

# The Sunday before Easter: Palm Sunday

*This liturgy provides for the celebration of Palm Sunday as the primary focus of the day, with an option to read the Passion narrative at the close of the service.*

## The Liturgy of the Palms

*When circumstances permit, the congregation may gather at a place apart from the church, so that all may go into the church in procession.*

*The branches of palm or of other trees or shrubs to be carried in the procession may be distributed to the people before the service, or after the prayer of blessing.*

*Presider* Beloved in Christ, for these forty days we have journeyed with Jesus from the wilderness up to the gates of Jerusalem. As we join with all the faithful and celebrate his entry in both triumph and humility, let us welcome him with cries of “Hosanna,” and may his praise be on our lips even as we walk with him toward the cross and the grave, confident in God’s power to save.

Let us pray:

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that as we greet our Savior with joy at his entry into Jerusalem, we may follow him in humility and contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*People* **Amen.**

*The following or some other suitable anthem is sung or said, the people standing*

*Presider* Hosanna to the Son of David.

*People* **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

*Reader* Lo, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

*Zechariah 9:9*

Ride on in the cause of truth  
and for the sake of justice.

*Psalms 45:4*

Your throne is the throne of God, it endures forever;  
and the scepter of your kingdom is a righteous scepter.  
You have loved righteousness and hated evil.  
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you  
with the oil of gladness above your fellows.

*Psalms 45:7-8*

*Presider* Hosanna to the Son of David.

*People* **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

*The Presider then says the following blessing*

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

*Presider* It is right to praise you, Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

*People* **Amen.**

*Presider* Hosanna to the Son of David.

*People* **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

*Deacon* Let us go forth in peace.

*People* **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*During the procession, all hold branches in their hands, and appropriate hymns, psalms, or anthems are sung, such as the hymn "All glory, laud, and honor" and Psalm 118:19-29.*

*At a suitable place, the procession may halt while the following or some other appropriate Collect is said*

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ showed himself to be the true king, reigning with humility and service, and was hailed by the crowd as Messiah. Grant us the faith to know and love him, that we may accompany him on the way of the cross, which is the path of glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*All* **Amen.**

*In the absence of a bishop or priest, the preceding service may be led by a deacon or lay reader.*

*At services on this day other than the principal celebration, suitable portions of the preceding may be used.*

## **At the Eucharist**

*When the Liturgy of the Palms immediately precedes the Eucharist, the celebration begins with the Salutation and Collect of the Day.*

### **Collect of the Day**

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose Son entered the gates of Jerusalem to acclamations of reverence and homage from those who recognized him; grant that the eyes of your people may remain opened, that we too may see, believe, and worship him, through Christ our Sovereign and Redeemer.

*People* **Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Word

<b>First Reading</b>	Zechariah 9:9-10
<b>Response</b>	Psalm 118:19-29 <i>or</i> 122
<b>Second Reading</b>	Philippians 2:5-11 <i>or</i> Revelation 15:1-4 <i>or</i> Revelation 21:1-7
<b>Gospel</b>	<i>Year A</i> Matthew 21:1-11
	<i>Year B</i> Mark 11:1-11
	<i>Year C</i> Luke 19:29-40

*The service continues with the sermon and the Prayers of the People.*

*When the Liturgy of the Palms has preceded, the Nicene Creed and the Confession of Sin may be omitted at this service.*

## The Liturgy of the Table

*The Eucharist continues with the Offertory and the Great Thanksgiving.*

### Preface of Palm Sunday

Because you sent your Son Jesus Christ to live and teach among us, and in his last days enter the holy city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey, a sign of triumph and humility. We raise our Hosannas as we proclaim a new kingdom in which justice reigns and the lowly are exalted.

Therefore with angels and archangels...

### Prayer after Communion

*Presider* Let us pray.

*People* **Lord Jesus Christ,  
you set your example before us  
as one who came  
not to be served but to serve:  
Give us the courage to be your faithful disciples,  
following your way even to the cross,  
and proclaiming you as Savior and King.  
Amen.**

*If the Passion Gospel is not to be read at this point, the service may conclude with a blessing, or the solemn prayer over the people for Holy Week (see The Book of Occasional Services), followed by the dismissal.*

*If the Passion Gospel is read at this point, the service proceeds as follows.*

## **Reading of the Passion Gospel**

*Concerning the manner of reading the Passion Gospel, see the Additional Directions for the Reading of the Passion Gospel.*

*The Passion Gospel is announced in the following manner*

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to \_\_\_\_\_.

*The customary responses before and after the Gospel are omitted.*

*Year A*                      Matthew 26:14 – 27:66 *or* Matthew 27:11-54

*Year B*                      Mark 14:1 – 15:47 *or* Mark 15:1-39(40-47)

*Year C*                      Luke 22:14 – 23:56 *or* Luke 23:1-49

*The Passion Gospel may be read or chanted by lay persons.*

*The congregation may be seated for the first part of the Passion. At the verse which mentions the arrival at Golgotha (Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33) all stand.*

*At the conclusion of the reading, the congregation may depart in silence or the Solemn Prayer over the People may be said.*

## **Additional Directions for the Reading of the Passion Gospel**

It is encouraged that congregation members are provided the following pastoral note for this service:

“On Palm Sunday it is a tradition to proclaim the passion narrative so that Jesus Christ’s love for all is made clear. Over time, this narrative has been used to promote anti-Judaism. The responsibility for the suffering and death of Jesus Christ cannot be attributed, in either preaching or teaching, indiscriminately to all Jews of that time, nor to Jews today. The Jewish people should not be referred to or represented as rejected or cursed by God, as this claim cannot be found in Scripture. Christians must remember that Jesus, his mother Mary, and his early disciples were Jewish. We must affirm the long-standing teaching of the church that Jesus Christ entered into suffering and death by his own free will as a sign of God’s saving and reconciling love to the world.”

Presentations of the passion gospel may take the form of reading or chanting of the passion by a single lector or group of lectors, or a dramatization of it. When read in parts or dramatized, care should be taken to portray these events with reverence and to avoid parody or distortions of the characters presented in the gospel.

In this liturgy, the congregation as a whole should not take on the role of the crowd in Jerusalem. This is because of the historic association between the cry of the crowd and Jewish guilt for the death of Jesus. To avoid these associations, this role should be assigned to a designated person or group when the passion is read in parts or dramatized. Congregants may be given instructions to bow their heads, kneel, or beat their chests at this portion of the gospel. This change in practice during the passion reading will aid in avoiding anti-Jewish interpretations of the narrative.

If roles are to be double cast, either for readings or dramatizations, this should be done with care. Jesus ought not to be double cast. Judas might be double cast with the centurion or the criminal asking for forgiveness to heighten the dramatic effect.

In dramatizing the passion, the Jewishness of Jesus and his disciples ought not to be downplayed. Neither should the Jewishness of the priests, Pharisees or other Jewish protagonists be over-emphasized. Stereotypical features or character traits associated with antisemitism must be thoroughly avoided. Any design elements ought to serve the purposes of historical and theological understanding rather than to promote entertainment value or reinforce religious biases, implicit or explicit.