

Rangeley Congregational Church
Order of Worship – March 28, 2021
PALM SUNDAY ~ Sixth Sunday in Lent

Richard Rohr ~ 21st century Mystic

Most of us understandably start the journey assuming that God is “up there,” and our job is to transcend this world to find “him.” We spend so much time trying to get “up there,” we miss that God’s big leap in Jesus was to come “down here.” So much of our worship and religious effort is the spiritual equivalent of trying to go up what has become the down escalator. I suspect that the “up there” mentality is the way most people’s spiritual search has to start. But once the real inner journey begins—once you come to know that in Christ, God is forever overcoming the gap between human and divine—the Christian path becomes less about climbing and performance, and more about descending, letting go, and unlearning. Knowing and loving Jesus is largely about becoming fully human, wounds and all, instead of ascending spiritually or thinking we can remain unwounded.

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: The Palms
Jean-Baptiste Fauré, Charles Gabriel

Blessing of the Palms ~ Officiant

CALL TO WORSHIP ~ Liturgist & Officiant

Liturgist: We come to prepare for the holiest of weeks.

**Officiant: We will journey through praise, with joy on our lips;
we will travel through betrayal and death, cradling hope deep in
our hearts.**

**Liturgist: Jesus leads us through this week, and we will follow, for he is the
life we long for, he is the Word who sustains us.**

**Officiant: We wave palm branches in anticipation, we lay our love before
him, to cushion his walk.**

**Liturgist: Setting aside all power, glory, and might, he comes:
modeling humility and obedience for all of us.**

**Officiant: Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the One who brings us the
kingdom of God.**

THE STORY: Mark 11:1-11 ~ Liturgist

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

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

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

(Joyfully wave Palms!)

Liturgist: The streets were crowded.

Officiant: A parade mood filled the air.

Liturgist: Shouts came from deep in the heart.

Officiant: Hosanna. Save us.

Liturgist: Save us from lukewarm faith.

Officiant: Hosanna. Save us.

Liturgist: Save us from callous indifference.

Officiant: Hosanna. Save us.

Liturgist: Save us from paltry hopes and petty dreams.

Officiant: Hosanna. Save us.

Liturgist: Save us from unquenchable greed.

Officiant: Hosanna. Save us.

Liturgist: Save us from lazy habits and faithless commitments.

Officiant: Hosanna. Save us.

Liturgist: Save us from soft-mindedness and hard-heartedness.

Officiant: Hosanna. Save us.

Liturgist: We cry from the depth of our hearts and the very pit of our souls.
Officiant: Hosanna. Save us. Save us now.

INVOCATION ~ Psalm 118: 1 -2, 19 – 29 ~ **Liturgist**

O give thanks to God, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say, "God's steadfast love endures forever."

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

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

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

The Lord is God, and God has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God,

I will extol you.

O give thanks to the God, for God is good, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

*Officiant: May Your Light, O God, always lead us to your Love.
In your Gracious name, we pray. AMEN.*

OPENING HYMN: All Glory, Laud, and Honor
Tune: ST. THEODULPH

Prayer over Palms – for Peace in Heaven – for The Triumphal Entry ~ Officiant

PRAYER OF CONFESSION and ASSURANCE ~ **Officiant**

...time for silent prayer... ~ Officiant

WORDS OF ASSURANCE ~ **Officiant**

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 31: 9-16 ~ **Liturgist & Officiant**

Liturgist: Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.

Officiant: For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.

Liturgist: I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.

Officiant: I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.

Liturgist: For I hear the whispering of many— terror all around!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

Officiant: But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.”

Liturgist: My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

Officiant: Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

Philippians 2:5-11 ~ **Officiant**

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God.

Mark 15:1-39 ~ **Officiant & Liturgist**

Jesus before Pilate ~ Officiant

15 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. [¶]Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” [¶]Then the chief priests accused him of many things. [¶]Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” [¶]But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified ~ Liturgist

[¶]Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. [¶]Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. [¶]So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. [¶]Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” [¶]For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. [¶]But the chief priests stirred up

the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do¹³ with the man you call¹⁴ the King of the Jews?" ¹⁵They shouted back, "Crucify him!" ¹⁶Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" ¹⁷So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus ~ Officiant

¹⁶Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters¹⁷); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁸And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁹And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ²⁰They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²¹After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus ~ Liturgist

²¹They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²²Then they brought Jesus²³ to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²⁴And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁵And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.²⁸ ²⁹Those who passed by derided³⁰ him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³¹save yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³²In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³³Let the Messiah,³⁴ the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

The Death of Jesus ~ Officiant

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land[Ⓜ] until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"[Ⓜ] ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he[Ⓜ] breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

SERMON

HYMN OF RESPONSE Ride On! Ride On!

Tune: ST. DROSTANE, Lyrics: John Bell

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE ~ Liturgist

Please offer the names of those whom you would like added to our Prayer time this morning.

(As you name a joy or concern later in the prayer, please finish by saying "This is my prayer." The church family responds by saying "This is our prayer.")
We pray for: Marcia Baker, Janet House, Becky and Dave Walker, Carol Ellinwood Judy Wicken's Dad John Sheeler, Patrick Egan, Sam Meehan's Mom and her husband Nicole & LeRoy Hileman, Erin Smith, Tony McNaughton, Scott and Janet Wilson and Janet's father John Owens, Marcia Baker's niece, Kris Nozal, Dave Walker's brother, Peter Walker, Haelyn Vorous, the Daileys' son Rob, and our Members in Discernment Becky Walker and Scott Hatfield.

Our law enforcement personnel, medical personnel and first responders, and our military personnel worldwide, and all those who serve our country. We pray for safety and comfort for all those who are stuck and struggling in bad weather patterns especially those in North Carolina.

We pray for the people around us this day for those who are upon our hearts and minds because of a need that they have...

PASTORAL PRAYER ~ Officiant

A TIME OF SILENCE

OUR 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 (sins, debts, trespasses) as we forgive those who (sin, our debtors, 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.

CLOSING HYMN: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
Lowell Mason, Isaac Watts

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: Jesus, Our Divine Companion
Tune: PLEADING SAVIOR / Arr. R. Summers
You the Bread of heaven, are broken in the sacrament of life.

Special thanks to Kit Caspar for being our Liturgist, Dan Simonds for leading the singing, Dave Walker for the PowerPoint slideshow presentation and Sam Meehan for setting up the Zoom live stream so we can worship together.

Deacon of the Month: Linda Caspar (207) 864-5539

We will hold a Zoom Tenebrae service on April 1 at 6:30pm. Unfortunately there will be no soup supper this year. Please note the time and a Zoom invite will be sent prior. Also, as we're all working remotely, we're not planning for additional flowers in the Sanctuary this Eastertime. If you would normally donate and dedicate flowers, for this year we encourage a donation to the Deacons' Relief Fund instead.