

**Sermon Notes** April 14, 2019

**Focus** liturgical stuff for Holy Week including Palm Sunday

**Lectionary Readings**

[https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearC\\_RCL/HolyDays/CPalmSun\\_RCL.html](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearC_RCL/HolyDays/CPalmSun_RCL.html)

In the sermon notes, I usually focus on a particular biblical text, but today I want to get 'liturgically nerdy' with you. I will look at hymns on Good Friday and return to biblical texts on Easter Sunday. Pastor Susan will preach Maundy Thursday and Easter Vigil!

### **Palm Sunday - The Liturgy**

Early in my clergy life, I railed against Palm Sunday. I thought it was too confusing and too packed with themes to have the "right" impact. I would advocate strongly for it either being Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday - but I was an associate priest; therefore, was just patted on the head.

Maybe I have enjoyed the kool-aid too much over the years, but I've come to really like Palm Sunday and its whiplash effect. You start high, go low and then you come back up a little higher at communion. It's a worthwhile experience -- this liturgical dissonance. However, I'm still not happy!

One thing I still have a liturgical itch about is Communion. **NOT** this year, but maybe in a year or two, I want to take communion away altogether on Palm Sunday. (You may now move to your fainting divan in order to collapse from the horror of the thought.) A seminary teacher said one time, "You can preach heresy from the pulpit without people batting an eye, but move a candle and you'll have World War III." Knowing that, some of you are already getting nervous by me even mentioning this, so think about the liturgical flow with me.

In this alternate Palm Sunday sans Communion -- We sing Hosanna, have a Palm procession (everything is as it should be). In the middle we dive into a singing/preaching meditation. Then we read the passion story at the end only to send you out blinking -- metaphorically booted out into the world for Holy Week. A different vibe, don't you think?

You would only get one Communion break during the middle of the week journey - Maundy Thursday (another whiplash service.) We wash each other's hands in a very intimate service. Then we strip the Altar and leave in isolated silence. Like I said, no liturgy will change in 2019, but want your thoughts on anything that I may have provoked you to consider.

### **Palm Sunday - the Palms themselves**

The four gospels say basically the same thing

- **John 12** They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!"
- **Luke 19** As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

- **Matthew 21** A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.
- **Mark 11** Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields.

I point out that only John's Gospel mentions Palms. There is a way that you can celebrate Palm Sunday without palms. You can cut any kind of branch and wave it around and still have the assurance you are not desecrating Palm Sunday. Don't worry, I am **not** plotting to get rid of Palms on Palm Sunday. We can have palms o' plenty in the years to come. Just wanted to give you some context.

**The Triduum (Three days) --**

**Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil/Easter Sunday**

The Triduum is the sacred three days. It begins on the evening of Thursday, April 18, and ends with Easter evening, April 21st. More practically, our 7:30pm Maundy Thursday service begins the Triduum. The Triduum effectively ends after church on Easter morning unless you count Easter brunch as part of the holy three.

It is a really powerful three days. We start with washing hands and then move to stripping the Altar on Thursday evening. We come back the next day to a barren church and try to grow comfortable with the "absence" on Friday. We are back Saturday to watch and pray; to ring and celebrate Easter during the Vigil.

Unless you are a priest, you typically don't do Saturday evening and Sunday morning in the same year. Saturday and Sunday are 'proper' Easter services. This year why don't you do the trifecta? Come Thursday and Friday and then return Saturday or Sunday.

**Saturday at 7:30pm**

Bring your bells if you are coming on Saturday evening. If you don't have a bell, we have a few. We will literally ring in Easter on Saturday evening.

**Sunday**

Bring your scavenger hunt brain if you are coming Sunday morning. We will have an all family Easter scavenger hunt after 9am and 11am service instead of an Egg Hunt.

<b>Easter Sunday Morning</b>	
7:30am	Worship starts on Labyrinth and continues in the church for sermon and Communion
9am	Easter Music and Communion
10am	Patio Fellowship (weather permitting) with "Easter Scavenger Hunt"
11am	Easter Music and Communion "Easter Scavenger Hunt" Patio Fellowship after worship ~ 12pm.

**Todd**