



This Sunday at St. Luke's
April 6, 2025

8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)

**10:15 a.m. – Holy Communion together with the Blessing and
Distribution of Palms and Majestic Music**

Steven Cagel, organist

The Sunday before Easter **Palm Sunday**



Your King comes! Hosanna!

A SUNDAY OF HIGHS AND LOWS

Palm Sunday begins on a jubilant note. Jesus enters the Holy City and makes an open declaration that He is in fact God's Anointed – the Messiah. He does so without speaking a word, choosing rather to enact the prophecy found in Zechariah 9:9:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on an ass,
on a colt the foal of an ass.

More than that, those who line the roadway leading into the city seem to understand the significance of this acted-out drama. As He passes by, they shout something on the order of “God save the King!” – “Hosana, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” and line His way with branches of trees.

But even as He comes, the shadow of the cross looms closer and closer on the horizon. In a few short days, those cries of “Hosana” will be replaced with another cry, “Crucify Him, Crucify Him.” Liturgically on Palm Sunday we experience both cries. The palms distributed at the beginning of the service speaks of the first; the Gospel read at Holy Communion – the Passion according to St. Matthew – the second cry.

In the end, however, a shaft of light appears. As Jesus' own people – the Jews – are rejecting their King, the centurion, a gentile, at the foot of the cross seems to get a glimpse of His glory. Looking up at the crucified One, he confesses: **“Truly this was the Son of God.”** Might his confession not be an advance sign of what St. John says in the prologue to his Gospel: “He [Jesus] came unto his own, and his own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (1:11, 12)? (VHM)

COLLECT FOR PALM SUNDAY

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example *of* his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE EPISTLE – Philippians 2:5-11 (J.B. Phillips)

Let Christ be your example of humility

2 ⁵⁻¹¹ Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, and the death he died was the death of a common criminal. That is why God has now lifted him so high, and has given him the name beyond all names, so that at the name of Jesus "every knee shall bow", whether in Heaven or earth or under the earth. And that is why, in the end, "every tongue shall confess" that Jesus Christ" is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

NOTE: Here in a nut shell is St. Paul's belief about Jesus Christ. He who humbled Himself to become man and to die upon the cross is also Lord of all. (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 27:1-54 (J.B. Phillips)

The Passion of Jesus

27 ¹⁻² When the morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people met in council to decide how they could get Jesus executed. Then they marched him off with his hands tied, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

The remorse of Judas

³⁻⁴ Then Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that he was condemned and in his remorse returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and elders, with the words, "I was wrong—I have betrayed an innocent man to death." "And what has that got to do with us?" they replied. "That's your affair."

⁵⁻¹⁰ And Judas flung down the silver in the Temple and went outside and hanged himself. But the chief priests picked up the money and said, "It is not legal to put this into the Temple treasury. It is, after all, blood-money." So, after a further consultation, they purchased with it the Potter's Field to be a burial-ground for foreigners, which is why it is called "the Field of Blood" to this day. And so the words of Jeremiah the prophet came true: 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed them'.

Jesus before Pilate

¹¹ Meanwhile Jesus stood in front of the governor, who asked him, "Well, you—are you the King of the Jews?" "Yes, I am," replied Jesus.

¹²⁻¹⁴ But while the chief priests and elders were making their accusations, he made no reply at all. So Pilate said to him, "Can you not hear the evidence they're bringing

against you?” And to the governor’s amazement, Jesus did not answer a single one of their accusations.

¹⁵⁻²¹ Now it was the custom at festival-time for the governor to release any prisoner whom the people chose. And it happened that at this time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they assembled to make the usual request, Pilate said to them, “Which one do you want me to set free, Barabbas or Jesus called Christ?” For he knew very well that the latter had been handed over to him through sheer malice. And indeed while he was actually sitting on the Bench his wife sent a message to him—“Don’t have anything to do with that man! I went through agonies dreaming about him last night!” But the chief priests and elders persuaded the mob to ask for Barabbas and demand Jesus’ execution. Then the governor spoke to them, “Which of these two are you asking me to release?” “Barabbas!” they cried.

²² “Then what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?” asked Pilate.

²³⁻²⁴ “Have him crucified!” they all cried. At this Pilate said, “Why, what is his crime?” But their voices rose to a roar, “Have him crucified!” When Pilate realised that nothing more could be done but that there would soon be a riot, he took a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I take no responsibility for the death of this man. You must see to that yourselves.”

²⁵⁻²⁶ To this the whole crowd replied, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!” Whereupon Pilate released Barabbas for them, but he had Jesus flogged and handed over for crucifixion.

²⁷⁻³¹ Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the governor’s palace and collected the whole guard around him. There they stripped him and put a scarlet cloak upon him. They twisted some thorn-twigs into a crown and put it on his head and put a stick into his right hand. They bowed low before him and jeered at him with the words, “Hail, your majesty, king of the Jews!” Then they spat on him, took the stick and hit him on the head with it. And when they had finished their fun, they stripped the cloak off again, put his own clothes upon him and led him off for crucifixion.

³² On their way out of the city they met a man called Simon, a native of Cyrene in Africa, and they compelled him to carry Jesus’ cross.

The Crucifixion

³³⁻³⁵ Then when they came to a place called Golgotha they offered him a drink of wine mixed with some bitter drug (or vinegar mixed with gall or myrrh in other versions of the New Testament), but when he had tasted it he refused to drink. And when they had nailed him to the cross they shared out his clothes by drawing lots.

³⁶⁻³⁷ Then they sat down to keep guard over him. And over his head they put a placard with the charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁸⁻⁴⁴ Now two bandits were crucified with Jesus at the same time, one on either side of him. The passers-by nodded knowingly and called out to him, in mockery, “Hi, you who could pull down the Temple and build it up again in three days—why don’t you save yourself? If you are the Son of God, step down from the cross!” The chief priests also joined the scribes and elders in jeering at him, saying, “He saved others, but he can’t save himself! If this is the king of Israel, why doesn’t he come down from the cross now, and we’ll believe him! He trusted in God ... let God rescue him if He will have anything to do with him! For he said, ‘I am God’s son’.” Even the bandits who were crucified with him hurled abuse at him.

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ Then from midday until three o’clock darkness spread over the whole countryside, and then Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

⁴⁷⁻⁵⁰ Some of those who were standing there heard these words which Jesus spoke in Aramaic—Eli (or Eloi), Eli lama sabachthani?, and said, “This man is calling for Elijah!” And one of them ran off and fetched a sponge, soaked it in vinegar and put it on a long stick and held it up for him to drink. But the others said, “Let him alone! Let’s see if Elijah will come and save him.” But Jesus gave one more great cry, and died.

⁵¹⁻⁵³ And the sanctuary curtain in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The ground shook, rocks split and graves were opened. (A number of bodies of holy men who were asleep in death rose again. They left their graves after Jesus’ resurrection and entered the holy city and appeared to many people.)

⁵⁴ When the centurion and his company who were keeping guard over Jesus saw the earthquake and all that was happening they were terrified. “Indeed he was the son of God!” they said.

NOTE: This is the description of our Lord’s trial, crucifixion and death. Even the Roman governor and the Roman centurion saw in the Humble Victim something of the royal majesty of the King of Glory. (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READING

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Zechariah 9:9-12 (RSV)

The coming ruler of God’s people

9 ⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you;

triumphant and victorious is he,

humble and riding on an ass,

on a colt the foal of an ass.

¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from E'phraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the nations;
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your captives free from the waterless pit.
¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

NOTE: This is the Old Testament prophecy of the coming Messiah which Jesus acted out in detail on the first Palm Sunday. While He was in truth the long-expected Messiah, yet He was a kind of messiah no one expected. Hymn 64, "Ride on! Ride on in majesty!" catches something of the spirit and meaning which the first disciples did not fully comprehend. (William Sydnor)

THIS SUNDAY

Celebrant: Rev. Ronald O. Wikander – 8:15a.m.

Celebrant: Rev. Victor H. Morgan – 10:15a.m.

Preacher at both services - Rector

Options

In-church.

Online. Services are livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on YouTube. To access both put "Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga." In the search bar.



Tip of the Canterbury Cap to Tim Kirby for extraordinary work on the churchyard.



JOIN THE CHOIR!

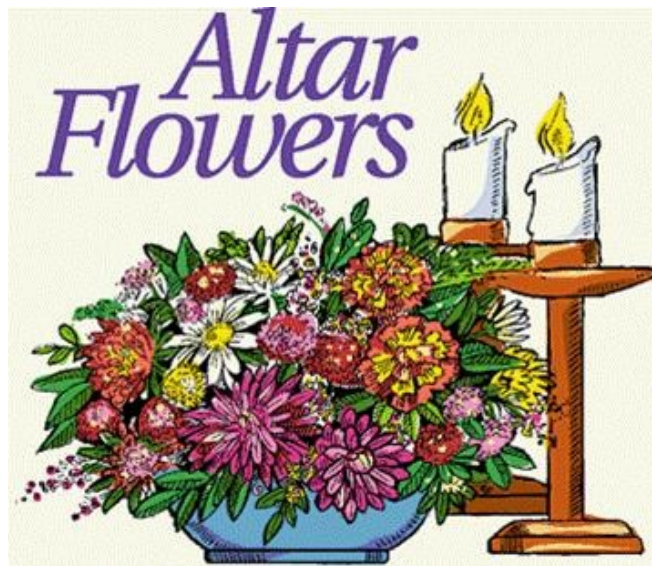


For information, contact, Diana Burden at 678-852-6907 or email dburden6907@gmail.com.



OUR MISSION

St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.



SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2025.

Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

Flowers are needed throughout the end of the year. Please email or call Kathryn Noblett at the church office to sign up.

Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2025

As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2025

Name

Address

Amount

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)



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