



**March 28, 2021  
Order of Worship**

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### CENTERING

#### GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### BLESSING OF THE PALMS

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Pastor: We praise and bless you, ever-living God, for the acts of love by which you redeem the world through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**People: This day he entered into the holy city of Jerusalem and was proclaimed King by those who spread their garments and palm branches along his way.**

Pastor: Let these branches be for us signs of his victory; grant that we, who bear them, may always acclaim Jesus "Messiah," by walking the way of his suffering and cross;

**People: that, dying and rising with him, we may enter into your kingdom. Through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.**

**All: Amen.**

#### PRELUDE

"By Waterside In Babylon"

J. Pachelbel

#### GATHERING WORDS

Pastor: The journey has been long and sometimes very difficult.

**People: The end of our journey is near.**

Pastor: Now the Lord comes into victory.

**People: Jesus rides in Jerusalem and into our hearts.**

Pastor: We march into Jerusalem with Joy!

**People: The parade has begun. Let's rejoice and shout "Hosanna!"**

Pastor: Blessed is the One who comes in the Lord's name!

*Filled with excitement, all the happy throng spread cloaks and branches on the city streets  
There in the distance, they begin to see riding on a donkey, comes the Son of God  
From every corner, a thousand voices sing praises to him who comes in the Name of God  
With one great shout of acclamation, loud triumphant song breaks forth  
"Hosanna, hosanna to the King! Hosanna, hosanna to the King!  
As in that entrance to Jerusalem, we sing hosannas to the Christ our King  
To the living Savior Who still calls today asking us to follow Him with love and faith  
From every corner, a thousand voices sing praises to him who comes in the name of God  
With one great shout of acclamation, loud triumphant song breaks forth  
"Hosanna, hosanna to the King! Hosanna, hosanna to the King!"*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Wave high your palm branches! The Lord of life approaches!

**People: Sing with great joy for the Savior has come to us!**

Pastor: Even the beast of burden on which he rides seems to be royal.

**People: All creation shouts praises to the King of Kings!**

Pastor: Hosanna! Hosanna!

**People: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna! Amen.**

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we come this day filled with excitement and enthusiasm like all those who gathered at the side of the road to cheer and wave palms that day in Jerusalem so long ago. Increase our faith and listen to our prayers as we honor you this day. Help us to always live in you and to glorify your name. Amen.

INTROIT

"Tell Me the Stories of Jesus"

No. 277, v. 3

*Into the city I'd follow the children's band, waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand;  
one of his heralds, yes, I would sing loudest hosannas, "Jesus is King!"*

**PROCLAMATION AND ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM**

(The Palms Speak Out of God's Plan)

Pastor: 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,

**People: "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."**

Pastor: So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owner asked them,

**People: "Why are you untying the colt?"**

Pastor: 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, say,

**People: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"**

Pastor: Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him,

**People: "Teacher, order your disciples to stop."**

Pastor: He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

*All glory laud and honor, to Thee Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.  
Thou art the King of Israel thou David's royal Son  
who in the Lord's name comest, the King and Blessed One.  
All glory laud and honor, to Thee Redeemer, King  
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.  
To Thee before Thy passion, they sang their hymns of praise;  
to Thee now high exalted, our melody we raise  
All glory laud and honor, to Thee Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.*

## CELEBRATING

### INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Whether we are bringing a colt or spreading our clothes on the road, whether we are writing a check with many zeroes or dropping a few coins in the plate, our gifts are symbols of welcoming Christ. Every gift is a blessing. Every gift is needed. Let us welcome Christ as we share our offerings with God.

### THE LORD'S OFFERING

#### OFFERTORY

"In Thee Alone, O Christ My Lord"

J. Pachelbel

#### \*DOXOLOGY

(Sung to the tune of the regular doxology)

*Praise to our God, wave high the palm. Praise to Christ Jesus, God's own Son.  
Praise to the Spirit, now we sing, for in our hearts hosannas ring. Amen*

#### \*OFFERTORY PRAYER

**Blessed are you, Christ Jesus, as you come to us this day. Blessed are you, as you work through the gifts we bring you now. Blessed are you as you live in our lives, helping us become faithful disciples and stewards of your love. Bless and strengthen our gifts, that they may bless and strengthen others. With gratitude and joy, we pray. Amen.**

### CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

## HEARING

### LITURGY OF THE PASSION

Pastor: Listen again to the story of our redemption.

**People: Let your face shine upon your servants; save us in your steadfast love.**

Pastor: Jesus Christ has been wounded for our transgressions. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.

**People: Let your face shine upon your servants; save us in your steadfast love.**

Pastor: Therefore God has highly exalted him, giving him the name which is above all others.

**People: Let your face shine upon your servants; save us in your steadfast love.**

### THE INVITATION

Pastor: Jesus, we come—to walk the road with you—to follow you to the cross.

**People: We seek to know the agony you suffered there.**

### HYMN

"O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done"

No. 287, v. 1

*O Love divine, what hast thou done! The immortal God hath died for me!  
The Father's co-eternal Son bore all my sins upon the tree  
th'immortal God for me hath died: My Lord, my Love, is crucified!*

Pastor: We prepare ourselves now to follow your footprints in the dust...to understand how you died...to understand how we die

**People: Teach us to endure, as you endured, the scorn of unbelievers and the torments of our enemies.**

***Is crucified for me and you, to bring us rebels back to God.  
Believe, believe the record true, ye all are bought with Jesus' blood.  
Pardon for all flows from his side: My Lord, my Love, is crucified!***

Pastor: We come to understand how you lived....to understand how we are to live.

People: **Help us keep strong faith in you forever. When we falter, rescue us. When we forget your promises, refresh our memories. When we face death, be with us faithfully.**

***Behold him, all ye that pass by, the bleeding Prince of life and peace!  
Come, sinners, see your Savior die, and say, "Was ever grief like his?"  
Come, feel with me his blood applied: My Lord, my Love, is crucified!***

## PASSION OF THE CHRIST

(Scripture readings are taken from "The Message")

### SCRIPTURE READING

"With Christ at the Table"

Matthew 26:14-29

That is when one of the Twelve, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the cabal of high priests and said, "What will you give me if I hand him over to you?" They settle on thirty silver pieces. He began looking for just the right moment to hand him over. On the first of the Days of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare your Passover meal?" He said, "Enter the city. Go up to a certain man and say, 'The Teacher says, My time is near. I and my disciples plan to celebrate the Passover meal at your house.'" The disciples followed Jesus' instructions to the letter, and prepared the Passover meal. After sunset, he and the Twelve were sitting around the table. During the meal, he said, "I have something hard but important to say to you: One of you is going to hand me over to the conspirators." They were stunned, and then began to ask, one after another, "It isn't me, is it Master?" Jesus answered, "The one who hands me over is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table. In one sense, the Son of Man is entering into a way of treachery well-marked by the Scriptures – no surprises here. In another sense, that man who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man—better never to have been born than do this!" Then, Judas, already turned traitor, said, "It isn't me, is it Rabbi?" Jesus said, "Don't play games with me, Judas." During the meal, Jesus took and blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples: "Take, eat. This is my body. Taking the cup and thanking God, he gave it to them: Drink this all of you. This is my blood, God's new covenant poured out for many people for the forgiveness of sins. I'll not be drinking wine from this cup again until that new day when I'll drink with you in the kingdom of my Father."

"One Bread, One Body"

No. 620, v. 1

***One bread, one body, One Lord of all, One cup of blessing which we bless.  
And we, though many throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.  
Gentile or Jew, servant or free, woman or man, no more.  
One bread, one body, One Lord of all, One cup of blessing which we bless.  
And we, though many throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.***

### SCRIPTURE READING

"With Christ in the Garden of Prayer"

Matthew 26:30-46

They sang a hymn and went directly to Mount Olives. Then Jesus told them, "Before the night's over, you're going to fall to pieces because of what happens to me. There is a Scripture that says, I'll strike the shepherd; helter-skelter the sheep will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I, your Shepherd, will go ahead of you, leading the way to Galilee." Peter broke in, "Even if everyone else falls to pieces on account of you, I 'wont.'" "Don't be so sure," Jesus said. "This very night, before the rooster crows up the dawn, you will deny me three times." Peter went with them to a garden called Gethsemane and told his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray." Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he plunged into an agonizing sorrow. Then he said, "This sorrow is crushing my life out. Stay here and keep vigil with me." Going a little ahead, he fell on his face, praying, "My Father, if there is any way, get me out of this. But please, not what I want. You, what do you want?" When he came back to his disciples, he found them sound asleep. He said to Peter, "Can't you stick it out with me a single hour? Stay alert; be in prayer so you won't wander into temptation without even knowing you're in danger. There is a part of you that is eager, ready for anything in God. But there's another part that's as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire." He then left them a second time. Again he prayed, "My Father, if there is no other way than this, drinking this cup to the dregs, I'm ready. Do it Your way." When he came back, he again found them sound asleep. They simply couldn't keep their eyes open. This time he let them sleep on, and went back a third time to pray, going over the same ground one last time. When he came back the next time, he said, "Are you going to sleep on and make a night of it? My time is up, the Son of man is about to be handed over to the hands of sinners. Get up! Let's get going! My betrayer is here."

***Go to dark Gethsemane, ye that feel the tempter's power; your Redeemer's conflict see,  
watch with him one bitter hour. Turn not from his griefs away; learn of Jesus Christ to pray.***

## SCRIPTURE READING

"With Christ in the Dark Night of Betrayal"

Matthew 26:47-56

The words were barely out of his mouth when Judas (the one from the Twelve) showed up, and with him a gang from the high priests and religious leaders brandishing swords and clubs. The betrayer had worked out a sign with them: "The one I kiss, that's the one—seize him." He went straight to Jesus, greeted him, "How are you, Rabbi?" and kissed him. Jesus said, "Friend, why this charade?" Then they came on him—grabbed and roughed him up. One of those with Jesus pulled his sword and, taking a swing at the Chief Priest's servant, cut off his ear. Jesus said, "Put your sword back where it belongs. All who use swords are destroyed by swords. Don't you realize that I am able right now to call to my Father, and twelve companies---more, if I want them---of fighting angels would be here, battle-ready? But if I did that, how would the Scriptures come true that say this is the way it has to be?" Then Jesus addressed the mob: "What is this—coming out after me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I have been sitting in the Temple teaching, and you never so much as lifted a hand against me. You've done it this way to confirm and fulfill the prophetic writings." Then all disciples cut and ran.

## HYMN

"What Wondrous Love is This"

No. 292, v. 1

***What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul,  
for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!***

## SCRIPTURE READING

"Jesus is Arrested"

Matthew 26:57-68

The gang that had seized Jesus led him before Caiaphas the Chief Priest, where the religion scholars and leaders had assembled. Peter followed at a safe distance until they got to the Chief Priest's courtyard. Then he slipped and mingled with the servants, watching to see how things would turn out. The high priests, conspiring with the Jewish Council, tried to cook up charges against Jesus in order to sentence him to death. But even though many stepped up, making one false accusation after another, nothing was believable. Finally two men came forward with this: "He said, 'I can tear down this Temple of God and after three days rebuild it.'" The Chief Priest stood up and said, "What do you have to say to the accusation?" Jesus kept silent. Then the Chief Priest said, "I command you by the authority of the living God to say if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus was curt: "You yourself said it. And that's not all. Soon you'll see it for yourself: The Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Mighty One, arriving on the clouds of heaven." At that, the Chief Priest lost his temper, ripping his robes, yelling, "He blasphemed! Why do we need witnesses to accuse him? You all heard him blaspheme! Are you going to stand for such blasphemy?" They all said, "Death! That seals his death sentence." Then they were spitting in his face and banging him around. They jeered as they slapped him: "Prophecy, Messiah: Who hit you that time?"

## HYMN

'Ah, Holy Jesus"

No. 289, v. 1

***Ah Holy Jesus, how hast thou offended, that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?  
By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted!***

## SCRIPTURE READING

"Jesus is Denied"

Matthew 26:69-75

All this time, Peter was sitting out in the courtyard. One servant girl came up to him and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean." In front of everybody there, he denied it. "I don't know what you're talking about." As he moved over toward the gate, someone else said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene." Again he denied it, salting his denial with an oath: "I swear, I never laid eyes on the man." Shortly after that, some bystanders approached Peter. "You've got to be one of them. Your accent gives you away." Then he got really nervous and swore. "I don't know the man!" Just then a rooster crowed. Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. He went out and cried and cried and cried.

## HYMN

Ah, Holy Jesus

No. 289, v. 2

***Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my reason, Jesus, hath undone thee!  
Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.***

## SCRIPTURE READING

"Jesus is Condemned"

Matthew 27:1-26

In the first light of dawn, all the high priests and religious leaders met and putting the finishing touches on their plot to kill Jesus. Then they tied him up and paraded him to Pilate, the governor. Judas, the one who betrayed him, realized that Jesus was doomed. Overcome with remorse, he gave back the thirty silver coins to the priests, saying, "I've sinned. I've betrayed an innocent man." They said, "What do we care? That's your problem!" Judas threw the silver coins into the Temple and left. Then he went out and hung himself. The high priests picked up the silver pieces, but then didn't know what to do with them. "It wouldn't be right to give this---a payment for murder!--

as an offering in the Temple.” They decided to get rid of it by buying the “Potter’s Field” and use it as a burial place for the homeless. That’s how the field got called “Murder Meadow,” a name that has stuck to this day. Then Jeremiah’s words become history: They took the thirty silver pieces. The price of the one priced by some sons of Israel, and they purchased the potter’s field. And so they unwittingly followed the divine instructions to the letter. Jesus was placed before the governor, who questioned him: Are you the ‘King of the Jews?’ Jesus said, “If you say so.” But when the accusations rained down hot and heavy from the high priests and religious leaders, he said nothing. Pilate asked him, “Do you hear that long list of accusations? Aren’t you going to say something?” Jesus kept silence – not a word from this mouth. The governor was impressed, really impressed. It was an old custom during the Feast for the governor to pardon a single prisoner named by the crowd. At the time they had the infamous Jesus Barabbas in prison. With the crowd before him, Pilate said, “Which prisoner do you want me to pardon: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the so-called Christ?” He knew it was through sheer spite that they had turned Jesus over to him. While court was still in session, Pilate’s wife sent him a message: “Don’t get mixed up in judging this noble man. I’ve just been through a long and troubled night because of a dream about him.” Meanwhile, the high priests and religious leaders had talked the crowd into asking for the pardon of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. The governor asked, “Which of the two do you want me to pardon?” They said, “Barabbas!” “Then what do I do with Jesus, the so-called Christ?” They all shouted, “Nail him to a cross!” He objected, “But for what crime?” But they yelled all the louder, “Nail him to a cross!” When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was imminent, he took a basin of water and washed his hands in full sight of the crowd, saying “I’m washing my hands of responsibility for this man’s death. From now on, it’s in your hands. You’re judge and jury.” The crowd answered, “We’ll take the blame, we and our children after us.” Then he pardoned Barabbas But he had Jesus whipped, and then handed over for crucifixion.

HYMN

“Go to Dark Gethsemane”

No. 290, v. 2

***See him at the judgment hall, beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned; O the wormwood and the gall!  
O the pangs his soul sustained! Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; learn of Christ to bear the cross.***

SCRIPTURE READING

“Jesus is Mocked”

Matthew 27:27-31

The soldiers assigned to the governor took Jesus into the governor’s palace and got the entire brigade together for some fun. They stripped him and dressed him in a red toga. They plaited a crown from branches of a thorn bush and set it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand for a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mocking reverence: “Bravo, King of the Jews!” they said. “Bravo!” Then they spit on him and hit him on the head with the stick. When they had their fun, they took off the toga and put his own clothes back on him. Then they proceeded out to the crucifixion.

HYMN

“To Mock Your Reign, O Dearest Lord”

No. 285 (v 1)

To mock your reign, O dearest Lord, they made a crown of thorns;  
set you with taunts along that road from which no one returns.

They could not know, as we do now, how glorious is that crown;  
that thorns would flower upon your brow, your sorrows heal our own.

SCRIPTURE READING

“Jesus is Nailed on the Cross”

Matthew 27:32-54

Along the way, they came on a man from Cyrene named Simon and made him carry Jesus’ cross. Arriving at Golgotha, the place they call “Skull Hill”, they offered him a mild painkiller (a mixture of wine and myrrh), but when he tasted it, he wouldn’t drink it. After they had finished nailing him to the cross and were waiting for him to die, they whiled away the time by throwing dice for his clothes. Above his head, they had posted the criminal charge against him: THIS IS JESUS. THE KING OF THE JEWS. Along with him, they also crucified two criminals, one to his right, the other to his left. People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament: “You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days—so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you’re really God’s Son, come down from that cross!” The high priests, along with the religion scholars and leaders, were right there mixing it up with the rest of them, having a great time poking fun at him: “He saved others—he can’t save himself! King of Israel, is he? Then let him get down from that cross. We’ll all believe then! He was so sure of God—well, let him rescue his ‘Son’ now –if he wants him! He did claim to be God’s Son, didn’t he?” Even the two criminals crucified next to him joined in the mockery. From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around midafternoon, Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” Some bystanders who heard him said, “He’s calling for Elijah.” One of them ran and got a sponge soaked in sour wine and lifted it on a stick so he could drink. The others joked, “Don’t be in such a hurry. Let’s see if Elijah comes and saves him.” But Jesus, again crying out loudly, breathed his last. At that moment, the Temple curtain was ripped in two, top to bottom. There was an earthquake, and rocks were split in pieces. What’s more, tombs were opened up, and many bodies of believers asleep in their graves were raised. (After Jesus’ resurrection, they left the tombs, entered the holy city, and appeared to many.) The captain of the guard and those with him, when they saw the earthquake and everything else that was happening were scared to death. They said, “This has to be the Son of God!”

***Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree? Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?***

## SCRIPTURE READING

"Jesus is Buried"

Matthew 27:55-66

There were also quite a few women watching from a distance, women who had followed Jesus from Galilee in order to serve him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the Zebedee brothers. Late in the afternoon, a wealthy man from Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, arrived. His name was Joseph. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate granted his request. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linens, put it in his own tomb, a new tomb only recently cut into the rock, and rolled a large stone across the entrance. Then he went off, But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed, sitting in plain view of the tomb. After sundown, the high priests and Pharisees arranged a meeting with Pilate. They said, "Sir, we just remembered that the liar announced while he while he was still alive, 'After three days I will be raised.' We've got to get that tomb sealed until the third day. There's a good chance his disciples will come and steal the corpse and then go around saying, 'He's risen from the dead.' Then we'll be worse off than before, the final deceit surpassing the first." Pilate told them, "You will have a guard. Go ahead and secure it the best you can." So they went and out secured the tomb, sealing the stone and posting guards.

## HYMN

"Were You There?"

No. 288, v. 5

***Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?***

## RESPONDING

Pastor: The day is as silent as death.

**People: Gone are the loud hosannas sung by children in the streets.**

Pastor: The dishes remain unwashed in the upper room.

**People: The dregs from Jesus' cup have turned sour, the crumbs from Jesus' plate have grown stale.**

Pastor: Thirty pieces of silver buy the betrayal of a friend.

**People: Three questions in a courtyard shatter pledges of loyalty and love.**

Pastor: The cock crows; the whip cracks; the hammer falls.

**People: Heaven weeps as innocent blood is spilt.**

Pastors: The day is as silent as death.

## VEILING OF THE CROSS

(The chimes will be struck 33 times in recognition of Jesus' years of earthly life.)

## EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

## SENDING

## \*BENEDICTION

Pastor: In the hours and days and weeks ahead, Christ goes with us, leading the way.

**People: Where Christ leads, we will follow.**

Pastor: Let us journey together to the cross.

**People: Where Christ leads, we will follow**

Pastor: Amazed by God's love,

## SILENT RECESSIONAL



**Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church**  
**905 Mifflin Avenue**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15221**

**A WELCOMING, WORSHIPPING, WITNESSING, CARING, LEARNING COMMUNITY OF FAITH**