words that Jesus taught, spoken in all of our languages:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Invitation Song

Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and everywhere adored.

Bless thou this food and grant that we may feast in paradise with thee.

If you are not alone, pass the bread and offer some water to each person you are sheltering with.

If alone, take some bread and water. Eat and drink as much as you have available and need.

As you break and share bread, remember: You are loved by Christ.

As you partake of the cup of water, remember: You are a child of God.

Closing Prayer

We give thanks for this time of fellowship and sharing your love, O God. May we offer the love and grace and peace that you have given us to others, both strangers and friends. In this coming week, you call us to bear witness to a difficult part of the Christian story. We want to linger at the parade. We want to keep celebrating the happy moments, both in our own lives and in the life of Jesus. But soon enough, the darkness comes. Soon enough grief bubbles up. Be with us through it all - the joyous times and the painful ones. Hold us in your loving embrace. May we remember that we are not alone. Jesus went through this darkness before us. He knows the way and we are travelling with him. Thanks be to God, Amen.

Closing Song *Let Us Be Bread* FWS #2260

Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord, broken and shared, life for the world.
Let us be wine, love freely poured. Let us be one in the Lord.

Benediction

Go now in peace and may the love of God, the light of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit abide in you now and forever. Amen and Amen.

Reaching Out

I encourage you to reach out to someone and share your experience with this morning's worship. Ask how they celebrated and if there are any specific prayer concerns they would like to share with you.

Offering - During this time of worshiping at home, the work of the church continues. We are reaching out through phone, letter and internet, feeding hungry people and offering spiritual support to those in need of encouragement (which is really all of us). Thank you for continuing your faithful support of our church through your offering, which may be mailed to the church at 60 Strongs Ave. Rutland, VT 05701

**** Love Feast** Created by Rev. Jill Colley Robinson, Vermont District Superintendent with reference to The United Methodist Book of Worship. P. 581ff. ©1992. John Birch, adapted. The Open Church, adapted. John Cennick, adapted.