**Salendine Nook Baptist Church – Church Together**

**Sunday 10th April 2022 – Easter – Words Of Joy And Hope**

**Welcome**

Welcome to **Church Together**.
**No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together.**

Our flexible Sunday worship patterns blend together on - line services, home deliveries and E - mailed copies of Church Together.

On this special Palm Sunday Service we will be looking at: **Mark 11 v. 1 - 11**

The theme for today’s service is: **Easter - Words Of Joy And Hope**

Today’s service that is set out in this edition of **Church Together** we will be thinking about **Easter - Words Of Joy And Hope**. We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for this **Palm Sunday Service during April 2022** and that you would indeed **on this Palm Sunday, know the words Joy and Hope because of who Jesus is!**

**Call To Worship**

**Psalm 111 v. 1 - 4, 9 NLT**

Praise the Lord!
I will thank the lord with all my heart
As I meet with his godly people.
How amazing are the deeds of the Lord!
All who delight in him should ponder them. Everything he does reveals his glory and majesty. His righteousness never fails
Who can forget the wonders he performs?
How glorious and merciful is our Lord!

He has paid a full ransom for his people. He has guaranteed his covenant with them forever.

**Moment Of Reflection**

God of crowds and God of crowns: in your humility, on the back of a donkey, at the start of a week of great pain, you showed a determination to save us not with overwhelming force but with self-giving, revolutionary love. May we see in your life and death, and in your resurrection, the way to face the foes within. May we overcome our fears, and put down our selfish wants; may we stop our tendency to blame, and fight for others first. As you shield us from what we can’t control, save us from ourselves.

**Prayer For Palm Sunday**

Lord Jesus Christ, you had no interest in serving yourself, only in serving others;

You did not desire your own glory, only the glory of him who sent you;

And because of that God has highly exalted you, giving you the name that is above every name.

Teach us today the true nature of kingship, service and authority,

And so help us to honour you as you desire, through loving God with heart, mind and soul, and loving our neighbour as ourselves.

So may we build your kingdom, until you return in glory and gather all things to yourself.

Amen

**Song Suggestion**

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna In The Highest

**What Is Palm Sunday?**

On Palm Sunday, Christian worshippers celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, an event that took place the week before the Lord's death and resurrection. Palm Sunday is a moveable feast, meaning the date changes every year based on the liturgical calendar. Palm Sunday always falls one week before Easter Sunday.

For many Christian churches, Palm Sunday, often referred to as Passion Sunday, marks the beginning of Holy Week, which concludes on Easter Sunday. The biblical account of Palm Sunday can be found in all four Gospels: **Matthew 21 v. 1 - 11; Mark 11 v. 1 - 11; Luke 19 v. 28 - 44; and John 12 v. 12 - 19.**

**Palm Sunday History**

The date of the first observance of Palm Sunday is uncertain. A detailed description of a palm processional celebration was recorded as early as the 4th century in Jerusalem. The ceremony was not introduced into the West until much later in the 9th century.

**How Is Palm Sunday Celebrated Today?**

Palm Sunday, or Passion Sunday as it is referred to in some Christian churches, is the sixth Sunday of Lent and the final Sunday before Easter. Worshippers commemorate Jesus Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

On this day, Christians also remember Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, praise God for the gift of salvation, and look expectantly to the Lord's second coming.

Many churches, including Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, Moravian and Reformed traditions, distribute palm branches to the congregation on Palm Sunday for the customary observances. These observances include a reading of the account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the carrying and waving of palm branches in processional, the blessing of palms, the singing of traditional hymns, and the making of small crosses with palm fronds.

In some traditions, worshippers take home and display their palm branches near a cross or crucifix, or press them into their Bible until the next year's season of Lent. Some churches will place collection baskets to gather the old palm leaves to be burned on Shrove Tuesday of the following year and used in the next day's Ash Wednesday services.

Palm Sunday also marks the beginning of Holy Week, a solemn week focusing on the final days of Jesus' life. Holy Week culminates on Easter Sunday, the most important holiday in Christianity.

**Offering**

No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together here at Salendine Nook.

Now that we find ourselves once again holding services in Church, we can give of our finances to the work of the Lord when we are in church. If you feel that you can, then please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.

**Bible Reading**

**Mark 11 v. 1 - 11 NIV**

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as king

11 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2 saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you, “Why are you doing this?” say, “The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.”’

4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5 some people standing there asked, ‘What are you doing, untying that colt?’ 6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. 7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

‘Hosanna!
‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ 10‘Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

**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.

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

And the glory, forever and ever.

**Amen**

**Moment Of Reflection**

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. **Zechariah 9 v.9**

**Song Suggestion**

You Are The King Of Glory

**Thoughts From One Of The Crowd**

What a day it was, a day I shall never forget — the voices raised in jubilation, the arms out- stretched in welcome, the crowds lining the streets, waving their palm branches, hurling down their cloaks, welcoming their king: the Son of David, the one who came in the name of the Lord.

They believed that, at long last, the waiting was over, the Messiah finally come to set them free. We believed it too, come to that. After all his talk of suffering and death, we dared to hope he’d got it wrong, and for a moment, as I watched him, I wondered if he felt the same — the way he responded to the cheers, laughter playing on his lips, a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eyes.

He was enjoying himself, I’m sure of that, determined to savour the moment. But then I noticed it as we drew near to Jerusalem: a tear in the corner of his eye — so unexpected. Not a tear of joy but of sorrow, trickling slowly down his face, silent testimony to his pain. He wasn’t fooled by the welcome, not like the rest of us.

He knew what they wanted, how they would change, but still he continued, resolute to the end — that’s the extraordinary thing. It was a day to remember, a day on which they welcomed their king. But none imagined, least of all I, that the crown would be made of thorns, and the throne reached via a cross.

**Song Suggestion**

Ride On, Ride On In Majesty

**Meditation Of Simon The Zealot**

You should have heard them! What a noise!
What a sight!
What a welcome!

I’m telling you, I’ve never seen the like, not in all my born days, and there’s been a few of those.

We’ve had kings here, governors, would-be messiahs, and they’ve all had their moments, their fans out in force to greet them, but nothing like this, nowhere near it!

They came in their thousands, waiting to meet him, the news of his coming having raced before him.

And it wasn’t just his followers, it was everyone, men, women and children plucking branches from the trees, tearing off their cloaks, carpeting the road before him, their voices hoarse with shouting.

‘Hosanna!’ they cried.
‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’

It was treason, of course, and probably heresy too, but no one cared - devil take the consequences, this was a time for rejoicing, and rejoice we did.

Yet if that was unusual - the abandonment, the jubilation - there were stranger things to follow, for just a few days later, less than a week in fact, the scene was so very different.

The same people by and large, once more part of a crowd, but this time not love but hatred in their faces, not welcome but rejection, their waving hands suddenly shaking fists, their ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’ all at once ‘We have no king but Caesar’.

I wouldn’t have believed it possible if I hadn’t seen it for myself, but the sad fact is I not only saw it, in my own way I was part of the whole sorry business, for when the crisis came I was found wanting, concerned only to save my skin with no thought as to his.

It was a chilling lesson, and one that I, like so many others, learned the hard way - the lesson that it’s easy to call someone king, much harder to actually serve them.

**Moment of Reflection**

Some of the people went ahead of him, and some followed. They all shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

**Church Together Thought**

Jesus would have attended the synagogue each Sabbath to hear the Rabbi read from the Torah, the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These books were repeated over and over, so that, in the oral learning culture of that time, it became ingrained on the heart and mind of every devout Israelite.

This was not only on the Sabbath, but there would have been synagogue prayers twice a week on the market days of Tuesday and Thursday. It seems highly probable that Jesus may have received extra tuition to become a Rabbi, for the Gospel accounts record Him being called Rabbi, Teacher, Master and Lord. For example, Nicodemus addressed Jesus as ‘Rabbi’ in **John 3 v. 2**.

So, as we take a closer look at Jesus, we see this man of God, soaked in holy words, who, within His ministry, gaining the reputation for challenging His critics with profound words from Scripture. And, as the prophets before Him, when words were insufficient for the point He wished to make, Jesus dramatically enacted His message. So, as we look at this passage from **Mark 11 v. 1 - 11** we see Jesus, demonstrating those actions, and fulfilling Scripture as recorded in **Zechariah 9 v. 9** which says: ‘Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey’, in the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was a place bursting with thousands of pilgrims gathered especially for the Passover Festival and Jesus and His disciples were part of the festival. The historian Josephus wrote that on one occasion there were over two million people packed into the city and suburbs, but that is perhaps a slight exaggeration! However, people from all over the known world, three times a year, turned the City of David into a vibrant, cosmopolitan meeting place for commerce and for worship. And Passover was the biggest of all the festivals.

**HOSANNA!**

The closing verse of **John chapter 11** which says: ‘When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple courts they asked one another, “What do you think? Isn’t he coming to the festival at all?” But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him’. makes it plain that Jerusalem was now a dangerous place for Jesus. The chief priests and the Pharisees had their spies mingling with the crowds, ready to pounce at the first opportunity to arrest Him. Jesus had become too popular.

We are told in **John 4 v. 24**, which says: ‘God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth’, that Jesus longed for people to see that they could worship God in spirit and in truth without the pomp and ritual sacrifices that burdened the poor and lined the pockets of the priests. Time and time again, Jesus sought to focus the people’s minds on God; to bring them back into the trusting, loving relationship the religious legalism of their day had blunted.

Jesus’ teaching showed His followers how to put into practice the high moral and ethical demands of Scripture, not as a cold duty, but in response to God’s eternal goodness and love. Several times in the Gospel narratives we see Jesus taking a deliberately low profile and even telling people not to speak about things they had witnessed Him doing.

However, in this story from **Mark 11 v. 1 - 11**, we have a spectacularly high - profile Jesus. By riding down the Mount of Olives and up into Jerusalem on the back of a humble donkey, Jesus ensured all eyes were directed on Him, and after Jesus had been glorified, they might remember Zechariah’s prophecy, the king riding on a donkey was the hope of a re - established Davidic kingdom, as we read in **Zechariah 9 v. 9 - 10**.

Careful arrangements had been made to accommodate Jesus’ purpose of using a young colt in order for Him to enter into Jerusalem. At Passover time everybody in Jerusalem was looking for a lamb but Jesus comes looking for a colt.

There were no buses or taxis in Jerusalem, so just imagine how inconvenient loaning a young donkey might have been to the owner especially at such a busy time as Passover. Whatever does Jesus want with an untamed colt? Jesus doesn’t always offer a detailed explanation to his servants. Is there a desire to encourage a deeper level of trust?

**We may not know or even understand what the reasons are that lie behind Jesus request of us at the moment, but we need to ask the question: does it matter if some of the details are not yet revealed?**

The answer that is given to the colt’s owner is simply: ‘The Lord needs it’ and that is meant to be enough.

No questions asked, other than on whose authority. No reasons given. No conditions laid down. No payment offered. Just ‘The Lord needs it.’

The fact that the incident took place at Bethany, a place Jesus often visited, suggests that Jesus and the unnamed supporter were maybe known to each other and that a bond of trust and respect had arisen be- tween them. The colt was ready and waiting, and the servant was ready too.

Being led by the Spirit can, and usually does, mean a careful and thoughtful approach to the commission we have received from God. And so it is, with supreme courage, Jesus, by now a ‘wanted man’, was making an emphatic visual statement. He saw Himself as God’s Anointed, the King of Peace whose kingdom would never end.

The crowds seemed delighted to hail Him as King, but on their terms, a King who would rid them of the Roman occupation. The Messiah they wanted was a King to lead them into battle against their enemies and then they would live happily ever after!

So, they chanted their words of joy and hope when they cried out their ‘**Hosannas’**, which literally means ‘**Save!**’ — lifted directly from **Psalm 118 v. 25**, one of the psalms recited at the Passover Festival. It was also the part of the Hallel, sung each morning by the Temple choir during the Feast of Tabernacles, and therefore would have been a familiar song of jubilation.

When the choir reached the ‘**Hosanna’** part, it became a tradition for worshippers to wave lulabs — a few shoots of willow and myrtle tied with palm — similar to the tradition of standing for Handel’s ‘**Hallelujah Chorus**’. Sometimes, these lulabs were even called ‘hosannas’.

When Luke records that the crowd ‘spread their cloaks on the road’, it was not just a romantic expression such as Francis Drakes for Queen Elizabeth I, but an ancient honour in acknowledging a king. (See what happened to Jehu in **2 Kings 9 v. 13**).

We also need to recognise the potential political implication of the palm branches. Waving a palm branch was like waving the national flag. The palm was such a popular national emblem that it was used on Jewish coins. In the context of an occupied nation, entering the city waving palm branches was blatant and defiant nationalism.

The statement that Jesus makes is unambiguously Messianic. He was determined to fulfil in himself the Father’s preordained and revealed purpose. Therefore, Jesus calculated action causes us to ask some questions:

* Was Jesus deliberately rousing a volatile and potentially explosive situation? And, if his prophetic actions held such clear scriptural, Messianic overtones, how was it that the people were blind to His message of justice, peace and compassion?
* How could the meekness and majesty portrayed by Jesus in that triumphal entry into Jerusalem have been so badly misunderstood?
* What steps do I need to take in order to know the will of God for my life and how deliberate am I in seeking to fulfil it?
* Can we see in Jesus a pattern for the way we approach the days that lie ahead?

On this Palm Sunday, may our words be full of joy and hope because of who Jesus is!

**Song Suggestion**

Majesty, Worship His Majesty

**Prayers Of Intercession**

This morning loving God, we thank you for your triumphal entry into our world each and every day. As we enter into Spring, we give thanks for the slow motion explosion of buds on the trees proclaiming “Hosanna!” For the rushing water, falling from heaven, gurgling to the sea, that proclaims “Hosanna!” For the fragrance of spring in the morning air which proclaims, “Hosanna!” and for all the beauty of nature that proclaims your praise!

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We long today to join this chorus, giving you thanks and praise for who you are, for all you have created, and for all that you are creating. Thank you for sending us Jesus, who showed us your love for all creation, who shows your love for us. He opened our eyes to see your kingdom come here on earth. Forgive us today, we pray, for the times where we have gone about our own business, concerned with many things, oblivious to the needs of those around us, oblivious to the call of your love in our heart. God of grace, equip us to be your servants, listening, eager and ready to serve, wherever we may be. May your words of joy and hope forever be on our lips in praise of your Holy name.

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Thank you loving Lord for your presence in our world, even in war - filled places. We especially remember today on this Palm Sunday the situation that continues to rage in Ukraine. Be with us we pray, when we are tempted to despair, and to think that you have forsaken us. When we are tempted to think that you are powerless. We pray today, that you would give us a vision of your entry into our world as the Prince of Peace, changing hearts, changing our hearts, one by one, creating peacemakers who say no to violence. We pray for those who seek to find an end to this hostility and war in Ukraine.

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

This morning Lord, open our hearts to be your hearts, open our hands to be your hands, open our arms, to be your loving arms for all who need your presence. You know the people in our congregation with pressing needs: those with new diagnoses, those waiting for tests, those coping with chronic pain. In these moments loving Lord, we lift them before you.

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

You place people in our road who are in desperate need of your good news, and we have walked by on the other side. Or we’ve said, “We’ll help them tomorrow, when we have more time or more money or more something.” Help us loving Lord Jesus, to be your hands and feet in this world; let us bring words of joy and hope to those who need them the most.

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

God of grace, we long to be your dear disciples, washing each other’s feet. We long to be faithful companions on the journey that you are taking us along, awaken our hearts and minds in the darkest hour. We long to follow in your footsteps, even if they lead to crosses on a barren hillside. These are the desires of our hearts.

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We ask all these things, in the name of Christ.

**Amen**

**Song Suggestion**

I Will Enter His Gates, With Thanksgiving In My Heart

**Moment Of Reflection**

Hosanna, hosanna

You are the God Who saves us, worthy of all our praises

Hosanna, hosanna

Come have Your way among us

We welcome You here, Lord Jesus

**Song Suggestion**

King of Kings, Majesty

**Moment Of Reflection**

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday! Be reminded of the reason for the Easter season! Amongst all the busyness that goes on reflect on Jesus and His resurrection.

**Blessing**

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray; And in your mercy defend us From all perils and dangers of this life; For the love of your only Son, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, We pray this humble prayer.

**Amen**