



MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

402 N. First Street, Lindsborg, Kansas 67456

Office: 785-227-3977

www.melclindsborg.org

mlchurch@mlc.kscoxmail.com

March 28, 2021

WOV Service of Word and Sacrament Palm Sunday

PRELUDE

Fanfare

Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to COVID restrictions, we will not process today. Please pick up a palm cross to affirm that today is Palm Sunday; we celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Please join us for the rest of Christ's Passion on Maundy Thursday (7 p.m.), Good Friday (& p.m.), and next Sunday's Easter celebration of the Resurrection (8 a.m. and 10 a.m.).

CALL TO WORSHIP

Crosses of palm unite us in our devotion to Jesus of Nazareth, and focus our gaze on the King, the Lamb, the Son of God.

On the way to Calvary, palms were waved to honor the King.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious is he, humbled and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

On the way to Calvary, palms were waved—response to One who came to suffer so.

He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

On the way to Calvary, we take up our crosses, and watch this One who rides toward death and life eternal—one King, one Lord, one death—for all!

(3 times) Blessed is the One who come in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!

ENTRANCE HYMN (*Spoken*)

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

344

Refrain

All glory, laud, and honor to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

- 1 You are the king of Israel and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming, our King and Blessed One. *Refrain*
- 2 The company of angels are praising you on high; creation and all mortals in chorus make reply. *Refrain*
- 3 The multitude of pilgrims with palms before you went;

our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present. *Refrain*

- 4 To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise.
To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise. *Refrain*
- 5 Their praises you accepted; accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness, O good and gracious King. *Refrain*

KYRIE *(sung by liturgist—one voice does the whole thing)* **ELW p. 213**
(Liturgist sings refrain from “Glory to God,” congregation responds speaking the verses)

Refrain: Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest; glory to God, glory to God, and peace to God’s people on earth.

1. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks,
2. we praise you for your glory. *Refrain*
3. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. *Refrain*
4. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Steadfast Love: you hand us the palm branches, so we can wave them in hope; you steady us in the days when pain is stuck to the daily-ness of our lives, when fear is our constant companion. We empty ourselves so you might fill us with joy.

Humble Healer: When our mouths turn numb and we cannot speak our dreams, you tenderly hold our lives, leaning over to hear our faltering words. When our arms have grown weak from the burdens we carry, you take them from us, and strengthen us with your mercy. We empty ourselves so you might fill us with grace.

Voice of Wisdom: when death hovers so close we can feel it's cold breath, you come to us, the warm breath of resurrection pushing aside our fears. When we hesitate to walk into the unknown stretching before us, you tightly clasp our hands and teach us the first step. We empty ourselves so you might fill us with peace.

God in Community, Holy in One, we open our hearts to you, as Jesus came to open your way of living to us. On this day when we celebrate the joy he brought to the lives of those who heard him speak, as we celebrate the hope he offered to those whom he healed, as we celebrate the infinite patience of the Trinity, we come to worship Jesus, the King riding on a donkey, triumphant and gentle, present and awaiting.

Lord of all, we come to lift our voices with those who sang your praise as you entered into the final days. We also do not know what is coming next, although you offer us signs and voices who see our lives as we cannot. Bless us as we honor you, most holy God, Father, Spirit. **Amen.**

Isaiah 50:4-91

⁴The 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— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. ⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. ⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. ⁷The 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; ⁸he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. ⁹It 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. ¹⁰Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of the LORD and relies upon his God? ¹¹But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled! This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment. The Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God!**

Psalms 118

¹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!

²Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

²²The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

²³This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

²⁶Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.

We bless you from the house of the LORD.

²⁷The LORD is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

²⁸You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.

²⁹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and

under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
The Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God!**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

We stand to proclaim together: Lord hear us as we call on your Word:

Return to the Lord, your God, return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Mark 11:1-11 Glory to you, O Lord.

¹¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and 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. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" ¹¹Then 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.

The Gospel of our Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ!**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

God Loved the World

ELW #323

- 1 God loved the world so that he gave his only Son the lost to save,
that all who would in him believe should everlasting life receive.
- 2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, who was made flesh and suffered death;
all who confide in Christ alone are built on this chief cornerstone.
- 3 If you are ill, if death draws near, this truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus rescues us from death; that is the firmest ground of faith.
- 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son forgives all sins that you have done,
and justified by Jesus' blood, your baptism grants the highest good.
- 5 All glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity, be praise now and eternally!

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Give your church humility. Redeem your people from pride and the certainty that we always know your will. Heal us and empower us to confess Christ crucified. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In creation, life springs from death. Redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore lost habitats and endangered species. Create new possibilities for areas affected by climate change. We pray for our national parks and our recreational areas. Grant relief from natural disasters, and nurture new growth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. In all nations, instruct the powerful, that they would not exploit their power but maintain justice. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them, that they serve those in greatest need, led even so by a spirit of peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

On the cross Jesus joined all who feel forsaken. Abide with those who are condemned to death. Defend those who are falsely accused. Console and strengthen those who are mocked or bullied. Accompany all who suffer especially we pray for our members Rolland, Donna, Walli, Betty, Ron, Gloria and Gene. We pray for our friends Donna, Denise, Bill, Dawn, Dorothy, Stephani, Karla, Orin, Danielle, Krista, Betty, Charlene, Meghan and Matt let us pray that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace. We pray for those serving in the military including: Alex, T.J., Ben, Vicki, Jeremy, Luke, Miranda and Daniel. We pray for seminarian Kaylie Ines. Grant respite and renewal. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You called followers to open the path into Jerusalem, covering the ground with palms and cloaks. Sustain your Church as we seek to welcome all people, people oppressed, people differently abled, people who struggle to make ends meet, people who are filled with your abundance, people of differently colored skin, people of every culture and every age. Bless this congregation's ministries at times of death: those who plan and lead funerals, those who prepare meals, all who offer support in grief. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as your Son. Inspire us also. We praise you for the faith you have given to people of all places and times. Give us also such faith to trust the promises of baptism and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

When the parade is over, do we pick up our lives, brush them off, and live in the old way? Do we toss our palm branches aside, so we can grasp the seductions of the world? As we begin the journey through the holiest of weeks, let us speak the truth, as we confess to our God, praying together,

Ever constant God, mixing love and hope together, you pave the way to the kingdom, but we prefer to stub our toes on the potholed roads of temptation. You will touch the cup of grace to our parched lips, but we seem to hunger for the ashy taste of bitterness. You beg us to learn the songs of salvation, but we hum along with the chorus death plays in the background of our lives.

Have mercy upon us, God of Holiness. As you come to us, you bring healing for our brokenness, peace for our troubled lives, hope for our doubting minds. May we empty ourselves of everything

which keeps us from following you, so we may receive these gifts, and more, from Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. *Silent prayers may be offered.*

Laying aside judgment, God offers us redemption; setting aside anger, God embraces us with love; letting go of grief, God pours living water upon us. This is the good news, my friends: God's steadfast love endures forever.

Hosanna! Hosanna Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God! Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION/OFFERING

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

Wilbur Held

As we offer these tangible gifts, Holy One, remind us of those who could use the clothes hanging in our closets unworn, those who could be fed by the food stored in our pantries, those who could be healed by the grace and hope we keep locked away in our hearts. May we be as generous with others as you are with us, we pray. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you!

May the God of hosannas be with you.

May the God of this holy week be with you.

Lift your broken heart to our God who will fill them with hope in these days.

Remember to sing laments during this holy time;

we do so, that we may know the reason for glad songs of joy.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Morning by morning, creation's voices join in praising you, God of every goodness. The forests form a festal procession, the heavens reflect your glory's light. Though we were formed by you, we looked around at everything sin and death had to offer, and followed them through the world, thinking they could protect us. You gave prophets the tongues of teachers, to comfort our weariness and teach us the way back to you, but we turned our back on them. When judgment did not lead to redemption, you sent Jesus to reach out in love, to bring us home to you.

So with those who spread cloaks before you, and those who are sustained by your love, we join our voices, proclaiming, **Holy, holy, holy, God of enduring love. From every part of creation come glad songs. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in humility and hope. Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are you, Sustainer of the weary, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Love become human. He emptied himself of glory, to be filled with our broken hopes and hearts. He chose the path of suffering love, so that we could run through the streets of the kingdom waving branches of joy. He walked the sin-cold stones into the tomb which could not hold him, so we could join our voices together,

'Hosanna! Hosanna! He is risen!'

As we journey through Jerusalem and beyond, as we struggle with death, loss, and grief we recall that in the night in which he was betrayed, Our Lord Jesus took the bread, broke it, and giving thanks, he gave it for all to eat, saying, "This is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, and giving thanks, he gave it to all to drink, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me. For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we ponder this mystery we call faith:

In trust, Christ died. In joy, Christ was raised to new life. In hope, Christ will come again.

Here at the Table graced with creation's gifts, we discover the world you intend.

Here where your love enlivens the bread and the cup we are given more than enough of everything we need. Sharing deeply in the Holy Spirit, we know hope is given wings, carrying us to serve the broken all around us. Strengthened by the grace with which you feed us, Holy God, we join together to sustain the weary of the world. And when the gates of joy have been opened to us, we will spend moment by moment, every knee in creation bending, singing our praises to you, God in Community, Holy in One. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered in to one body by the power of the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Christ taught.

Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who 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 and ever. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you +† that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN**Where Charity and Love Prevail****ELW #359***(Spoken: Men speak vs. 1 & 3, Women speak vs. 2 & 4, all speak v. 5)*

- 1 Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.
- 2 With grateful joy and holy fear, God's charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in return.
- 3 Let us recall that in our midst dwells Christ, God's holy Son;
as members of each body joined, in him we are made one.
- 4 Let strife among us be unknown; let all contentions cease.
Be God's the glory that we seek; be his our only peace.
- 5 Let us forgive each other's faults as we our own confess,
that we may love each other well in Christian gentleness.

SENDING

Go out into the world in as God's people.

We will journey with praise on our lips.

Go out into the world as followers of Jesus.

**We will join the parade of the broken, the lost, the hopeless,
for that is where Jesus may be found.**

Go out into the world as the Spirit's peace.

We will share the warm breath of reconciliation with all we meet. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

The Royal Banners Forward Go

Wilbur Held

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2015 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS00046 Text: Theodulph of Orleans, 760-821; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt. Text: *Gesangbuch*, Bollhagen, 1791; tr. August Crull, 1846-1923, alt. Text: Latin hymn, 9th. cent.; tr. Omer Westendorf, 1916-1997, alt. Text © 1960 World Library Publications

Messiah Lutheran Church

2/28/2021

	Actual Feb-21	Actual Jan - Feb 21	Budget Jan - Feb 21
Revenue	\$15,413.70	\$24,221.45	\$24,193.30
Expenses	15,001.86	26,684.17	26,747.44
Surplus (Deficit)	<u>\$411.84</u>	<u>-\$2,462.72</u>	<u>-\$2,554.14</u>
Reserve Balance	<u>\$78,203.91</u>		

Members, Friends, and Family for Whom We Pray

Members of Messiah:

Rolland Christenson, Donna Forsberg, Walli Ellis, Betty Peterson, and Gloria and Gene Holdsworth

Friends of Messiah

Donna Stejksal	Daniels' friend	Karla Goewert	Friend of Kirsten Bruce
Denise	Pari Ford's mother	Orin Shogren	Har's brother
Bill Stephenson	Joy Janis's brother	Danielle	Robbie Peterson's
Dawn	Sharon Hoffman's Daughter	VanDeVyvere	granddaughter
Dorothy Carmichael	Friend of Messiah	Krista Bahler	Betty Peterson's Niece
Stephani White	Betty Holcombe's daughter	Betty Finney	Sharon Hoffman's friend
Charlene Stevens	Sister in law of Sharon Bruce	Meghan Presley	John & Margaret Presley's daughter
Matt Forrester	Pastor Amy's brother		

Serving the U.S.A.

Alex Klapp	Betty Russin's grandson	Vicki Charboneau	Elaine Eller's granddaughter
Ben Youngquist	S Hoffman's nephew	Jeremy Guy	Hensley's son-in-law
T.J. Paulsen	Barb Malm's child	Daniel & Miranda Norland	Randy/Gretchen's son & wife

Serving the U.S.A. Overseas

Luke Hammontree Daniel's grandson

Seminary

Kaylie Ines

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Brian and Rhonda Anderson	3/25	Muriel Gentine	4/1
---------------------------	------	----------------	-----

We give thanks in our prayers for the **COVID-19** vaccination. We ask God to continue to work through us towards healthy, safe, distanced events and interactions, that we might be able to have restrictions lifted. We continue to pray for all those affected by the virus including those who have contracted it, those who care for those suffering, and those who continue to research and seek the best resolutions for the virus and the health of society.

Wider Church by Jeanne Ahlers

On March 12, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Its passage was shaped by input of many constituents, including Lutheran voices. We can celebrate the supports funded for millions of Americans who are still struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal response means a family has rent for another month, food on the table, required medicine, and for many, the chance no longer to live in poverty and hunger.

Many individual, leadership and coalition actions emphasized ELCA federal priorities for advocacy action. On the domestic front, economic realities were addressed by payments of up to \$1,400 per person and \$2,800 per married couple whose yearly income was below \$75,000 or \$150,000 respectively, COVID-19 vaccine funding and continued contract tracing will take some \$55 billion. And the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) received \$3 billion to invest in nutrition services for pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children under age five.

The Plan addresses home energy by providing \$4.5 billion for the Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and another \$500 million for drinking water and wastewater assistance. Comprehensive housing needs stemming from the pandemic's impact are addressed by roughly \$50 billion, including \$10 billion for homeowners facing foreclosure and \$27 billion for renters facing eviction. All this will proactively prevent the looming mass-eviction crisis, It's a significant win for congregations and shelters already exceeding capacity.

Internationally, Congress included nearly \$11 billion for COVID-19 relief. These funds help low- and middle-income countries mitigate further spread of the coronavirus, and support them in addressing health, humanitarian and economic needs.

All this is indeed reason to celebrate. Of course there is still much to be done. But with our continued support, we'll continue making progress together.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you are interested in **being a worship assistant**, please contact Ida in the office, 785.227.3977, or mlchurch@mlc.kscoxmail.com, and let her know! She will be happy to hear from you!

Please pick up your **offering envelopes** in the hallway beside the office. If you prefer to not have envelopes, please let Muriel know (785.906.0101).

Lilies for Easter this year are not being ordered through the office. If you would like to bring a lily or a flowering potted plant, you are welcome to do so for Easter Sunday. Plants need to be in the entryway by the office by Saturday, April 3 at 10 a.m. If you would like to have a commemoration noted in the bulletin, please have that information to the office by Monday, March 29th. Plants will need to be picked up the week following Easter. Thank you for sharing with the congregation!

A **blood drive** will be held at Trinity United Methodist Church on Monday, March 29 between 12 pm to 6:00 pm. To schedule your appointment visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter Sponsor code: Lindsborg or call 1-800-Red-Cross.

Beginning this week, we will be collecting **Personal Care Kit items for Lutheran World Relief**. Anyone may donate to this worthwhile project, sponsored by Messiah Church Women. A tub will be available with lists of what is needed on the north Fellowship Hall table. We can also provide the items for you. Checks can be written to Messiah Church Women and dropped off in the office or sent to Chris Reinert. At present there is currently a great need for these kits, both in our country and abroad.

We are planning a **spring clean-up day** at Messiah Church on April 17th. If you are available to dust, declutter, trim bushes, pull weeds, etc. please join us anytime between 9 am and 1 pm.

Now is the time to begin cleaning out all those treasures that you no longer have a use for or are just tired of looking at. Children's clothes are welcome; adult clothing not so much. You can bring items to the church anytime. We are also seeking a **person to lead** the way for a **Treasure Sale** (aka: garage sale!) in June. If you would like to be a leader in this endeavor, please contact the office (785.227.3977) or Muriel Gentine (785.906.0101). Thank you!

Youth Group Fundraiser has been extended through Easter. This is a penny war between Pastor Chris and Pastor Amy. Pastor Amy will color her hair if her point total is highest, and Pastor Chris will shave his mohawk if his point total is highest. All proceeds go to the National Youth Gathering for BLC and MELC students. Donate COINS(+) to Pastor Amy to ADD to her point total. Donate COINS(+) to Pastor Chris to ADD to his point total. Donate BILLS(-) to Pastor Amy to SUBTRACT from her point total. Donate BILLS(-) to Pastor Chris to SUBTRACT from his point total. (Think 100 penny adds 100 points; \$1 bill subtracts 100 points)



1-2-3-4 WE DECLARE A

PENNY WAR



POSITIVE POINTS	NEGATIVE POINTS
1 Penny = 1 pt	\$1 = -100 pts
1 Nickel = 5 pts	\$5 = -500 pts
1 Dime = 10 pts	\$10 = -1,000 pts
1 Quarter = 25 pts	\$20 = -2,000 pts and so on...



Pastor Chris

VS



Pastor Amy

A Survey to Share Your Lutheran Perspective

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you during this season of Lent. It is a time when we, as Christians, reflect on our life together in Christ and the ways in which our identity in Christ is reflected in the world. Being able to articulate that identity can help guide us to a better understanding of ourselves and each other as God continues to call us to respond to the needs of the world.

There are many ways to reflect on our identity as Christians and Lutherans, one of which is by engaging each other across our global Lutheran family. As part of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), we seek to contribute our North American Lutheran perspectives to the larger Lutheran tapestry, made up of 77 million members across 99 countries! And like the ELCA, the LWF has a rich history of theological study processes that can help us better understand ourselves and what it means to be church.

In 2019, the LWF launched a study process to explore the ways our global Lutheran identities are lived out through biblical interpretation, worship and the work of justice, peace and reconciliation. As a member of the LWF, the ELCA is taking part in this unique study process in a number of ways as we examine our Lutheran identity in our own context here in North America. We hope this process will allow us to experience the diverse ways our Lutheran tradition is being lived out. This is an opportunity to discern the ways in which we, in our own contexts, express law and gospel, faith and works, nature and grace, justification and sanctification, freedom and vocation – all parts of our common theological identity.

This Lent, I invite you to reflect on your Christian and Lutheran identities by participating in the Global Survey on Being Lutheran. We also ask that you invite others in your churches to participate. The survey will be open through March 31, and responses gathered will help to shape the 13th LWF Assembly in 2023.

In addition, between now and June you are invited to take part in a larger conversation that will transpire across the LWF communion. The LWF has produced a discussion guide titled *We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Welcome to a Global Conversation on Being Lutheran*. This guide will help lead your congregation's Christian education and/or youth group on a journey of mutual discovery and learning.

Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences. They will contribute to furthering our understanding of what being Lutheran means in this time and place as we continue to journey together in Christ through these next 500 years of reformation.

With peace and gratitude,

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MARCH 28, 2021
PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

Jesus' journey to the cross.



DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 14:1–15:47	The passion of Jesus
Monday	John 12:12-16	Jesus enters Jerusalem
Tuesday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	A servant song
Wednesday	Philippians 2:5-11	The Christ hymn
Thursday	John 13:1-17, 31b-35	Jesus washes disciples' feet
Friday	John 18:1–19:42	The passion of Jesus
Saturday	Psalm 31:9-16	Prayer for deliverance
Sunday	Mark 16:1-8	The tomb is empty

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*[Jesus] 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. **Philippians 2:7b-8***
(NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you humbled yourself on the cross so that we may know you as Savior of the world. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus, we thank you for this food we are about to eat. May we open our hearts and minds to receive you in our lives with love and devotion. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God's face shine upon you, and save you with the steadfast love of the Lord. (Psalm 31:16)

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Now Behold the Lamb

WEEKLY MILESTONES CARING CONVERSATIONS

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- We often don't know important things about others. Who is someone you would like to learn more about? What would you like to ask them?
- Jesus' work as Savior comes through his rejection by others. Think or tell about a time when you were rejected. How did it make you feel?
- What do you learn about Jesus through his death on the cross?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 14:1–15:47.

This long text creates its own devotional mood by walking with Jesus days prior to his death to his anguish in the garden, the trial, suffering, and crucifixion. There is much to choose from and you can consider for yourself what is meaningful to focus on. Is it the hospitality of Simon the leper or the adoration of an unnamed woman anointing Jesus? Is it Judas Iscariot and how we might betray Jesus today or be one of the deserting disciples who scatter like sheep? Do you identify with the disciples in Gethsemane, unable to stay awake for prayer along with Jesus during his time of anguish? How would it be to be a bystander like Simon of Cyrene who is drawn in to carry Jesus' cross? How is it that the centurion from the occupying forces of Rome is the only one to acknowledge Jesus with the words, "Truly this man was God's Son" (15:39)? What was it like for Joseph of Arimathea to take down Jesus' lifeless body and place it in a tomb? Or what other part of the account grips you this year? Whatever it is, reflect on Jesus' great love and sacrifice and our own need for Jesus as Savior. How do you honor Jesus as Savior today?

Pray: **For your great sacrifice and love, help us to adore you and witness to you as the Son of God and hope for the world. Amen.**

SERVICE

Do you know someone who will spend Easter alone? Consider sharing the resurrection joy by inviting that person to join you for a meal or call them to let them know that you are thinking about them.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Palm Sunday is the day Christians remember Jesus entering Jerusalem. It signals the beginning of Holy Week. As the week begins, take time in your home to use palms received during worship or make palms out of construction paper and wave them to re-enact the crowds shouting as they met Jesus. As you wave the palms, imagine Jesus riding on a donkey past you and shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord" (John 12:13b).

In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org