

**KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH**  
**MARCH 24th 2024**  
**Palm Sunday**

<b>The Gathering of the People of God</b>
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**WELCOME & GREETING**

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

***And also with you.***

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

As we gather to worship, we acknowledge the Bidjegal people. We offer our respect to their elders past and present. We honour their care of this Country. We acknowledge their unceded sovereignty. As we walk into Jerusalem with Jesus, a walk showered in love, a walk clothed in justice, we commit ourselves to follow this way of love and justice. We commit to seeking a more just settlement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**KUC MISSION STATEMENT**

**Our VISION is to:**

- to be a loving and caring community, sharing God's love with the world.

**Our MISSION is to:**

- share God's love in the community,
- create a welcoming and inclusive place
- and provide care and support for all.

**Our VALUES:**

**We are a congregation**

**who welcome people of all cultures and lifestyles,  
who create a safe place for the community  
and who share the journey of life and faith.**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

With voices ringing, we cry:

**Hooray!! Hooray!!**

This is the day that the LORD has made;

**let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

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

**We bless you from the house of the LORD.**

Come, let us worship.

## LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

*God is always here*

God is with us

*God is always with us*

## SING: Trotting trotting TiS 244

Trotting, trotting through Jerusalem,  
Jesus sitting on a donkey's back,  
children waving branches, singing:  
"Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!"

Many people in Jerusalem  
thought he should have come on a mighty horse  
leading all the Jews to battle:  
"Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!"

Many people in Jerusalem  
were amazed to see such a quiet man  
trotting, trotting on a donkey:  
"Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!"

Trotting, trotting through Jerusalem,  
Jesus sitting on a donkey's back,  
let us join the children singing:  
"Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!"

## **OPENING PRAYER**

There is a tradition in the Church that through Lent we journey with Jesus towards Jerusalem, following his footsteps towards the cross. We extinguish a candle each week to remind us that Jesus walks on towards his death. We pray that we might take up Christ's courage to walk with love and seek justice. And we pray that we might not falter in this task. Amen.

## **LENTEN CANDLE LIGHTING**

*Extinguish the last Lenten candle.*

## **SING: God to Enfold You – John Bell Iona X2**

**God to enfold you,  
Christ to uphold you,  
Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight.  
So may God grace you,  
heal and embrace you,  
lead you through darkness into the light.**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION & DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

God of grace, who looks lovingly upon us.  
Forgive us when we become entangled in the crowd, when our actions betray us, when our words fail us, when we lose sight of love and justice in the most difficult moments.  
Reawaken our hearts, open our eyes, help us to be true to the Way, each and every day.

### **Words of Grace**

The God who loves Jesus loves us.  
On this day, filled with shouts of praise and tears of suffering, Jesus makes the way for us.  
Let us give thanks and rejoice, practicing the way of love given for us.  
Amen.

# PEACE

May the peace of God be with you. **And also with you.**

**SING: This is the day the Lord has made TIS 74 x2**

**This is the day, this is the day,  
that the Lord has made,  
that the Lord has made.  
We will rejoice, we will rejoice  
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.  
For this is the day that the Lord has made,  
we will rejoice and be glad in it!  
This is the day,  
this is the day that the Lord has made!**

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## The Service of the Word

### BIBLE READINGS:

#### Psalm 118:1-2 and 19-29

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

<sup>2</sup>Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

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

<sup>20</sup>This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

<sup>21</sup>I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

<sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup>This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

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

<sup>25</sup>Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

<sup>26</sup>Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.

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

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

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

## **Mark 11:1-11**

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

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

<sup>10</sup>Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

<sup>11</sup>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.

## **MAKING PALM CROSSES – Richard.**

## **REFLECTION – Deok Hee.**

I can't believe this, but this Sunday marks Palm Sunday. Time flies! It's not simply because Lent this year started a bit earlier compared to last year. Can you believe it? We started six weeks ago on Wednesday, called 'Ash Wednesday'. In our faith, we are

ashes in the beginning when God created the first human, Adam so that we live on dirt and will return to ashes. To remember where we come from and where we return, a sign of the cross of ashes is an important symbol for us. We may ask this question, why must we remember this every year? Why sing and shout “Hosanna!”? I say that ‘Remembering the Ash Wednesday, Lantern Journey, Palm Sunday and Good Friday is a great motivation to take a time of self-reflection so that we naturally take our heart again and again and pray, “Living Christ, let us draw near to you, creating a clean heart in me every day by your unfailing grace.’ Psalm says “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” It was our prayer when Lent began. I guess, returning to our reality, it allows us to take heart again with a new beginning. Being renewed a right spirit is the core conception of Christian life.

Have you ever imagined yourself time-traveling or if you were born during Jesus’ time? I must admit, I am kind of glad that I wasn’t born back then, that I wasn’t around Jerusalem and around Bethlehem to be confronted by Jesus’ teachings and the signs, wonders that he performed. I really want to see Jesus and his great things, but I wonder how I would have reacted to him. Would I become a good Christian or not? I am not sure. It must be hard. As we know, there were many ways that people reacted. So, I wonder, would I have been like the Pharisees? Would I have been like disciples? If you were there, what would you have been like? We all probably were one of the people who shouted “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!” People either side shouting hosanna, waving leaves and putting clothes and palm leaves on the ground for Jesus, Jesus enters Jerusalem as their Messiah!

‘Salvation’ and ‘Glory’ are definite themes that follow Jesus wherever he goes especially on Palm Sunday. But this also shows us that people have different and wrong ideas of ‘Salvation’ and ‘Glory’. That’s why I am glad that I wasn’t there. However, if we must be there as one of the characters in this story, what do you want to be? Disciples? Pharisees? Or the people shouting Hosanna? How about this? Would you be able to be a donkey? I know that it sounds funny and strange. We may say the donkey is a symbol that demonstrated an ideal king or what Jesus wants to accomplish in Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” We may say, “Jesus is a humble king, or a sacrificial animal have to be one that is pure”. Yes. there are all good but today I do want to focus on the Donkey itself. So, I want to uplift the crucial importance of imagination to understand. I encourage you now to use your imaginations to visualize the story that you are a donkey. I am not talking about the donkey that carried Christ into the city. Surely, it is a great and huge privilege to be used by Jesus. Also, I am not talking about this “Jesus has a plan for us just as he had plans for the donkey, but I want to highlight this passage. It says “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”. Did you find something that I want to share the symbolic word? “Tied” “Untying.”

We are certainly not donkeys, but I'd like to tell you that our relationship to this story maybe this. Many of us are tied up or we are tied up with something. And like the tied donkey in the story, we seem like the tied donkey. There is a reason why I want to emphasize this story. Now, our community, society and world need right spirit because we are living in a suffering world. We hear almost every day, tragic crimes that killed precious lives without any guilt. People hate, bully, degrade. It is a disgrace. During the pandemic, we've heard so many hate crimes, sad news which involves racism, discrimination, and human's sinful nature. Such events have overtaken others and could overtake us. Lack of human interaction, we are becoming angry bird without realizing it. I could say, we are becoming tied up with something and we are placed outside of the street, placed at the door like a donkey. We know that God speaks to us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." It is never, ever an easy task so that we may try to revenge it. I hope that it would be a good opportunity to reflect onto our hearts with those words "tied, untying." Let us look at our life and our world. Are there any ropes holding you back keeping you from amazing grace? Are there ropes that keep you guilty or addiction? Are there ropes that keeping away from suffering Jesus? What do you expect from Palm Sunday this year? As for myself, that I wear this stole because it helps me to remember that there is dignity to my calling as a minister. Some Sundays, I can feel this stole to be so heavy. Some Sundays, I can feel the opposite. Whether it feels heavy or not, I always try to remember why I am here. And I must surrender and die myself and rely on Christ for what he wants. If I completely insensitive to my identity, I will be failed. I am going to the wall. Sometimes, I can hear some inner voices from deep inside my mind. This voice is a small but powerful saying, "You don't deserve to be here. You are not good enough to preach". I would say, I am tied by this voice. What needs 'untying' in me?

I want to share one episode. You may know that the Korean church prohibits smoking and drinking. Sometimes these two determine whether you are a good or bad Christian. About 20 years ago, I moved into the UTC family student unit in North Parramatta. It wasn't easy with two small children at that time, organizing removal company, boxing and unboxing etc. The day I finished moving, we needed to buy something to eat. At night, Elin said, "I want to have a glass of wine with cheese, because of such a tough day." "Elin, when should I get it from? Many Koreans are living nearby." I thought, "That may be, but given the situation, I may have to give in anyway." I found the nearest Dan Murphy on the internet, it said it closes at 8 pm. So, I decided to go at 7:50pm to be safe. I entered the car park and there were only 4 cars including mine. 'Hmmm two would be the staff, and one would be a security guard.' I felt relieved and went into the shop. I quickly grabbed the bottle of wine and as I was heading out, but I bumped into the other customer. I was horrified because he was Korean that I know. I went home and Elin asked me, 'How did it go? Did you meet anyone? I said, 'Yes' and Elin was worried. But then I continued, 'He was Korean - Korean minister!' So, the man I met at the shop was a Korean minister! (He had the same concern as I had. That's why we bumped into each other at Dan Murphy, 10 minutes before trading hours.) What a funny story! Then, we knew each other before, but through this little

happening, our relationship totally changed. We became good friends. This happening brought a big change in our relationship. What I want to say, between my friend and I are set free from hiding our secrets. After that I set free whether drink or not, it doesn't matter to me. It doesn't mean whether a good Christian or not. I've learnt what is important, we don't need to stuck with non-essential thing.

This obscure in today's story, little incident may be a metaphor for our lives particularly this season of passion week. I would guess that we find ourselves tied down by something that limits our sense of freedom in Christ. It would be not just one thing, but many things. Like verse 5, "Some of the bystanders saying, what are you doing, untying the colt?", there is something that scatters us from what we believe in and long for. There are much more profound and basic reason why we need to be untied. Because we are forgiven sinners who deny and distort our created being, enabled by God's grace to begin life anew in faith. How are you tied down? and What is tying you down? We don't need anyone but ourselves, and only you can begin the process. Christ wants us to untie and let go of our bondage, and we will be able to unite ropes when we respond in faith. Yes, This Palm Sunday tells us that Christ has entered our lives and wants to untie what is tying us down and how we are tied down. As we take the time in our own way to be untied in him, we will be free and recognize him as our saviour and king.

Sisters and brothers in Christ! We are entering the passion week, and may we recognize these times of suffering when they're upon us, respond to the call, and untie all that needs untying. I pray that today's reflection helps us to find something within ourselves, in our own private space, personal being, and then Christ will untie and let them go. Amen.

## **SING: The King of glory comes the nation rejoices TIS 279**

**The King of glory comes,  
the nation rejoices,  
open the gates before him,  
lift up your voices.**

**Who is the King of glory,  
how shall we call him?  
He is Immanuel,  
the promised of ages.**

**The King of glory comes,  
the nation rejoices,  
open the gates before him,  
lift up your voices.**

**In all of Galilee,  
in city or village,  
he goes among his people  
curing their illness.**



**The King of glory comes,  
the nation rejoices,  
open the gates before him,  
lift up your voices.**

**Sing then of David's son,  
our Saviour and brother;  
in all of Galilee  
was never another.**

**The King of glory comes,  
the nation rejoices,  
open the gates before him,  
lift up your voices.**

**He gave his life for us,  
the pledge of salvation;  
he took upon himself  
the sins of the nation.**

**The King of glory comes,  
the nation rejoices,  
open the gates before him,  
lift up your voices.**

**He conquered sin and death;  
he truly has risen,  
and he will share with us  
his heavenly vision.**

**The King of glory comes,  
the nation rejoices;  
open the gates before him,  
lift up your voices.**

**The King of glory comes,  
the nation rejoices!**

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## **OFFERING**

Accept the gifts we bring together this day.  
May they be an invitation to love, and a call for justice.  
May they be used in the world for the enrichment of all. Amen.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## PRAYERS FOR OTHERS & THE LORD'S PRAYER

**God of the palms and cross,**

**hear us as we pray.**

For those living without feeling loved, may they see love in our eyes.

**God of the palms and cross,**

**hear us as we pray.**

For those living with the injustices of this world, may our voices ring out with justice for them in solidarity.

**God of the palms and cross,**

**hear us as we pray.**

For the brokenness in our societies and systems which creates barriers and injustice, may we work to break down the divisions among us.

**God of the palms and cross,**

**hear us as we pray.**

For those dedicated to creating ways for justice, may we walk the Way with them, expanding their reach, creating fairness, inclusion, and equality in your name.

**God of the palms and cross,**

**hear us as we pray.**

For those dedicated to loving the unloved, may we practice the Way like them, seeing with new eyes and loving without reservation.

**God of the palms and cross,**

**hear us as we pray. Amen.**

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 in the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen.

## **SING: Ride on ride on the time is right Iona John Bell**

**Ride on, ride on, the time is right:  
the roadside crowd screams with delight;  
palm branches mark the pilgrim way  
where beggars squat and children play.**

**Ride on, ride on, your critics wait,  
intrigue and rumour circulate;  
new lies abound in word and jest,  
and truth becomes a suspect guest.**

**Ride on, ride on, while well aware  
that those who shout and wave and stare  
are mortals who, with common breath,  
can crave for life and lust for death.**

**Ride on, ride on, though blind with tears,  
though dumb to speak and deaf to jeers.  
your path is clear, though few can tell  
their garments pave the road to Hell.**

**Ride on, ride on, the room is let,  
the wine matured, the saw is whet;  
and dice your death-throes shall attend  
though faith, not fate, dictates your end.**

**Ride on, ride on, God's love demands.  
justice and peace lie in your hands.  
evil and angel voices rhyme:  
this is the man and this the time.**

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### **The Sending Forth of the People of God**

#### **BLESSING**

What began as a day of celebration, concludes with an air of trepidation.  
What began with shouts of acclaim, concludes with tables turned, con-  
demnation and betrayal.  
As we go from this moment into the coming days, may we live the Way,  
as Jesus did in these moments,  
Loving even when it hurts.

## **SING: When his time was over the palms lay where they fell Tis 357**

**When his time was over the palms lay where they fell.  
As they ate together he told his friends farewell.  
Jesus, though you cried out for some other end,  
love could only choose a cross  
when our life began again.**

**Secretly they planned it, with money changing hands;  
in the quiet garden a kiss betrayed their man.  
Priests and elders tried him. Soldiers crowned him king.  
We were in the crowd that day  
when our life began again.**

**Women wept to see him; he said, "Don't weep for me."  
Many laughed and mocked him: "Forgive them, they don't see."  
Jesus, please forgive me, you know what I am;  
I was one who nailed your hands  
when our life began again.**

**There was one who asked you, "Remember me this day."  
Jesus, when I'm dying, remember me that way;  
when my life is over, be with me, my friend,  
like the thief upon the cross,  
when our life began again.**