

13th April 2025 – Morning Service

The stones will cry out

Rev Andrew Roberts

A Gathering Prayer¹

Come and give thanks to the Lord who is good: **his love lasts for ever!**

Give praise to the Lord who welcomes us: **his love lasts for ever!**

This is the day the Lord has made: **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord: **his love lasts for ever!**

StF 262 – All glory, laud and honour

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) All glory, laud, and honour
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. | 3) To thee before thy Passion
They sang their hymns of praise
To thee now high exalted
Our melody we raise.
Thou didst accept their praises;
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious King. |
| 2) The company of angels
Are praising thee on high,
And mortal men and all things
Created make reply.
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before thee went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before thee we present. | 4) All glory, laud, and honour
To thee, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring! |

St Theodulph of Orleans

[Note: When using as an LA, if you are using a Lent Liturgy in your church, please insert it here]

Prayer of Adoration²

The king of all creation rides on a humble donkey, a symbol of peace amid the celebrations and growing tensions. Can we stay silent?

No, we exalt you Jesus, King of kings.

Love comes, bringing in God's eternal kingdom. Can we stay silent?

No, we adore you Jesus, King of love and peace.

The King of glory comes to save. Can we stay silent?

No, Redeemer King, we bow before you.

Our blessed King comes riding with purpose. Can we stay silent?

No, we bow in adoration before you Jesus, our triumphant King. Amen.

Prayer of Confession¹

Dear Lord, hatred engulfed you, but you reacted with love. Forgive us for when we've reacted badly in the face of animosity. Forgive us when we let fear of what others think stop us from doing your will. Lord, you came as a man of the people. Though you were without sin, you did not look to be served but to serve. Forgive us our pride. Help us to humbly follow you and to seek to serve others, to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Our next song is based on Psalm 118 which may have been one of the festal psalms sung on Palm Sunday.

StF 77 – Give thanks to the Lord

1) Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King:
His love endures forever.
For He is good, He is above all things.
His love endures forever.
Sing praise, sing praise.

*Ch) Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us, forever
Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us, forever, forever*

2) With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,
His love endures forever
For the life that's been reborn
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise,
Sing praise, sing praise

3) From the rising to the setting sun,
His love endures forever.
By the grace of God, we will carry on.
His love endures forever.
Sing praise, sing praise
Sing praise, sing praise

Chris Tomlin © 2000 worshiptogether.com songs

StF 76 – Give me joy in my heart

1) Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Give me joy in my heart, I pray;
Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Keep me praising till the break of day:

2) Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving,
Give me peace in my heart, I pray;
Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving,
Keep me loving till the break of day:

*Ch) Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King of kings!
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King!*

3) Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,
Give me love in my heart, I pray;
Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,
Keep me serving till the break of day:

Anonymous

Reading: Psalm 118

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures for ever. Let Israel say: 'His love endures for ever.' Let the house of Aaron say: 'His love endures for ever.' Let those who fear the Lord say: 'His love endures for ever.'

When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me into a spacious place. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I cut them down. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the Lord I cut them down. They swarmed around me like bees, but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the Lord I cut them down. I was pushed back and about to fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation.

Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: 'The Lord's right hand has done mighty things! The Lord's right hand is lifted high; the Lord's right hand has done mighty things!' I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done. The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes. The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. Lord, save us!

Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you. The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures for ever.

Reading: Luke 19:37-40

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.'

Address

A couple of weeks ago Shona and I had the surreal experience of seeing Boney M perform in Worcester Cathedral. It was a wonderful evening with the audience dancing and singing to their Greatest Hits in the nave of that magnificent building. It was also very bright and very noisy. I did at one point wonder if some of the esteemed people buried in the cathedral might have been turning – or perhaps bopping along – in their graves.

For some of those present on Palm Sunday the experience must have seemed a bit bizarre too with all the singing and shouting, palm branches being waved (according to John) and cloaks being strewn – all to welcome a rabbi from Nazareth. It would certainly have been very bright and very noisy. The crowd were certainly up for it singing and shouting in welcome. Biblical commentators suggest that one of the psalms that the crowd was singing was Psalm 118. A psalm of celebration, a psalm of victory. In verse 26 of the psalm, we find the Palm Sunday cry '*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*'.

Expectations were at fever pitch with cries of Hosanna ringing out (Luke doesn't record that word but Matthew, Mark and John do). That word Hosanna probably meant 'Save us' – 'Save us, now! - but it becomes mixed up with a shout of praise as well. For some it may have been a political cry – save us now by driving out the Romans. Others may have had a more spiritual understanding. Either way after the events of Good Friday there were some, like Cleopas and his companion, who were devastated that the salvation they had hoped for had not apparently been delivered. But all that changed when they encountered the risen Jesus. The one who they had hoped would save them had done precisely that but not in the way they had expected.

Palm Sunday is a day of surprises. In his account of the day Luke includes the amusing little exchange between Jesus and the grumpy pharisees who are not happy at all with all that is going on. '*Teacher, order your disciples to stop*' they say to Jesus, to which he answers '*I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out*' (Luke 19:39-40).

In Penkridge, Methodist Deacon, Sue Culver was seeking a way to get God's word into the community. She was inspired to write and paint short biblical verses or images or words of blessings on stones and pebbles and scatter them at random around the community. One she painted with poppies led her to being asked to become the chaplain of the local ATC (RAF cadets) group. Others have led to profound conversations including with the mother of a young man who told Sue that her son was on the brink of suicide. He found one of Sue's pebbles that spoke of God's love to him and helped him to see there was hope. The stone had shouted out to him and saved his life.

Today is a day for welcoming Jesus again. A day for celebration yes, and also a day to see once again that Jesus comes to save. To save the lost and the lonely, the oppressed and the occupied, the anxious and despairing and those who apparently are ok and have got everything together.

Our next hymn reminds us that Jesus is waiting – waiting in the streets. Waiting perhaps for us to join him there to bring, companionship, hope and healing. After the hymn there will be an opportunity to write some biblical words or other words of blessing on pebble that you can then give us a gift to someone or place at random in the community for the God of Surprises to use as He wishes. Amen.

StF 251 – Jesus Christ is waiting

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets;
No one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too:
Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you. | 4) Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,
Where each sign of hatred He, with love,
defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too:
Where good conquers evil let me dance with you |
| 2) Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets,
Where injustice spirals and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too:
In the Kingdom's causes let me rage with you. | 5) Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,
'Who will join my journey? I will guide
their feet.'
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few:
Walk one step before me; I will follow you. |
| 3) Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets,
Curing those who suffer, touching
those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too:
Let my care be active, healing, just like you | |

John L Bell & Graham Maule © 1988 WGRG Iona Community

Creative Exercise

The writing of biblical verse or words of blessings on stones.....

Prayers of Intercession³

God, as we enter Holy Week, we thank you for the freedom we have to worship, the safety and the protection that we are granted through the laws of our country to learn about and proclaim your name freely. May we never take for granted the opportunity we have to openly declare the good news in the places you have called us to be. We pray for those without that opportunity, for those meeting in secret, who risk their lives simply by worshipping you. Sustain and protect those who worship you today in places of threat and danger, may they know that they are in the prayers of your people.

God, as we enter Holy Week, we pray for our leaders, for those called to shepherd your flock, may they know you ever more deeply. Grant them wisdom and discernment as they strive to lead us into being the Church that you have called us to be. As they go out day by day and week by week, we pray that they would be filled to overflowing by your spirit.

We pray also for the leaders of our country, may your voice be heard in their discussions, may your heart be witnessed in their actions and may your will be done through them. Strengthen those in government who know you, give them courage to speak up and step out, we pray that through their witness others will come to know you.

God, as we enter Holy Week, we pray for those we know who are suffering. We pray that to those living in darkness you would provide light, to the hurting that you would provide healing, and to the mourning that you would provide comfort. Thank you that, in your very nature, you care about us and understand our pain, worries and fears, this week we pray that you would open our hearts to encountering you more closely than we ever have before.

As we journey through this week and encounter the confusion of Thursday, the darkness of Friday and the hopelessness of Saturday may we hold firmly to the joy, hope and certainty of Sunday. **Amen**

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 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, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 265 – Ride on, Ride on

- 1) Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes, Hosanna cry;
Your humble beast pursues its road
With palms and scattered garments strowed.
- 2) Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, your triumphs now begin
O'er captive death and conquered sin.
- 3) Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
Look down with sad and wondering eyes
To see the approaching sacrifice.
- 4) Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh;
The Father, on his sapphire throne,
Expects his own anointed Son.
- 5) Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
Bow your meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O God, your power, and reign.

Henry Hart Milman

A Sending Out Prayer¹

Let us journey on, people of the cross, following a king riding on a donkey. Servant of the world, let us serve with love Jesus, our Saviour, as we follow you on the stony way to the cross. **Amen.**

¹ *From Roots for Worship*

² *Adapted from Roots for Worship*

³ *Tim Baker – All We Can*