

# Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



April 13th, 2025  
*Palm Sunday*

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## - Gathering -

*- service begins gathered outside on the Prayer Labyrinth or inside in the Fellowship Room -*

### Call to Worship

Today, we join Jesus in the final ascent to Jerusalem, knowing the depths we will descend on our journey through Holy Week.

**Open the gates of righteousness, that we may come to worship God!**

We join the disciples in declaring that Jesus, riding on a donkey, is our Ruler, the One who will bring peace and salvation for all.

**Open the gates of peace, that we may come to worship God!**

We join with the bystanders who questioned and wondered who this Jesus really is, who feared the consequences of angering the powers that be.

**Open the gates of truth, that we may come to worship God!**

The journey through Holy Week brings us face-to-face with the stark reality of sin and God's faithfulness to save.

**Open the gates of salvation, that we may come to worship God whose steadfast love never fails!**

## Processional Gospel: Luke 19:28-40

The Holy Gospel According to Luke the 19th chapter:

Jesus went ahead with the ascent to Jerusalem.

Approaching Bethpage and Bethany, near what is called the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of the disciples with these instructions: "Go into the village ahead of you. Upon entering it, you'll find a tethered colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and lead it back. If anyone should ask you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Rabbi needs it.'"

They departed on their errand and found things just as Jesus had said. As they untied the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you doing that?"

They explained that the Rabbi needed it. Then the disciples led the animal to Jesus and, laying their cloaks on it, helped him mount.

People spread their cloaks on the roadway as Jesus rode along. As they reached the descent from the Mount of Olives, the entire crowd of disciples joined them and began to rejoice and praise God loudly for the display of power they had seen, saying,

**"Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God!  
Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!"**

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" Jesus replied, "I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the very stones would cry out!"

Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God!**

## Blessing of the Palms

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## We Are Marching in the Light of God



*Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos', si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha -*  
 We are march - ing in the light of God, we are march - ing in the



*nyen' kwen - khos'.* *Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos',*  
 light of God. We are march - ing in the light of God,



*si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.*  
 we are march - ing in the light of God.



*Si - ya - ham - ba (ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba) oo*  
 We are march - ing (march - ing, we are march - ing) oo



*si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.*  
 we are march - ing in the light of God.



*Si - ya - ham - ba (ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba) oo*  
 We are march - ing (march - ing, we are march - ing) oo



*si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.*  
 we are march - ing in the light of God.

*Additional stanzas ad lib.:*

We are dancing ...  
 We are praying ...  
 We are singing ...

Text: South African traditional; tr. Freedom Is Coming, 1984  
 Music: SIYAHAMBA, South African traditional  
 Tr. © 1984 Utryck, admin. Walton Music Corp.

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## Prayer of Confession

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.  
**Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

*Silence for reflection*

Merciful God,  
With the psalmist, we declare,  
**"Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them!"**  
But we forget that only by your grace can we be righteous.

With the crowds, we proclaim,  
**"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"**  
But we neglect to follow you when you show us the ways  
to make peace on earth as it is in heaven.

With the Pharisees, we notice our siblings  
doing their best to follow you and command,  
**"Order them to stop!"**  
But we refuse to listen to your command  
to love our neighbors as you love us.

**Forgive us, merciful God,  
and free us to follow Jesus down the road into Jerusalem,  
confronting the death-dealing powers of this world  
with the truth of your peace and steadfast love.  
Amen.**

Centering Hymn

Who Is He  
W&S 3082 – verses 1-3

## Greeting & Prayer of the Day

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

**Hosanna in the highest!**

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

God of the foolish cross,  
tottering down the streets of Jerusalem on a donkey,

**You are not the savior we expect.**

Your power doesn't look like the power we want our God to demonstrate.

**Your wisdom makes no sense to us.**

We are happy to join the crowd, waving branches,

**But not so sure we want to follow you**

into the temple courts

**into the upper room**

into the Garden of Gethsemane

**to the foot of the cross.**

Forgive our false assumptions.

**Clarify our clouded vision.**

Let us enter into the foolishness of your love, your grace.

**Hosanna, hosanna.**

**Save us, we beseech you!**

**Amen.**

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Exalted YHWH has given me  
a skilled and well-trained tongue,  
so that I can sustain the weary  
with a timely word.  
God awakens me morning after morning —  
wakens my ear, to listen like a student.  
Exalted YHWH opened my ears  
and I have obeyed, I did not turn away.  
I offered my back to those beating me,  
offered my cheeks to those who would humiliate me.  
I did not hide my face from insults or spitting.  
Because Exalted YHWH helps me,  
insults cannot wound me,  
for I have set my face like flint,  
because I know I will not be put to shame.  
My vindicator is at my side.  
Who would dare accuse me?  
Let us confront each other!  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them accuse, e!  
It is Exalted YHWH who helps me.  
Who will judge me guilty?

Word of God, Word of Life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 31:9-16

Now take pity on me, YHWH,  
for I'm in trouble again.  
I cried so much that I'm exhausted —  
and not only my eyes, but my mind and body as well.

**My life is consumed by sorrow;  
my years are worn out with my sighs;  
my strength fails me because of my despair,  
my bones are getting weaker.**

Because of all my oppressors  
I'm held in utter contempt, even by my neighbors;  
my friends are afraid of me,  
and people who see me on the street hurry past me.

**I am forgotten, as good as dead in their hearts,  
like something that has outlived its usefulness.**

I hear their endless slanders,  
and threats from every quarter  
as they conspire against me,  
plotting to take my life.

**But I put my trust in you, YHWH;  
I say, "You are my God!"**

My times are in your hand;  
save me from the hands of my enemies and persecutors.

**Smile on your faithful one;  
save me in your love!**

Gospel Reading: Luke 19:41-45

The Holy Gospel continues, according to Luke the 19th chapter.

Coming within sight of Jerusalem, Jesus wept over it and said, “If only you had known the path to peace today! But now it has been hidden from your eyes. Days will come upon you when your enemies will encircle you with a rampart, hem you in and press you hard from every side. They’ll wipe you out, you and your children within your walls, and won’t leave one stone on top of another within you, because you failed to recognize the time of your visit from God.”

Then Jesus entered the Temple and began throwing out the vendors, saying, “Scripture says, ‘My Temples will be a house of prayer’ — but you have made it a den of thieves!”

Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Miranda P. Bermes

Hymn of the Day

All Glory, Laud, and Honor  
ELW 344 – verses 1, 3, 4



*Affirmation of Faith: A New Creed - Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada*

*Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together using the words of our common creed:*

**We are not alone  
we live in God's world.  
We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others  
by the Spirit.  
We trust in God.  
We are called to be the Church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our redeemer and our hope.  
In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.  
We are not alone.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Joys & Concerns**

*If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.*

Kyrie — *TFWS 2275*

## Prayers of the People

Holding all of the hopes, joys, prayers, and concerns of our community in our hearts, let us pray together by the power of the Holy Spirit for the church, God's creation, and all who are in need this day.

*A brief silence.*

Guide your church this Holy Week as we follow in the servant way of Jesus. Protect those who face hostility or oppression for their faith. Humble those who would use faith to dominate others and reinforce their own power.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

Make your creation a living witness to Christ's passion and resurrection: in waving palms, shouting stones, fragrant vineyards, murmuring wheat, and revealing fire. Make us attentive to your holy presence in the world, that we may care for the earth you love.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

Let your face shine upon the leaders of nations and let the same mind be in them as was in Christ Jesus, so that those with the most power may humble themselves to serve the most vulnerable.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

Sustain the weary with a word. Grant perseverance to political prisoners and to any who are exploited, unjustly accused, or wrongly convicted. Abide with all who are in jails, detention centers, or prisons. Console all who experience times of trial or suffering

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## Offering

*At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry. Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031. Online Donations can be made through the link below:*  
[Spirit of Grace Church](#)

## Litany of Offering & Commitment

God of the wilderness,  
We give these offerings in gratitude,  
**rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us.**  
We give these offerings in faith,  
**trusting that you will provide for our needs.**  
We give these offerings in hope,  
**knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world.**  
And with these offerings, we give ourselves;  
**May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen**

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language you are most familiar with - the language of your heart.

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

Gospel Reading: Luke 23:1-49

The Holy Gospel continues, according to Luke the 23rd chapter.

Then the whole assembly arose and led Jesus to Pilate. They began to accuse Jesus by saying, “We found this one subverting our nation, opposing the payment of taxes to Caesar, and even claiming to be Messiah, a king.”

Then Pilate questioned Jesus: “Are you the King of the Jews?”

“You have said it.” Jesus answered.

Then Pilate reported to the chief priests and the crowds: “I find no guilt in him!”

But they insisted, “He stirs up the people wherever he teaches, through the whole of Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem.”

On hearing this, Pilate asked whether Jesus was a Galilean, and learning that Jesus was from Herod’s jurisdiction, sent Jesus off to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at this time.

Now, at the sight of Jesus, Herod was very pleased. From the reports he had heard about Jesus, he had wanted for a long time to see him. Herod hoped to see Jesus perform some miracle.

Herod questions him at great length, but Jesus wouldn’t answer. The chief priests and religious scholars stood there, accusing Jesus vehemently. So Herod and the soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and ridicule, put a magnificent robe upon him and sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate, who had previously been set against each other, became friends that day.

Pilate then called together the chief priests, the ruling class, and the people, and said to them, “You have brought this person before me as someone who incites people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for any charge against him arising from your allegations. Neither has Herod, for Jesus has been sent back to us. Obviously, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish Jesus, but then I will release him.”

Pilate was obligated to release one prisoner to the people at festival time. The whole crowd cried out as one, “Take him away! We want Barabbas!” Barabbas had been imprisoned for starting a riot in the city, and for murder.

Pilate wanted to release Jesus, so he addressed them again. But they shouted back, “Crucify him, crucify him!”

Yet a third time, Pilate spoke to the crowd, “What wrong has this Jesus done? I’ve found nothing that calls for death! Therefore, I’ll have him flogged, and then I’ll release him.

But they demanded that Jesus be crucified, and their shouts increased in volume. Pilate decided that their demands should be met. So he released Barabbas, the one who had been imprisoned for rioting and murder, and Jesus was handed over to the crowd.

As they led Jesus away, they seized Simon — a Cyrenean who was just coming in from the fields — and forced him to carry the cross behind Jesus.

A large crowd was following, many of them women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. At one point, Jesus turned to these women and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t weep for me! Weep rather for yourselves and for your children! The time is coming when it will be said, ‘Blessed are the childless, the wombs that have never given birth, and the breasts that have never nursed.’ Then people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us up!’ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

Two others were also led off with Jesus, criminals who were to be put to death. When they had reached the place called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there — together with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, “Abba forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.” Then they divided his garments, rolling dice for them.

The people stood there watching. The rulers, however, jeered at him and said, “He saved others, let him save himself — if he really is the Messiah of God, the Chosen One!” The soldiers also mocked him. They served Jesus sour wine and said, “If you are really the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was an inscription about Jesus that read, “This is the King of the Jews.”

One of the criminals who hung there beside him insulted Jesus too, saying, “Are you really the Messiah? Then save yourself — and us!”

But the other answered the first with a rebuke: “Don’t you even fear God? We are only paying the price for what we have done, but this one has done nothing wrong!”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your glory.”

Jesus replied, “The truth is, today you’ll be with me in paradise!”

It was about noon, and darkness fell on the whole land until three in the afternoon, because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the curtain in the sanctuary was torn in two, and Jesus uttered a loud cry and said, “Abba, into your hands I commit my spirit.” Saying this, Jesus breathed for the last time.

The centurion who saw this glorified God, saying, “Surely this one was innocent.”

When the crowds that had gathered for the spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts and weeping. All the acquaintances of Jesus and the women who had come with him from Galilee stood at a distance, looking on.

Sending Song:

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded  
*ELW 351 – verses 1, 3, 4*

## Benediction & Dismissal

And now, my friends, go forth  
To a week where transformation  
Will meet you and guide you.  
Do not hide when they recognize you,  
Do not doubt when you see Christ,  
Do not deny when you are confronted.  
Do not stop until you are at the cross  
And there you will see the light  
And the burdens of your heart will roll away.

Go in peace. God's love endures forever.  
**God's love endures forever. Thanks be to God.**

*Our service continues on Good Friday at 7pm*



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**Church Office Hours**  
**Closed on Fridays**  
**Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller**  
M-W 9-12, or by appointment  
[spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com](mailto:spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com)  
**Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant**  
Tuesday 10-1

**Attributions**

Call to Worship – Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, September 2024.

Blessing of the Palms, Prayers of the People, Offertory Prayer - copyright augsburg fortress, 2023

Prayer of the Day: Written by Joanna Harader on her Spacious Faith blog, <http://spaciousfaith.com/>.  
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<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/02/prayer-god-of-foolish-cross.html>.

Prayer of Confession: Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, September 2024. Adapted by Rev. Bermes

Benediction: Written by B. Kevin Smalls, The Africana Worship Book, Year B (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007), 215.