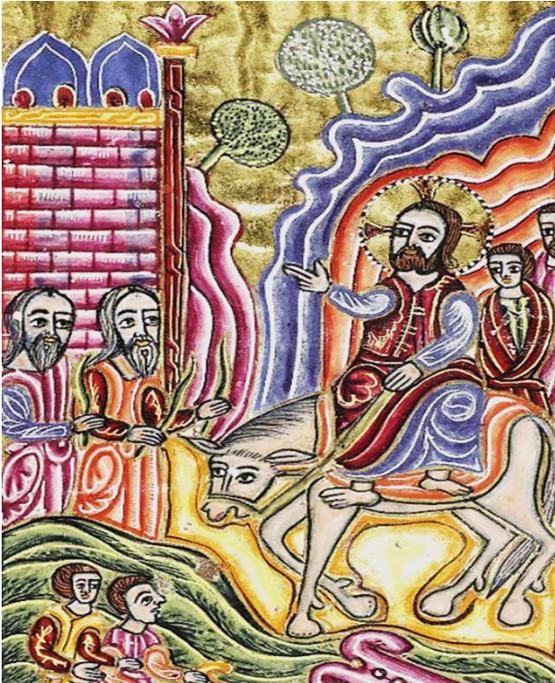


PALM SUNDAY SERVICE 06/04/2020

A Temporary Online Magazine for the United Reformed Church East Cheshire and Derbyshire Borders

[Missional Partnership Website](#)

[Providence Church Website](#)



This service has been compiled with various resources, some homemade by people in our church and some borrowed from other sources in good faith. Find a quiet space and moments to follow with us as we bring Church to you.

1. Welcome. You may want to light a candle or have a short period of silence.
2. [The Bright Field – R S Thomas](#) – read by Nicola Davies
3. Reflection By Dave Fraser:

I was on holiday to a little village I can't remember the name of. I wandered around their wee museum as an alternative to the shops. A particular exhibition item caught my eye, it had been found in a bog in the 1960 and was the pride and joy of the local history society. As I said I can't remember the name of the village so I will call their prize find the Nazarene jacket. To my untrained eye it looked like just a very old very disgusting piece of water damaged leather what interested me about the bog jacket was its history since it had been dug up. The archaeologist who had found it had dated it and named it as an

ancient jacket and it had been displayed as that ever since but 30 years later an ancient bag expert came a visiting and started asking questions of that lump of still leaking leather. They discovered holes that looked suspiciously like holes and straps and to everyone's amazement and shock it was discovered that their rare jacket was in fact a very rare leather bag.

It's that that caught my eye. The Nazarene jacket was in fact the Nazarene bag. Nothing had changed, the piece of leather was still the same piece of leather they had just discovered how to look at it differently. They had reconstructed it.

When I grew up palm Sunday was constructed as a glorious triumphant march into Jerusalem, in my mind's eye a cast of thousands were involved. The entry into Jerusalem was for and by a crowd who clearly adored Jesus, it was an event that was chiefly about adoration and an outpouring of love. In recent years we have been asked to rethink the day by the helpful reconstructions of theologians like Ched Myers. Instead of a benign entry into Jerusalem they would see a very deliberate and public demonstration of contempt. Jesus organised his few hundred followers to enact a public parable.

At the same time as Pontius Pilate rides in to Jerusalem At the front of a Roman column demonstrating Roman control by might. Jesus symbolically enters Jerusalem demonstrating that they are some who wish to non-violently non comply with the ruling elite.

And just as some folk choose to name a lump of leather a bag or a jacket. We too can look on the events of palm Sunday and Easter and decide how we might name and understand it. .

Palm Sunday can be a parade of love
Palm Sunday can be an act of sedition.
We can choose how to name it, we can even choose to rename it

For me it's clear that Jesus noncompliance with the status quo was one of a long line of acts of

disobedience. He constantly, audibly and publically proclaimed in story and in action his firmly held belief that many of the rules, traditions and systems imposed by the romans and the ruling elite on the poorest people of his land were not of the kingdom of God.

For me it was his escalation of noncompliance that was the final nail in the cross. He had to be dealt with because he was too public, too unbending in his criticism. The status quo love obedience and this Galilean was determined to be faithful only to God last and first. The noisy riding into Jerusalem with palms not swords was like lighting a candle in the night. It says to the darkness I beg to differ. Palm Sunday marks our Lord's defiance to the principalities and powers and the Easter story demonstrates what the empire does when you do and Easter Sunday proclaims whose side God is on.

This palm Sunday can I invite you to journey to Easter and if you can Ponder Easter a new and perhaps in prayer and in reflection you may discover Easter was what you always thought it was or maybe you will see it in a brand new way . But may we all discover our Jesus who lived, died and was made new by God this Easter

4. HYMN: [Ride on Ride On In Majesty – Played by Dr Gordon Stewart](#)

5. [Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 and Matthew 21:1-11](#)

6. [Our Homily for Today – Dr Richard Britton](#)

7. SONG: [Hosanna in the Highest – Anita Thomas](#)

8. Intercessions:

Caught between joy and despair,
we yearn for the fulfilment of God's desire
beyond the brokenness and neediness of this life.
We offer thanksgiving for God's presence with us
and petitions for the transformation
of the church and the world.

At this point we can keep in prayer and heart our celebrations and concerns

Life-giver, Pain-bearer, Love-maker,
day by day you sustain the weary with your word

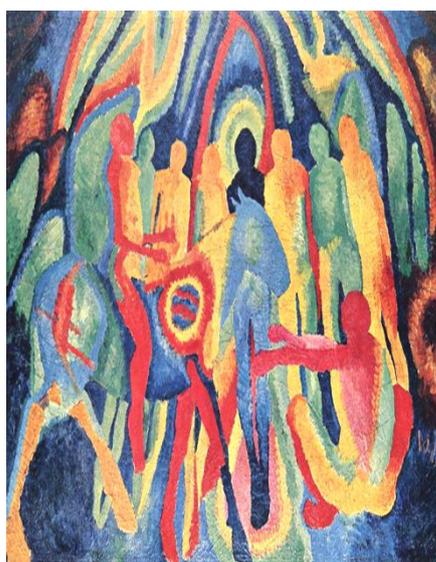
and gently encourage us to place our trust in you.
Awaken us to the suffering of those around us;
save us from hiding in denials or taunts that deepen
the hurt; give us grace to share one another's burdens
in humble service. Amen.

9. Let's say The Lord's Prayer for each other and all those who need our love and energy.

10. [All Glory Laud and Honour – played by Dr Gordon Stewart](#)

11. Blessing: The Kingdom by R. S. Thomas

It's a long way off but inside it
There are quite different things going on:
Festivals at which the poor man
Is king and the consumptive is
Healed; mirrors in which the blind look
At themselves and love looks at them
Back; and industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
By life. It's a long way off, but to get
There takes no time and admission
Is free, if you purge yourself
Of desire, and present yourself with
Your need only and the simple offering
Of your faith, green as a leaf.



Remember the URC has compiled [a list](#) of its churches which are live streaming acts of worship, offering sermons as podcasts or audio files, or offering recordings of services. This means there will

always be a service you can experience remotely from your home.

Make sure you are signed up to the [URC daily devotions](#) where you can access prayers and reflections on bible readings.