



Grace United Methodist Church

April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday

OUR WELCOMING STATEMENT

God's love is for all and God's grace is present in all creation. God's spirit draws us into community. We are filled with genuine care and love for one another.

Honoring the diversity of our faith journeys, our welcome is extended to all – people of all races, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, generations, physical and mental abilities, economic conditions, sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. No matter who you are, no matter where you are in your life, you are welcome here.

We are all invited to bless this church with our love, our presence, and our participation.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Love.

For so long, we have cried out:

Save us, O God! Evil and loss surround us.

Protect our children. Give rest to our elders.

Make low those who destroy from on high.

Christ hears us. Christ takes on human likeness.

Living among us. Living within us.

There is no greater hope than this!

And so we cry, Hosanna!

Hosanna! Blessed are we and blessed all who come in the name of Love!

OPENING PRAYER

Christ, you took on flesh and revealed the power of Love. We give you praise as you lead us to paths of salvation, birthing freedom in us despite every voice, story, institution, or system that seeks to diminish life. Receive our gratitude and give us the courage to accompany one another in the ways of life and liberation. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 6:25-34

MESSAGE

“Palms and Gates”

Pastor Nate Nims

COMMUNION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT

Our Father (Creator, Mother)†, 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 and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Guide to Prayer and Study: April 6 - April 11

Monday

Read – Luke 19:28-20:8

Notice – Most of us see donkeys as nothing special, even a bit comical. In Jesus' day, a donkey was a royal mount. Kings or generals only rode horses in war; when they came in peace, they rode a donkey. Jesus' ride into Jerusalem used symbols from Israel's history (see 1 Kings 1:38-40, Psalm 118:19-29) and from prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures (see Zechariah 9:9-17). Jesus' followers rejoiced, but Luke wrote that Jesus (seeing further) wept for Jerusalem. He said the city's people were blind to what would bring them peace. The attitudes driving the leaders to plot his death would in the end lead to Rome's brutal destruction of the city. Like them, we live in a world of cause and effect. Open your heart to God and ask, "What attitudes do I have that will keep me from having your peace if I don't change them?"

Pray - Jesus, what joy it must have been to wave palms and dream of a good life with you as king! Give me a heart that sings your praises and prizes your rule in my life. Amen.

Tuesday

Read – Matthew 21:28-46

Notice - Jesus told two "vineyard" stories to challenge his listeners' thinking about their submission to God. In the first, a father told two sons to work in the vineyard. He got a "no" that became yes, and a "yes" that became no. In the second story, a vineyard owner rented his vineyard to tenants and took a trip. When it was time to pay what they owed, the tenants refused to submit to the owner's authority. They beat and killed his messengers—and finally the owner's son. Matthew said the religious leaders "knew Jesus was talking about them." 2000 years later, it is easy to look down on the religious leaders of Jesus' time—they refused to submit even in the presence of God in the flesh. What have the authority figures in your life been like? How have your experiences with them affected your ability to trust and submit to Jesus? How are you responding to, or resisting, Jesus' call on your life?

Pray - Loving God, help me to always believe and trust in you. May I say "no" to the things I need to, because I have already said "yes" to you. Amen.

Wednesday

Read – Mark 14:1-9, John 12:1-9

Notice – Though some details in these two stories differ, their essence is the same: in the last week of his life, a grateful woman anointed Jesus with very expensive perfume.

Imagine the deep love and gratitude that led Mary to give Jesus this extravagant gift. What does Jesus' response tell you about how much her fervent love meant to him as he faced death? How can you show your love for Jesus, both in your inner "sacred space" and outwardly, with Mary's beautiful spontaneity and urgency?

Pray – Jesus, grow in me a heart like Mary's, pouring out devotion and gratitude to you. Replace any critical, selfish corners in my spirit. I love you. I thank you for the gift of new life in you. Amen.

Thursday

Read – Mark 14:10-50

Notice – As with his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus arranged in advance for a Passover meal. His hope-filled words changed that annual supper into the Lord's Supper we still observe. The meal over, Jesus prayed on the Mount of Olives. He had come to this moment by choice—but still he struggled with the awful suffering just ahead. Crucially, he prayed, "Not what I want but what you want." In the darkness, the rulers and Judas put their dark plot in motion. Sooner or later, we all face a situation in life that seems unbearable. What do Jesus' prayers as he faced the cross teach you about the value of honestly facing and voicing your feelings in those times of anguish? What is helping you learn to say, "Not what I want but what you want"?

Pray – Jesus, you held firm hope, and you also pleaded with God for a different way. Help me trust that even in my darkest, most painful moments you are listening, and offering me hope. Amen.

Friday

Read – John 19:4-37

Notice – John said that, on the cross, Jesus tenderly gave his mother to the care of "the disciple whom he loved." He said he was thirsty, and John noted that a hyssop branch (a Passover symbol) carried the red sour wine (or vinegar) drink. Then, perhaps in the loud shout Mark recorded (see Mark 15:37), Jesus said, with spiritual as well as physical significance, "It is completed"—and it was. How does Jesus and Pilate's dialogue (verses 7-11) contrast external power with inner spiritual strength? How did Jesus nurture and build up the inner strength that upheld him on that awful Friday? When, like Pilate, you have to choose between pleasing a human power (even social or family pressure) and doing what's right, what gives you the moral strength to do the right thing?

Pray – Jesus, you faced the worst of human betrayal and hypocrisy, yet you didn't become a victim. You forgave. Change my heart, and grow in me your ability to love and forgive. Amen.

Saturday

Read – Matthew 27:57-66, John 19:38-42

Notice – Matthew and John both “set the stage” for the Easter story. Matthew listed the futile steps the religious leaders and Pilate took to keep Jesus in his tomb. John linked his story to Genesis in chapter 18 by focusing on the “garden” Jesus prayed in. Here he returned to the image. In the Genesis 2 story, human life began in a garden. John said Jesus’ (and our) resurrection life would also begin in a garden—this was humanity made new, creation set to rights. Luke 23:50-52 named Joseph of Arimathea as one Jerusalem leader who did not agree to killing Jesus. John added a last glimpse of Nicodemus, who met Jesus in John 3. As you see how God used even the timid loyalty of Joseph and Nicodemus, can you trust that God can use whatever you have to offer to God’s service? The men’s fear looks very different to us than it did to them on that Saturday—because we know what came next. How can hope based on Jesus’ resurrection alter your view of even the most heart-breaking situations?

Pray - God, it’s been hard to read the descriptions of Jesus’ last hours. As we move to Easter worship, help me to fully grasp the joy of the resurrection because I have felt the sorrow of the crucifixion. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holy Week Online Services - Grace will celebrate Holy Week online. (We will also celebrate Easter on the first Sunday that we are able to worship together again in person.) Please join us on the Grace Facebook page (GraceDesMoines) at the following times:

Holy Thursday, April 9 - 6:00 pm
Good Friday, April 10 - 12:00 noon
Easter Sunday, April 12 - 10:15 am

Just a reminder that all in-person meetings are cancelled for the time being. If you need assistance setting up a video or audio conference, please contact the church office.

If you know of anyone who does not have internet access, but would like to get copies of bulletins, hard copies of sermons, or other church materials, please let the church office know.

Subscribe to the Beyond the Red Doors weekly email for information on upcoming events by going to www.gracedesmoines.org. Scroll toward the bottom of the page until you see the "Beyond the Red Doors" section and follow the instructions to subscribe.

I would like to receive the monthly Chimes Newsletter:

☐ via US Postal Service ☐ via email

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR 2020

I/we will provide altar flowers on:

<input type="checkbox"/> Apr 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Apr 26	<input type="checkbox"/> May 24
<input type="checkbox"/> May 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Jul 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Jul 26
<input type="checkbox"/> Aug 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug 16
<input type="checkbox"/> Aug 23	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug 30	<input type="checkbox"/> Sep 20
<input type="checkbox"/> Sep 27	<input type="checkbox"/> Oct 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Oct 18
<input type="checkbox"/> Nov 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov 29
<input type="checkbox"/> Dec 27		

Cost is \$40 per week. Please submit payment when you turn in your form. Flowers will not be ordered if payment has not been received by the Wednesday prior to the date for which you signed up.

Dedication: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please print clearly and return to the church office.

WORSHIP LEADER: Rev. Nate Nims;

RESOURCES USED IN THIS SERVICE:

Call to Worship and Unison Opening Prayer from enfleshed (www.enfleshed.com.)

All music used under OneLicense A-727197

Guide to Prayer and Study modified from cor.org

† In hymns, prayers, and liturgies, use language that makes worship meaningful, enriching, and inclusive.



Grace United Methodist Church

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Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter at GraceDesMoines

Services are held every Sunday at 8 am and 10:15 am

Can't make it to church?

Watch the livestream of the 10:15 am service on the GraceDesMoines Facebook page.