



**Sunday Missive -- April 5, 2020 -- Palm Sunday**

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'*      Isaiah 40:3

**Greetings, beloved Friends** – If you haven't checked your mailbox, now might be a good time. There should be a surprise in it, fully sanitized for your protection! Also, various online worship resources are listed below, at the end of this service.

The calendar tells us that Lent is coming to a close for the year, one week from today. But our enforced 'fasting' from gathering continues. Today is Palm Sunday, with its dual focus, on Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and on his ignominious treatment at the hands of the brutal, frightened powermongers there.

Most every year but this one, we are in the habit of re-enacting the procession that welcomed Jesus as the Savior of the people. We get to march around the church, singing and waving our palms and enjoying each other's company. Today, we can take advantage of our deprived condition (where other people are concerned), to pause for a moment, breathe deeply in the silence to welcome and honor the Spirit of the Universe into ourselves in a "procession of the heart," so to speak. The pathway of the breath of our lives can be laid open for God's Word and Will to ride in and triumph over all that keeps us from peace.

**The Lord be with you. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**

**It is right to praise you,** Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Who this day entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed King of kings by the people, who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these palms be for us a sign of that victory, and grant that we who bear them may ever hail him as our only ruler, and follow in the ways that lead to eternal life. *Amen.*

**Almighty God, whose most dear** Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### **Hymn 154**

All glory, laud, and honor to thee, Redeemer, King!  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

The people of the Hebrews with palms before thee went;  
Our praise and prayer and anthems before thee we present.

To thee before thy passion they sang their hymns of praise;  
To thee, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

Thou didst accept their praises; accept the prayers we bring,  
Who in all good delightest, thou good and gracious King.

**Almighty and everliving God**, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, so that we may share in his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **Let us pray**

**Assist us mercifully** with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### **Hebrew Bible Reading -- Isaiah 50**

“The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens my ear to listen as a pupil, and I am not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled at my beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; for the one who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.”

This is the testimony of a person of faith who has undergone insult, oppression and violence. Each trial undergone has only served to strengthen the conviction that the goodness of God runs deeper and the power and persistence of that goodness surpass anything and everything this mortal life have to offer or inflict upon us. God does not remove suffering, but accompanies us through it. Neither does God reward some of us over others. Rather, those who are fortunate in this life are obligated to see how their good fortune can benefit others.

## Psalm 31

In you, O Lord, I seek refuge -- *do not let me ever be put to shame.*

Incline your ear to me -- *and speedily come to my rescue.*

Be a rock of refuge for me -- *a strong fortress to save me.*

Free me from the net that ensnares me -- *for you are my salvation.*

Into your hand I commit my spirit -- *redeem me, O faithful God.*

Be gracious to me, I am in distress -- *my eye wastes away from grief.*

My life is spent with sorrow -- *and my years with sighing.*

My strength fails because of my misery -- *my bones all waste away.*

I am the scorn of all my adversaries -- *a horror to my neighbors.*

Shunned by people in the street -- *those who see me run away.*

Let the lying lips be still -- *that speak falsehood against the righteous.*

For God has shown steadfast love -- *when I was a city under siege.*

You heard my supplications -- *when I cried out for help.*

Abundant is your goodness -- *toward those who take refuge in you.*

Be strong, let your heart take courage -- *all you who wait for the Lord.*

**Note that not only grief** and hardship beset the psalmist, but also false information (lying lips) and the pain of social isolation (those who see me run away). With every city – and every middlesex village and town -- under siege today from within itself, the words of the endangered innocent become a global cry: “Be strong, and let your heart take courage -- all you who wait for the Lord.”

## **The Epistle -- Philippians 2**

“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 the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

One cannot help but think of the selflessness of medical workers, food workers, first responders, peacekeepers and all those who are actively working to mitigate our present crisis and see us through it. They are facing this enemy on our behalf, despite fear and trembling. Their will is to work out their salvation by saving as many of us as they can. Surely they are evidence of the industry of the goodness of God.

### **Hymn 435**

At the Name of Jesus, every knee shall bow,  
Every tongue confess him, King of glory now;  
'Tis the Father's pleasure, we should call him Lord,  
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Name him, Christians, name him, with love strong as death,  
Name with awe and wonder, and with bated breath;  
He is God the Saviour, he is Christ the Lord,  
Ever to be worshiped, trusted, and adored.

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue  
All that is not holy, all that is not true:  
Crown him as your Captain, in temptation's hour;  
Let his will enfold you in its light and power.

## **The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew**

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "my time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

**to be continued...**

**If we ever needed** logical proof of God not interfering with earthly happenings and the will of humankind, this is it. Jesus says, "The Son of Man goes as it is written of him," conflating his earthly existence with the timelessness of the Word of God. In that view, Judas' betrayal, like all of human failing, was bound to happen. Psalm 139, verse 16 says of God:

“Your eyes saw all my actions; they were all written in your book. Every one of my days was decreed before one of them came into being.”

Judas’ betrayal is already part of cosmic history, and Jesus already knows where he is in human history. If there had been a different, less unpleasant way for God to come alive as a human (the Son of Man) and complete an earthly life, we have to believe that God would have chosen it! Likewise, we are living out our history every day. And these days are among the most challenging and, thankfully, strangest we will ever have. Judas is our poster child for what not to do when you find yourself in such a moment. It is well beyond our pay grade to say that those who make themselves part of the pandemic problem instead of part of the solution are accursed. But Matthew does have Jesus say, “Woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.” And when God says, “Woe be to you,” it does not bode well.

How do we learn from Judas? How do we learn not to betray the daughters and sons of humankind in this strange and challenging moment of history? For most of us, for most of our lives, the answers are not a matter of life and death, but rather of friendship, fairness, finance and fidelity. The stakes have gone up in these days of deadly virus pandemic, but the basic issue is the same: am I worthy of other’s trust, and how will I live into that bond? For each of us, the answers will be different. For some, it will mean making just and visionary policies. Others are being called upon to care for the sick and hungry. Most of us will live into our integrity by exercising caution, compassion and restraint. But if the question we are asking is ‘How do I go about treating others the way I think I deserve to be treated?’ the answers will come. That is how we can prepare the way of the Lord today and always.

**Most merciful God,** we know that you do not willingly afflict or grieve the children of humanity. Look with pity upon the sorrows of the people of the earth, now afflicted and threatened by pestilence. We remember the sick, the vulnerable, the hungry, the lonely and all who work to care for them. Nourish their souls with patience, strengthen their hands and hearts, comfort them with a sense of goodness, shine your face upon them and give them peace. For you are the One God, now and forever.

**Almighty God, you have given us grace** at this time, with one accord to make our common supplication unto you; and you have promised, through your well-beloved Child that when in the name of love, two or three are gathered together --virtually or otherwise -- you will be in the midst of us, fulfil now, O Lord the desires and petitions of your servants as may be best for us, granting us more knowledge of your truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

**Shelter in place to love and serve the Lord. Thanks be to God**

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### **On Mercy**

The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'T is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown:  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That, in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;  
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

**Portia, *The Merchant of Venice* IV i**

## **Brother Aidan writes from the Holy Cross Monastery**

There is an odd dissonance in this moment. Outwardly much of our life in the Monastery is unchanged. And yet, everything is different. We are without guests at our busiest time of year. We are empty when we should be full. And just down the river in New York City, the epicenter of a global pandemic shakes the foundations of all we thought so certain and solid.

I find myself holding on to that dissonance, and paying attention to it. I don't want to give up the beautiful moments of spring sunshine, flowers, and more leisure time than I normally have. But nor do I want to be lulled into forgetting that many people are sick and dying in the world around us and many more are struggling for economic security and even survival. I don't want to kid myself that everything is normal, because it isn't.

Oddly, the moments of beauty and rest, amid all the anxiety and chaos and death, strike me as profoundly true, profoundly real. Those of us who strive to be awake must strive to be awake to the whole of reality, which is to say to the terror and the pain as well as to the joy and the wonder of what it means to be human in this moment of eternity.

## **Coming Home in Covid Times – It Ain't Easy – One Family's Saga**



On Monday, March 31, Ugandan President (since 1986) Yoweri Museveni announced a 14-day nationwide lockdown from Wednesday, April 1, to prevent further spread of the coronavirus. Under the latest measures, the movement of people by private vehicles will be prohibited beginning Monday, March 30. In addition, a curfew from 19:00 to 06:30 will be put in place from Tuesday, March 31. All members of the public, except for individuals transporting cargo, have been instructed to stay indoors. Gatherings of more than five people will be banned as a precautionary measure. Shopping malls, arcades, hardware shops and all non-food stores, except for supermarkets and pharmacies, will also be suspended for 14 days from April 1. Meanwhile, a ban on all public transport remains in place as of Wednesday, March 25.

**continued on next page..**

**Tue, Mar 31, 10:12 PM (3 days ago)**

Caroline Burton, Lenny's granddaughter, is in Uganda, doing an internship in speech pathology, until the country was shut down this week. With no warning, the borders were closed, incoming and outgoing. Two days ago a stay-inside order came, making the obtaining of food difficult, and increased the possibility of civil unrest. Today the U. S. Embassy arranged a plane to take Americans home, but when Caroline logged on to the site, there were no seats left. Anna kept at it every few minutes, until the availability of a seat popped up, and she got it. No one can be on the roads, so Caroline will have to hire a driver and get a pass from the embassy to pass through the checkpoints and get to the airport out of Kampala.

**Wed, Apr 1, 8:50 PM (2 days ago)**

Might as well hold the Caroline story I sent for the Pebble or Missive until we know what's happening. She hasn't been able yet to get a pass to travel to the airport in Entebbe, as all offices are closed and phones don't answer. Anna called the Ugandan Embassy in DC, and neither did they answer, but from the website got the specific number of a staff member whose face looked nice (her picture was beside the number) and got some help. The lady thought that the gov't might issue a blanket pass tomorrow for Americans going to the airport, and she gave Anna the name of another American in Jinga who's got a pass, whom Caroline might hook up with. It's like a thriller. Will keep you posted.

**12:18 PM (7 Hours ago)**

Made it to the airport in Entebbe

**8:43 AM (4 hours ago)**

She's on a plane headed for Doha, after adventures at numerous checkpoints on the way to the airport. Stopover in Doha for 14 hours, then a 14 hr flight to Dulles. Woo-hoo!

**As of this writing,** Caroline is on the plane to Dulles Airport in Virginia, where she will pick up another flight home to Dallas, closing this nerve-wracking chapter.

**Entebbe Airport -- Caroline is on the right!**



## Free Online College Courses

**Learning takes all forms**, which is why Yale University has put a wealth of lifelong learning opportunities at your fingertips. Get started with some of the offerings below and see where your curiosity takes you.

**Lectures & Talks – Note: Coursera courses are being offered free for the duration.**

A host of great lectures and other lifelong learning opportunities are available through Yale offerings, including:

- [YouTube](#): To view all videos posted by Yale, including many featuring talks and lectures by professors, visit the Yale YouTube channel.
- [Open Yale Courses](#): Open Yale Courses provides free and open access to a selection of introductory courses taught by distinguished scholars. The aim of the project is to expand access to educational materials for all who wish to learn.
- [Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning](#): The Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning at Yale explores online learning for a wide and global audience: from lifelong learners seeking to improve knowledge skills, to students looking to supplement their current classes, to those who wish to take a class online for college credit, a certificate, or a degree.

## Worship Services

**Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, TX -- Rt. Rev. Tony Burton, Rector**

<https://incarnation.org/digital-worship/>

**St. Barnabas, Arroyo Grande:**

**Sunday morning Palm Sunday Eucharist at 10:00am**

We will live-stream this traditional worship service on the St. Barnabas' Facebook page:

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

All you need is a device with an internet connection.  
No need for a Facebook account.

Trinity Church Wall Street in New York City invites you to join us for Holy Week and Easter services streamed live and available on-demand in HD.



## HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES AVAILABLE ONLINE

### **Palm Sunday**

Sunday, April 5; 11:15am-12:30pm

### **Tenebrae** (encore presentation of 2018)

Wednesday, April 8; 6pm-7pm

### **Maundy Thursday**

Thursday, April 9; 6pm-7:15pm

### **All-Night Vigil Before the Blessed Sacrament**

8pm Thursday-6:30am Friday

### **Liturgy of Good Friday**

Friday, April 10; 12:05-1:30pm

### **The Great Vigil of Easter**

Saturday, April 11; 7:30pm-9:30pm

### **Easter Festive Eucharist**

Sunday, April 12; 11:15am-12:30pm

[Learn More & Mark Your Calendar](#)

To access the livestream, visit [trinitywallstreet.org](http://trinitywallstreet.org) 5-10 minutes prior to the event. At the top of the page under the header, you will see a white banner with the name of the current live broadcast and text that reads, "Watch Live Now." Alternatively, follow Trinity Church Wall Street on Facebook to watch the services on Facebook Live. To watch on-demand after a service has ended, visit [trinitywallstreet.org/videos](http://trinitywallstreet.org/videos).