

# St Andrew's Church

## Palm Sunday

Newsletter for March 28<sup>th</sup> 2021

10.00am Mass on Zoom

*Celebrant and Preacher; Father John*

### Collect

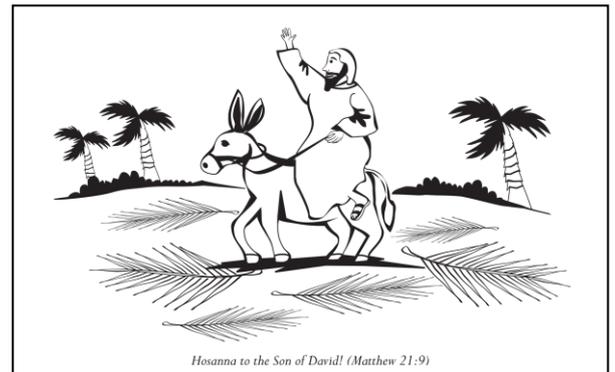
True and humble king, hailed by the crowd as Messiah: grant us the faith to know you and love you, that we may be found beside you on the way of the cross, which is the path of glory. **Amen.**

### First Reading

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'"

They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it.

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"



*Hosanna to the Son of David! (Matthew 21:9)*

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

### Liturgy of the Passion

### John 18, 19

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people. Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."

When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.) Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus

answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

### **Post Communion Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation: give us the mind to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

**Please pray for people who are sick or in need of prayer:** Kirsty, thanksgiving for Becks and her family, Beverly Mitchell, Mrs Baxter, Gloria Booth, Linda, Matthew Hill, Hilton Joseph, Caswell Geffry.

**For those who have recently died:** We remember this week all those who have died in the Covid pandemic.

**Anniversary of death:** Doreen Browne

## Notices

The palms blessed this morning can be collected in church on Easter Day.

## Services this week

- **Maundy Thursday** April 1<sup>st</sup> 7.30 pm Eucharist **on Zoom**, followed by a vigil with readings until 9.00pm
- **Good Friday** April 2<sup>nd</sup> Service **in Church** 2pm-3pm – readings, reflections and hymns to listen to.
- **Holy Saturday** April 3<sup>rd</sup> Service of Light **on Zoom** 8pm. Please prepare a darkened room, and have a candle ready to light during this service.
- **Easter Sunday** April 4<sup>th</sup> 10.00am Eucharist **in Church**. Also 2pm Eucharist **in Church**. A second Eucharist has been arranged because there will be limited space in church for reasons of safety. Please send your name and the number of your party stating which service you would like to attend to Alison on Whatsapp, or text message 07736 414 307, or email [alisonthorne1943@gmail.com](mailto:alisonthorne1943@gmail.com)

**Please note that the Lent Course continues this week on WEDNESDAY not Thursday as normal.**

# Session 7: Stories of finding Jesus.

Wednesday March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 – 7.00pm

## Featured Bible Passages

- Luke 24:13-35
- Acts 9:1-9
- Acts 26:29

## Summary

This session explores the different ways that people come to faith in Jesus and unpacks the implications of this for our models of evangelism. The session aims to prepare you to share the gospel both 'long and short'. The session also features a video interview...

This session is based around Chapter 7 of Hannah Steel's book *Living His Story*. A featured passage is below, but you are encouraged to read the whole chapter as the questions often reference the book.

## Featured Passage

The book of Acts records for us many of the conversations the Apostle Paul had with those who were sceptical about the Christian faith. One such conversation came after he had spent two years imprisoned on a false charge, when Paul finds himself before King Agrippa in Acts 26. Agrippa stood in the lineage of a string of kings who had opposed truth and righteousness, not least Herod the Great who had tried to kill Jesus as a young child. And now Paul himself stands before the King, seeking his help and ultimately awaiting his fate.

Paul's response in this situation was, as on numerous occasions, simply to tell the story of God's work in his life. He does not engage in legal argument about his unlawful imprisonment but honestly and openly traces his journey of faith, from his religious childhood, through the dramatic encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, through to his present situation. The only defence he needs is to narrate his experience of God's work in his life and he does this calmly and full of respect for his listeners.

What is particularly striking in this testimony is the boldness with which Paul directs his question to the King himself: 'King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.' One can imagine the shock at the brazenness of Paul's question to the King, demonstrating that all those years in prison have in no way dampened his courage. The King's reply is similarly feisty, questioning Paul: 'Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?' Suddenly the attention is not upon Paul's story but on the King's reaction to it. It is evident that Paul's testimony leaves the 'what about you?' question lingering in the air. Paul's response reveals a profound truth about the ways in which people come to faith: 'Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am – except for these chains' (Acts 26.27–29). In this statement Paul reveals his evangelist's heart. The beauty of Paul's evangelistic approach in this incident is the transparency of his desire that every person listening would meet Jesus. However, his use of the phrase 'quickly or not', translated in the NIV as 'long or short', indicated what Paul had learned about the variety of ways in which different people made the journey of faith. For some, their experience would be an instant moment of conversion, a crisis point in

which their life is instantly changed, but for others it would take more time, a slowly evolving movement towards faith.

in Christ. What may appear as a somewhat throwaway comment from Paul is actually a principle that gives hope to us as we seek to witness to those around us. Since receiving the message from my friend Chris, this idea of 'long or short' has been both helpful and hopeful in understanding that the journey towards faith will look very different from one person to another.

### Discussion Questions

1. This Lent, reflect upon your own faith journey and ask yourself: What are the key moments that stand out? Who has influenced and helped you?
2. How do you feel the story of your journey to faith affects others? How do those of others affect you?
3. What are some of the ways you might be able to help gently nudge people along the pathway to faith?