

Palm Sunday in Word and Song
Performed by the Children and Youth of St. Paul's UCC Church
April 14, 2019
John 12:12-27

Characters:

Narrators 1-6

Preachers 1-4

Jesus

Donkey (non-speaking role)

Pharisees

Philip (non-speaking role)

Greeks

Andrew (non-speaking role)

SONG "This is the Day"

Narrators 1 and 2 stand at pulpit and lectern. All others stand on stairs with their palm branches.

VANDON
Narrator 1: The next day, the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

All: *(waving palms)* "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

ALEX
Narrator 2: Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

Jesus and donkey lead the others around the sanctuary, singing...

SONG "We Are Marching in the Light of God"

When song is over, give palm branches to a grown-up. Narrators 3 and 4 stand at pulpit and lectern. All others stand on stairs.

MARENZA
Narrator 3: Jesus' disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

SONG "God's Banner over Me Is Love"

All sit. Narrator 5 takes the place of Narrator 3 (who goes to sit on the stairs).

Narrator 4: So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify.

ALL: (talking over one another, chaotically) Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Narrator 4: It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. The Pharisees then said to one another,

Pharisees stand.

Pharisees: "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!"

Pharisees sit.

Narrator 5: Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him

Greeks and Philip stand.

Greeks: (to Philip) "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

All stand.

SONG "Give Me Jesus"

Narrator 6 and Jesus go to lectern and pulpit. Philip and Andrew stay standing on the stairs. The rest sit on the stairs.

Narrator 6: Philip went and told Andrew (Philip tells Andrew); then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. (Philip and Andrew go to Jesus) Jesus answered them,

(Philip and Andrew stay standing beside Jesus).

Jesus: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me

must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour."

All stand.

SONG "Jesus, Name above All Names"

All (except preachers 1-4) sit on the stairs. Preachers 1 and 2 go to the pulpit and lectern. Preacher 3 and 4 stand behind them.

MARISA
Preacher 1: Today is a strange day for us. It's partly a joyful day; but there's also a kind of tragic irony to Palm Sunday. Today, Jesus rides into Jerusalem in the midst of a cheering crowd. Today, Jesus reaches the very pinnacle of his popularity. But it won't last for long. In a few days, the same crowd that cries "Blessed is the name of the Lord!" will cry just as loudly for Jesus' blood. Before this week is out, the Christ who is celebrated today will be the one who is crucified on the outskirts of town. You might say that Jesus has a way of wearing out his welcome.

JANSON
Preacher 2: And it's not hard to see why. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in the second chapter of Philippians, Jesus walks a difficult path. He starts out at the right hand of Majesty, in every way equal to God, but his way descends downward to defeat and death. For love of us, he gives up position and privilege. He walks the path of obedience, a path that leads him through the loud cheers of today, to his last meal on Thursday with the one who will betray him, to the darkness of Gethsemane, to the crucifixion, and to the God-forsaken loneliness in which he will die. This is hard path to follow – for Jesus, and for us.

EMILY
Preacher 3: But Paul also reminds us that Christ's life – and his death – are the pattern for *our* life, the example of how *we* should live. Even though it's hard, we are still called to follow in the way of Jesus. Jesus does not suffer what he suffers so that we can stand on the sidelines and marvel at what he has done. Instead, he invites us to join him, and to know him, in the fellowship of his sufferings; to take up *our* cross, and to follow in his footsteps.

MARISA
Preacher 4: Not that we'll do a very good job. Holy Week, the week that starts tomorrow and goes until Easter Day, reminds us that *all* of us fail to follow; *all* of us forsake Jesus at one point or another. Like his first disciples, we will all fall

away. The remarkable thing is that Jesus keeps calling us anyway, that he never gives up on us. This Holy Week, Jesus invites us to watch, to witness and to follow, even though we're not very good at it. As he meets us in our own brokenness, may he give us grace to follow him all the way to the cross, and to all that lies beyond.

All Preachers: Thanks be to God!

All stand.

SONG REPRISE (ALL to sing) "God's Banner over Me is Love"

The children are welcome to stay for worship, or go down to the Sunday School room for the rest of the service.