



An Online Church Service

Palm Sunday Intergenerational Service:

“The Rocks Will Cry Out”

*This service is designed for an online church gathering.
We also have an outline for an in-person church service.*

Beforehand:

- Invite people bring:
 - o to wear a coat to the call, that they don't mind putting on the ground to be trod on.
 - o A rock from their garden, stone
 - o A branch or large leaf
- Give out the script to a couple of good readers

**Service length: 45mins approx.

Welcome: 1min

We have gathered together this morning to meet with each other and to meet with God. It doesn't matter how young we are or how old we are. It doesn't matter where we have come from, or where we are going. The colour of our skin, or the language of our heart. God is present here with us this morning. This morning we will enter into the events of Palm Sunday. Together we will become the crowd who gathered that day to watch Jesus arrive into the city.

We are all part of that crowd, gathered in Jerusalem about 2000 years ago. Something is about to happen, something that will change everything forever!

Opening Prayer 2mins

Our Journey Begins: 3mins

Have a one or two readers of different ages organised to read this:

Our journey today starts in Jerusalem, a bustling busy place. Crowded and chaotic. People have gathered from everywhere because it's time to celebrate the Passover. The place is packed! In fact, Josephus tells us that one Passover they kept count of the number of lambs killed for this festival – 256 thousand.

Josephus reckoned there must have been about 2 million people in Jerusalem. Wall to wall people. There are people on your right and on your left. A big crowd. And tensions run high. The Romans are in charge of this city. And they don't like crowds. Crowds can easily get out of control. They have in the past and there have been riots. So, the romans are nervous. There are soldiers everywhere, keeping an eye on the people. Making sure nothing happens.

As you sit in the crowd you look over and see a roman soldier nearby. He glares at you, and the sharp point of his spear flashes in the sunlight. You look away. Word passes among the crowd that Jesus is heading this way. Jesus, that guy from Galilee, the one who stopped a storm and brought people back to life, the one whose teaching stopped you in your tracks. Amazing! And he's in town. Someone yells out, let's go find him. You are up and the crowd is moving. Where is Jesus? There is pushing and shoving as people squeeze down the narrow streets. Where is Jesus? And then someone waves a palm branch in the air. Where did she get that from? And then another. Where did he get that from? Palms don't grow up here in Jerusalem, they must have picked them up on their journey to the city.

And another. Before you know it, palm branches are being waved everywhere.

[If you have brought a branch or leaf along with you, wave it so we can all see them on our screens.]

You get nervous. A palm branch is not there to fan you to keep you cool, it's not a pretty way of decorating the place. A palm branch is a sign of revolution. If you wave a palm branch you are saying, "Down with the Romans!" It says, "We want our freedom!" All of this for Jesus. And then someone yells out, Hosanna! Which simply means, save us now! And everyone joins in, Hosanna they yell.

It's been two hundred years since Judas Maccabeus rode into town and took control. That was an amazing victory. What a hero. And now, here comes Jesus. He will rescue us, he will save us. Hosanna, save us Jesus! You could say the dry kindling was all arranged. The bases were loaded. The bullets were in the barrel. All Jesus had to do was light the fire, swing the bat, pull the trigger — just make the slightest move and the crowd would have joined him to take over from the Romans. The crowd were ready for a fight. Here comes Jesus!

Bible Reading: 5 mins

- Option 1: Luke 19:28 – 40. Use the ‘The Message’ version. Have several good readers of different ages to read it, a section each.
- Option 2: Play Luke 19:28-40 from the Lumo Project: [link](#) (Play the first 2 minutes)

Put yourself in the story: 15mins

Let’s put ourselves into this story. We are the crowd. We have watched Jesus arrive on a donkey.

There are six people in this story who we will imagine in the crowd that day. For example, a person who has a daughter who Jesus healed during one of his visits to Nazareth.

Breakout Groups:

This could be 6 breakout groups of 4-5 people. If you have a large group, you may create more characters, or double up.

In your breakout group you will be given a person to imagine. Your task as a small group will be to look at the description and answer this question: why are you in the crowd today? For example – Jesus healed my daughter, and I am so grateful. I had to come today to say thanks and to praise him. He’s amazing!

You will have about 8 minutes in your groups. Talk briefly about your person and why they are there. Then choose one person in your group to feedback to the whole, to pretend to be this person as you present.

1. Jesus healed your sick daughter.
2. You are a Roman soldier.
3. You are a leader in the synagogue.
4. Jesus came to your house for dinner one night.
5. Jesus borrowed your donkey.
6. Jesus told you to pick up your mat and walk.

Feedback:

Invite 6 breakout groups max to report back, having one person per group set into character to report on: Why are you here today?

Ask the congregation: Now I want you to use your imagination. If you had lived in Jerusalem at that time, would you have left your house that morning and found your way to this crowd? What would you have called out to Jesus as he went by? Why would you seek out Jesus?

Add your thoughts into the **chat screen**.

Read out some of the suggestions.

Palm Branches: 5mins

Let's bring the next scene to life.

Have someone read this out: People called out: "Hooray! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the King of Israel!" "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" John's gospel tells us they waved palm fronds about and laid them on the road in front of Jesus. Luke tells us they laid coats and garments on the road.

If you have brought a branch and a coat with you, now is the time to get them ready.

As I read that scripture again, please wave your branches around and lie your coats on the ground.

People called out: "Hooray! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the King of Israel!" "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

Rocks: 2mins

People were shouting out praise, they were waving palm fronds, they were laying down their coats. But not everyone was so excited.

Luke tells us that some of the leaders of the church, the Pharisees were getting really upset. They even told Jesus to get them to stop. Tell your friends to stop it. They can't do this, they can't say these things. But Jesus says something really amazing back. Does anyone remember what Jesus said? "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

Nothing will stop these people from praising me, and even if you silence them, the very earth will keep on praising. What's going on? Well, you see the Pharisees didn't recognise who Jesus was, but the rocks did. They knew that Jesus was actually God, Jesus was there when the world was made. The rocks, the trees, everything that flies and swims and runs, and us too. The rocks recognised their creator. In fact, as the Easter story goes on, we realise that not only did the rocks praise Jesus, but the very earth grieved when Jesus died. The sun stopped shining and a great

earthquake split the ground up when Jesus died. You can stop the people, but the whole earth knows who Jesus is and you can't stop that!

Reflection: 8mins

If you brought a rock or stone with you to this call, go and get it now and hold it up so we can all see. We want to give you some time to think about Jesus. Maybe there is something you want to praise Jesus for. Today. Jesus, who took this journey for us. He knew that riding into Jerusalem on a donkey was going to get him in trouble. He knew what was going to happen, but he did it anyway. He did it because of his great love for us and for the world. We are going to play some quiet music and we invite you to hold your rock. If you have a marker pen, you could write a word or idea on your rock.

Play a song that fits the theme. Here are two suggestions:

- [A thousand hallelujahs](#)
- [Rocks cry out](#)

This week, place your rock somewhere where you can see it as a reminder of what Jesus went through on Palm Sunday.

Thanks for coming and prayer to close: 2mins.

For more Lent and Easter resources see:

www.sunzbreakthrough.org.nz

