



Community UCC

We're worth our words

Welcoming Progressive Community

Vibrant Messengers of Hope



Champaign, Illinois

Palm Sunday, Year B

March 24, 2024

Thoughts before worship: — In your faith journey, when have you gone through a confusing and uncertain season? Have you ever found clarity by looking back on that time with a new perspective? What allowed you to understand in hindsight? What did you realize? What did you remember?

Prelude

Aaron Ames

*Call to Worship

Sing songs of loudest praise!

Hosanna!

Sing songs that are unashamed.

Hosanna!

Sing songs without being afraid.

Hosanna!

Sing for the God of tomorrow and today.

Hosanna!

Let us worship the One worthy to be praised.

*Invocation

Let us pray together saying,

God of grace,

your Word is like a song.

It is the melody that we long to sing,

the refrain that we pray will get stuck in our heads.

So as we return to scripture once more,

we pray that you would allow us to sink into this song.

Allow us to hear the truth in between the words.

Allow the cries of the crowd's "hosannas" to feel like our own.

With open hearts and open ears we pray, amen.

*Hymn

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

NCH 213

"Hosanna, loud hosanna," the little children sang; through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang;

We welcome you to our service this morning. Celebrating the diversity of creation, Community United Church welcomes persons of any age, ability, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or life condition. May the Divine Presence become real to you through this time of worship. We hope you come back!

Note: Our worship services are live streamed. If you prefer not to have the back of your head seen on the live stream worship please do not sit in the first seven pews on the left side (organ/piano) of the sanctuary.

Note 2: The congregation responds to the liturgy parts in **BOLD**

*Everyone is invited to stand in body or in spirit.

To Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast, the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

*From Olivet they followed amid a cheering crowd, the victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud.
The one whom angels worship rode on in lowly state, and glad to see the children, slowed down the donkey's gait.*

*"Hosanna in the highest!" That ancient song is ours. We hail our great Redeemer and sing with all our powers:
"Hosanna, Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice. Hosanna! In your presence forever we'll rejoice!"*

Welcome, a Word About Worship, and an Invitation to Check-In

Introit

Come O Fount of Every Blessing

NCH 459 v. 1

*Come, O Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unfailing love.*

Call to Confession

The Gospel of John tells us that crowds gathered to praise Jesus as he entered Jerusalem, singing and shouting with confidence.

After describing the crowd, however, the Gospel writer zooms in on the disciples and tells us that while the crowds shouted praise at Jesus, the disciples were confused. The text says, "the disciples did not understand what was happening" (John 12:16).

A lot of our lives may look like this: either we understand God's presence in our lives and want to shout it from the rooftop—or we're standing on the side of the parade missing our chance to sing.

That is why we need the prayer of confession. Because life happens fast, and without a doubt, we have stood where the disciples stood. So let us pray, for we don't want to miss our chance to sing:

Prayer of Confession

We humbly confess,

Holy God, we want to run into the streets and sing your praise!

We want to be bold and unashamed of this good-news Gospel.

However, too often we find ourselves standing against the wall.

Too often we stay quiet.

Too often we let others carry the song.

**Forgive us for the moments when we could lead the parade
but instead find ourselves standing on the sidelines.**

Show us which songs are ours to sing.

Show us which parades are ours to lead,

and then give us the courage and conviction to do both.

With hope and honesty we pray, amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Dear ones, no matter where we are on the parade route—whether waving palm branches through the streets or standing against the wall, quiet and cautious—Jesus marched for you, for us, for all the world. Jesus' love, his striving for justice and mercy, it was for you, for us, for all the world.

You are included in this story and nothing can ever change that.

So hear these words and trust them deep in your bones:

We have reason to sing, for Jesus Christ loved us yesterday. Jesus Christ loves us today. And Jesus Christ will love us tomorrow. You are forgiven, claimed, and sent to serve. Go out and sing. Go out trusting these words. Amen.

***Passing of the Peace**

Children's Message

Anthem

Ride on, Jesus, Ride

CUCC Choir

*Ride on, Jesus, ride. Ride on, Jesus, ride.
Ride on, Jesus, conquering king, Ride on, Jesus, ride.
King Jesus rides on a milk-white horse. The river Jordan he did cross.
My Jesus lifted his throne above. See his mercy and his love.
The children of Jerusalem Strewed their branches on his way.
Blessings on the Holy One! Blessings on the Saving One!
Ride on, Jesus, conquering king, Ride on, Jesus, ride.
Ride so humble, ride so true, Ride to bring the world to you,
Ride to set your people free, Ride the road to Calvary,
Ride obedient unto death, Ride to break the chains of death,
Ride on, Jesus, conquering king, Ride on, Jesus, ride.
Ride again in the hearts of us, Ride again in the hands of us,
Now beyond all time and space, Now in ev'ry land and race,
Ride on, Jesus, conquering king, Ride on, Jesus, ride.*

Call to Prayer

After the sermon, we will offer up our joys and concerns. Your prayer requests will be offered aloud. Whether you are sitting here in the sanctuary, or worshipping with us remotely, you are invited to add your joys and concerns to the prayer list: go to community-ucc.org/pray (a Google Form), or scan the QR code found here or there are prayer cards on the table at the back of the Sanctuary that you may fill out and hand to the usher.



Prelude to Scripture

Whether we take what is written in the Bible as fact, metaphor, myth, or story, let us listen now for the meaning it might hold for us on this day.

Sacred Reading from the Gospel

John 12:12-16

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

'Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—
the King of Israel!'

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ 'Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.

Look, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!'

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

Postlude to Scripture

Together, let us say:

May the Spirit bless us with wisdom and wonder as we ponder the meaning of these words for our lives.

*Hymn

Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed

NCH 537

*Christian, rise and act your creed; let your prayer be in your deed;
Seek the right, perform the true, raise your work and life anew.*

*Hearts around you sink with care, you can help their load to bear;
You can bring inspiring light, strengthen them to do the right.*

*Offer others hope and joy, and God's worship your employ;
Giving thanks in humble zeal, learning all God's will to feel.*

*Come then, law divine, and reign; faith that doubt assails in vain,
Perfect love bereft of fear, born in heaven and radiant here.*

Message

Songs of Loudest Praise

Silent Meditation

Joys and Concerns

Affirmation of Faith

We trust that God hears our prayers, those spoken aloud and those whispered from the depths of our hearts. Together, we affirm our faith saying,

We believe in Jesus of Nazareth,

who rode through the streets of Jerusalem on a donkey.

We believe in Jesus of Nazareth,

who challenged Rome's oppressive power with peaceful protest.

We believe in Jesus of Nazareth,

who was surrounded by crowds of dreamers and believers.

We believe in Jesus of Nazareth,

so even today, we will sing songs of loudest praise.

Hosanna!

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

Response

Abide With Me

NCH 99 v. 1

*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The shadows deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.*

Call to Offering

When we financially support the mission and ministry of Community UCC, we affirm that our Wandering Hearts have a spiritual home, a Community of other seekers and sojourners. May all that we offer be used in the service of Jesus the Christ who loves without end, Amen. You may give online, or here, in person. Any money placed in the offering plates will support the mission and ministry of CUCC. Any money placed in the globes will go towards our Lenten Offering for the Trauma and Resilience Initiative. May God bless the gifts and the givers



Offertory

Lamb of God

*Lamb of God, with love poured out you suffer with the world, have mercy.
Lamb of God, who suffers with the world, grant us peace.*

Commissioning of the Community

***Hymn**

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

NCH 216

All glory laud and honor to you, O Christ we sing to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way; our praise and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.

*O Promised One of Israel, of David's royal line, the one called "God's beloved," of flesh and yet divine,
To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise; to you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.*

*As you received their praises, receive our prayers today, whose justice and whose mercy and sovereignty hold sway.
All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ, we sing, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!*

***Benediction**

***Benediction Response**

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'

NCH 526 v. 1, 2

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos', siyahamb' eku khanyen' kwenkhos'.

(repeat)

We are marching in the light of God.

(repeat)

We are marching, Ooh,

We are marching in the light of God.

(repeat)

***Postlude**

Aaron Ames

Please join us in the Parlor for the after party.

Acknowledgements

Liturgy used with permission from A Sanctified Art: *Wandering Heart, Figuring out Faith with Peter*

Anthem, "Ride on, Jesus, Ride," Martin, arr. Haughen

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Offertory, "Lamb of God," Music and Lyrics by Gary Rand

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Serving Today

Ministers: The Community of Community UCC
Presider and Preacher: Rev Leah Robberts-Moser
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Ushers: Cara Finnegan, Scott Johnson
Greeters: Sue Fristoe, Mary Bunyard

Organist: Aaron Ames **Singers:** Kathy Lee, CUCC Choir
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Your Ministry Team Leaders

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*denotes Church Life Board Member

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Community United Church of Christ

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