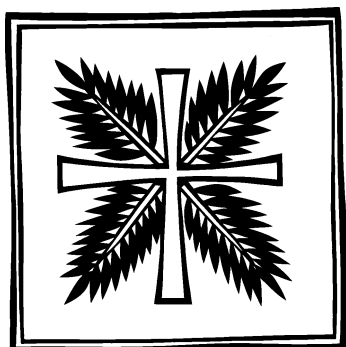


Abundant Life Lutheran Church

3486 Raleigh Street, East St. Paul, Manitoba, R2E 1B7
Phone 204-255-5433 Email: office@abundantlifelutheran.ca



Where ALL are welcome!

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Palm Sunday

April 5, 2020

**Abundant Life Lutheran Church
3486 Raleigh Street
East St. Paul, MB R2E 1B9**

Office Phone: 204-255-5433

Pastor's Cell: 204-995-2350

www.abundantlifelutheran.ca/

<https://www.facebook.com/abundantlifelutheran/>

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INTRODUCTION

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READINGS

Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus enters Jerusalem

Philippians 2:5-11

Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.

SERMON

[Setting the scene: I am perusing a few supermarket tabloids – the National Enquirer and the Globe, to be specific.]

Ooh, now this is juicy!! “Meghan orders Harry – get a job, we need cash! Just weeks after their stunning decision to quit the royal family, Prince Harry’s stressed-out wife, Meghan, ordered her henpecked husband, ‘Get a job – or else!’” Now this is some gossip!

Oh, and here’s some more! “Desperate Meghan and Harry beg the queen, ‘Take us back!’ The frantic couple realize they made a mistake, and beg the queen for mercy!”

Don’t we just love juicy gossip? It’s so... satisfying to read about how the royal family is just as dysfunctional as we are! And yet... it was less than two years ago that we were all caught up in Prince Harry and Meghan Markle’s love story. I still remember that beautiful royal wedding at Windsor Castle, with Meghan in her dress, and Harry in his uniform... and all of the celebrities and heads of state... and the music, and that moving sermon by Bishop Michael Curry! It seemed like everything would be “happily ever after.”

But we wouldn’t want to let them get away with that, would we? No, we want to make sure all of their flaws are exposed, all of their secrets brought to light! Isn’t this human nature? We love to elevate celebrities today – to raise them up on a pedestal, to obsess over them, even to worship them... only to tear them down tomorrow.

You might think that this twisted pattern of raising up heroes and celebrities, only to tear them down... that this pattern might somehow be peculiar to our modern society. But in reality, this pattern is perhaps as ancient as humanity itself. In fact, we can see this ugly pattern playing out in the story of Holy Week, in the story of Jesus final days in Jerusalem.

It all started with Jesus triumphal entry into the city – the incredible event that we are celebrating today, Palm Sunday. Jesus rides in on a donkey, and the crowds that he has attracted while preaching and teaching across the countryside are all parading in with him! They’ve rolled out the red carpet – so to speak – spreading out their cloaks on the road ahead of him, and waving palm branches! And they’re shouting and chanting and singing, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Save us, Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Wow! What a parade! What a spectacle! What a royal entrance! Jesus must be the most popular person in all of Judea right now!

But what goes up must come down, right? And already, there are people watching Jesus’ every move, waiting for him to make a mistake, waiting for the right opportunity to turn the crowd against him.

And imagine if there were tabloids back in Jesus day... imagine what kind of headlines the Globe or the National Enquirer would print about Jesus final days in Jerusalem...

“Jesus Throws Tantrum in the Temple! Outraged Rabbi Flips Tables and Drives Out Merchants!”

Or... Scandalous! Rabbi Allows Prostitute to Wash His Feet!

Or... Galilean Prophet Claims He Is Son of God!

We know how the story goes. We know that this crowd, who today is shouting, “Hosanna! Hosanna!” by Friday, will be shouting something very different... “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

It’s like it’s in our DNA. Today, we’re adoring fans... tomorrow we’re a jeering mob. Today, we’re raising up, tomorrow we’re tearing down. Should it be surprising to us, that the crowd who is ready to crown this man king today, will be ready to call for his execution by Friday?

And Jesus is not naïve as he rides into Jerusalem. He knows how this will all play out. He has already told his disciples three times that in Jerusalem he will be handed over to the religious leaders – to the chief priests and the scribes – and they will condemn him to death. Jesus knows that by Friday, he will be at the centre of a very different procession, this time leaving the city, not riding a donkey, but bearing his own cross.

So perhaps the question is, why?

Why would Jesus ride into Jerusalem? Why would he willingly enter the city where the crowds would call for his coronation one day, and his crucifixion the next? Why would he willingly participate in this spectacle, knowing that it must end in his death?

And the answer... is love. That’s the depth of Christ’s love for us, for all people, even for the crowd, who is one minute crying, “Crown him!” and the next minute, “Crucify him!” That’s the depth of Christ’s love, even for us... we who are really no different

than that ancient crowd in Jerusalem... we who because of our bondage to sin cry “Crown him!” in one breath, and “Crucify him!” in the next. And yet Christ loved us so much, that he was willing to accept the sentence of death, so that we might receive the gift of life. For God so loved the world, that God gave God’s only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

And so this story of Holy Week is, at its heart, a love story. It’s the story of the love of God for all humanity, played out in the scenes of Palm Sunday, and the Last Supper, and the Garden of Gethsemane, and Good Friday. It’s the story of the love of God, embodied in the life of this one man, Jesus of Nazareth... a man in whom God’s love burned so brilliantly that not even death could extinguish it.

Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of mercy, be with Christians everywhere this Holy Week. Be present in communities that have been hardest hit by the outbreak. Be present with Christians who are not able to gather for worship and prayer. Give your church boldness and courage to witness to your presence in the midst of suffering, and your promise of resurrection.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of mercy, we pray for all who are working on the front lines in this crisis: doctors and nurses, health care aides, emergency first responders. For all who work in health care. Guide them in their work. Protect them and keep them safe. Give them compassion and wisdom. Be with their families. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of mercy, be with all those who work to provide essential and life-giving services during this time: farmers, truck drivers, delivery persons, utility workers, and grocery store workers. Be with leaders and with our government. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of mercy, be with all who are affected by the COVID-19 virus. We pray for China, Italy, Spain, France, Iran, and countries all over the world, for the United States, and for Canada. Heal those who are ill. Hold those who are dying close in your loving arms.

Comfort those who grieve. Give strength to families whose loved ones have fallen ill.

We pray, O Lord, for a quick and merciful end to this pandemic. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of mercy, we pray for all in our faith family who are in need of your healing hand, (*especially...*) We also pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of Gerda Fahr. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GERDA FAHR (nee Otto)

Gerda Fahr passed away peacefully at Middlechurch Home on March 19th. Gerda and her husband Julius generously donated the parcel of land for our church building. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Abundant Life Lutheran Church "piano fund" or a charity of one's choice. We give thanks to God for Gerda's life, and we will keep her family in our prayers. An obituary was published in Saturday's Free Press at:

https://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-271742/FAHR_GERDA

NEST BOARD

NEST (North End Sponsorship Team) is looking for someone to join their board and continue the long relationship NEST has had with ALL. (Pastor Annemarie was our congregational rep.) If interested, please contact Jim Mair at jimmair@shaw.ca or 204-770-4526.

NEW EXTERIOR SIGN COMING SOON!

We are needing to come up with some communication phrases for it and humour is just fine. If you would like to submit some suggestions for the future signage, please pass on to Kim: chair@abundantlifelutheran.ca If you are interested in volunteering to put the wording up on the sign/changing information and phrases let Kim know as well.

HELPING THOSE IN NEED THROUGH THIS PANDEMIC

The Community Christmas Hamper Program for communities north of the perimeter will be providing grocery store gift cards for people in need of food during this pandemic. To help those living outside of the perimeter which are not eligible to access Winnipeg Harvest and are struggling at this time. If you would like to donate to help with this cause you can go online to abundantlifelutheran.ca and under the donate now button choose "Hamper Program". Or click on the link below:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/873687115RR0001-abundant-life-lutheran-church-inc/campaign/hamper-program/>

**We will only be accepting cash donations. No food donations please.*

OTHER WAYS TO DONATE

Abundant Life Lutheran Church also accepts donations through Canada Helps, link can be found on the main page of our website (Under the big blue ‘donate now’ button!) Either as a one-time donation or monthly! This option provides tax receipts instantly for your convenience. Another option is by mailing in a cheque or through registering with ALL for Pre-Authorized Remittance (P.A.R) giving. To start the PAR process and find out more information email Lori at office@abundantlifelutheran.ca !

REMINDER: ALL COMMUNICATING IMPORTANT INFO THROUGH EMAIL BLASTS

Reminder for those viewing today's Worship Service through the website: That ALL is now sending out the Sunday Worship Service information through email blasts each week during this self-distancing period of online Worship. Other important information is sent out using the email blast service such as event dates & information, ALL Worship updates, newsletters etc. If you are not receiving them please first check your junk mail and if not there please contact our communications Coordinator, Rick about not receiving emails. If you would like to start receiving these emails, please contact us to be added to the list! Also, a reminder to let us know when you have any contact information changes for our records. Another way to ensure you do not miss any new video updates is to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

COVID-19 / HOLY WEEK & EASTER UPDATE

As many of you know, our governments and public health officials are calling for more aggressive social distancing measures, in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. We are committed to abiding by these measures as long as they are recommended. As Christians, we are approaching one of our most important and cherished times in the church year – Holy Week and Easter. And yet, due to the current epidemic situation, we will not be able to celebrate these festivals in the way that we would have hoped. We will not be able to gather together in person for worship for Holy Week services or Easter. However, we will continue to worship, and to gather around God's Word, in our families and at home, using the resources that are available to us. We will be posting worship services for Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, as well as a video reflection for Maundy Thursday. We'll also be delivering mail-outs to our members who do not have access to the internet.

See Pastoral Letter Re: Easter on website for full Pastoral letter regarding this update. (<https://www.abundantlifelutheran.ca/pastoral-letter-re-easter>)

OFFERING

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a financially stressful time for many people. At the same time, in order to continue the ministry of our church, we are relying on our members to continue to give regularly. Please consider how you are able to continue to support our church during this time. There are many ways to give to our church, even if we aren't meeting in person:

- Consider signing up for PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance)
 - to sign up for PAR, please email office@abundantlifelutheran.ca for more information
- Donating online through the “Online offering” button on our website
- Sending weekly or monthly cheques in the mail to:
Abundant Life Lutheran Church
3486 Raleigh Street
East St. Paul, MB R2E 1B9

We are thankful for your continued support!

Contact Information:

Jeremy Langner, Pastor - jeremy@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Kim Scherger, Core Leadership Chair - chair@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Lisa van Dijk, Director of Youth Ministries - slpc-youth@live.ca

Rylee Innes, Administrative Secretary - office@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Lori Templeton, Financial Secretary - office@abundantlifelutheran.ca

Rick Scherger, Communications Coordinator - rickscherger@fatecommunications.ca

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Jeremy's Hours

Tuesday 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Wednesday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Administrative Secretary Hours

Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM.

To arrange appointment please email or phone: office@abundantlifelutheran.ca / 204-255-5433.

REACHING OUT

Are you in distress? Here are a few numbers that you may find helpful.

911 Emergency

Dial 911

Winnipeg Police Service Non-Emergency Line

1-204-986-6222

Health Links (Info Sante)

204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257.

Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba

24-7 support line for anyone experiencing anxiety: 204-925-0600

Klinic Crisis Line

204-786-8686 or 1-888-322-3019

TTY 204-784-4097

Manitoba Suicide Line "Reason to Live"

1-877-435-7170 (1-877-HELP170)

Kids Help Phone (national line available to Manitoba Youth)

1-800-668-6868

Klinic Sexual Assault Crisis Line

204-786-8631 or 1-888-292-7565

TTY 204-784-4097

