



Holy Week

GATHER

As you begin, pray together.

Read God's holy Word.

Matthew 21:1-11

Anticipatory Grief and Joy

"In the desert, the whole community grumbled" — Do you ever feel like you are a part of a whole community grumbling? Or maybe you are the one that people are grumbling against? Either way, dissatisfaction in life is real; and further, many of us hold expectations of being able to fix our "problems." In American culture, we can plan, execute, solve, and sway our challenges and difficulties into submission—or so we think. But, what we can learn in this Exodus story is that there is a deeper truth here about trust. The Israelites (like us) need to relinquish their control and trust God to provide for them. The Israelites (like us) need to stop and rest in God and His promises and provision for us.

EQUIP

Take some time to pause and then consider the questions together as a group.

- As you prepare for Holy Week and Easter, what is something you find yourself most anticipating? And is there something you tend to avoid or put off during this time?
- What do you imagine the disciples were anticipating as this moment unfolded before them?
- How might the disciples have wrestled with confusion—hearing Christ boldly declare Himself the righteous Davidic Messiah, while also recalling His earlier acknowledgment that He would soon suffer and die?
- The disciples may have been filled with uncertainty, but Jesus moved forward with unwavering clarity—driven by love. Have you ever witnessed this kind of love—the kind that presses on even when something painful lies ahead (a diagnosis, a divorce, a death)?
- How can we be present with someone walking through anticipatory grief—when the sorrow has already begun, even though the loss is still to come?
- In this Holy Week, as we look toward the cross and also the empty tomb, what are some practical ways we can draw near to Jesus—being present with Him in both His suffering and His promised resurrection?

ENGAGE

Join us for our Holy Week observations and Easter Celebration:

- Maundy Thursday (the passover supper) on Thursday, April 17th at 7 pm in the Sanctuary.
- Good Friday on Friday, April 18th at 7 pm in the Sanctuary.
- Easter Services: 8 & 11 am in the Sanctuary (Traditional Service) and 10:45 am in Grand Hall (Contemporary Service).
- Join the Children & Family Ministry for a Family Celebration on the lawn beginning at 10:30 am.

Close in Prayer

BLESSING FOR PALM SUNDAY

By Kate Bowler

Jesus, from that mountain
high among the olive trees,

it would have been an easy journey
down to the city,
to Jerusalem, which lay below.

So why choose to make your way
on a donkey,
on an everyday beast of burden,
your feet almost dragging on the ground?
And who are these people running, bending low,
to spread their precious cloaks
on the road before you,
waving palm branches and shouting,
“Save us! Hosanna to the Son of David!”?
What is the raw and urgent hope that rises in their songs?
“Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord!”
And, Jesus, why are you smiling?

Because it is true what they are saying,
though they can't yet know the whole of it.
It is happening. It is unfolding
in slow motion,
the fulfillment of that promise from of old:
their savior would come,
humble, and riding on a donkey.

Blessed are we, on this side of history
shouting, “Come, Lord, save us too!”
We know how it ends, and still we forget
to rush toward our humble,
forgettable king
and yell, “Hosanna, hosanna,
our hope is in you!”