

Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on Palm Sunday March 28th 2021 at 10:45.

The current lockdown restrictions have resulted in the decision to not meet in person at Bethesda Chapel at present. We plan to use our YouTube channel to broadcast the services, but will still continue to provide this written service sheet. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we all seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Colin welcomes us.

“Good morning to you all on this last Sunday of March. I hope you remembered to put your clocks forward an hour to summer time. We give you a warm welcome to our on-line service for Blackburn Baptist Church. Wherever, whenever and however you able to watch our service, we thank you for joining with us. If you are watching for the first time, we pray that the Lord will richly bless you, as we seek to worship him together. May the Lord of life and glory be truly exalted in our midst in and through the Holy Spirit as we praise the Saviour for his great goodness towards us. Today is a special day in the Christian calendar: it is Palm Sunday, which marks the start of Holy Week. On this day, he rode triumphantly into Jerusalem and was greeted as the Messiah or King. The crowds waved palm branches and shouted ‘Hosanna in the Highest Heaven’. So it won’t come as any surprise that our first hymn this morning is called ‘Hosanna’. If you are able to stand, please do so, and grab something to wave around as you dance and sing to the music. If you can’t find anything then just clap away. As you can see I’ve got my palm branches ready, so let us do justice to this great hymn of praise.”

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest,

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

Lord, we lift up your name, with our hearts full of praise,
be exalted, O Lord, my God,
Hosanna in the highest!

Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings!

Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings!

Lord, we lift up your name, with our hearts full of praise,
be exalted, O Lord our God,
Hosanna in the highest!

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, is the King of kings!

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, is the King of kings!

Lord, we lift up your name, with our hearts full of praise,
be exalted, O Lord our God,
Hosanna in the highest.

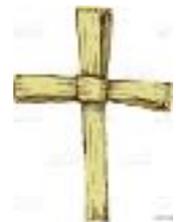
Colin leads us as we pray together:

“Our Saviour God, we thank you this morning for sending your Son and paving the way for our lives to be set free through Jesus' death on the cross. Thank you for what this day stands for - the beginning of Holy Week, the start of the journey towards the power of the cross, the victory of the Resurrection, and the rich truth that Jesus is our King of Heaven. *"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord..."* We give you praise and honour for your ways are righteous and true. We worship you for who you are and what you have done for us because of your great love. For your lovingkindness endures forever. Thank you that your ways are far greater than our ways, your thoughts far deeper than our thoughts. Thank you that you had a plan to save us. Thank you that you make all things new. Thank you that your face is towards us, and you hear our prayers, and know our hearts. Help us to stay strong and true to you. Help us not to follow after the voice of the crowds, but to come close to you, to hear your whispers, and seek after you alone.

We praise you, we bless you Lord! Thank you that you reign supreme and we are more than conquerors through the gift of Jesus Christ! In the Mighty Name of Jesus, we ask this. Amen.”

Colin: Palm Crosses

“It is the custom on Palm Sunday to distribute palm crosses, like this one. As we are not holding our service today in the chapel that will be rather difficult to do. However, as we are hoping to return to the chapel next Sunday, for our Easter Sunday celebration, you can, if you are able to be present, pick one up then. If you will not be able to join us, and you would like one, then please get in touch with me by some means and I will be more than happy to send you one in the post. I have obtained a bag of 50, so there should be enough to go around. They were made in a village in Tanzania, Africa.



You can put it on your notice board, if you have one in the kitchen, or you can attach it to your bedroom door for Easter, or if you are a keen reader you can use it as a bookmark. Whichever way you wish to use it, I would like you to treat it as a symbol, an *aide de memoir*, of our Lord as the King of Peace. We live in troubled times, not least because of the pandemic. And for many people, the word peace is probably the last word that comes to their minds to sum up their inner condition and feelings at the present time. And this may also be true for yourself. So whenever you pick up this palm cross or touch it I want you to say a brief peace-prayer to the Lord by stating someone or something that troubles you at this time for which you would like the Lord to anoint or bless with his peace. It may be yourself: you may be feeling down or upset or unwell; you may be going to hospital for an appointment. Ask the Lord to grant you peace. Or, it may be a family member, or a

neighbour, who is going through a difficult time at the moment, then ask the Lord to shower them with his blessing of peace. Or, you may have read about something in the papers or seen something terrible on the news channels that troubles you and is crying out for the peace of God in Christ, then ask him to intervene in the situation, so that lives may be touched with the gospel of peace and reconciliation, for his name's sake."

We can sing again, another familiar hymn, though sung to a guitar and piano and drum accompaniment on this video, rather than the expected organ, but if you're reading this at home, you can imagine whichever instruments you like!
It's Rejoice the Lord is King, written by Charles Wesley.

Rejoice, the Lord is King:
Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing,
and triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart,
lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
The God of truth and love;
when He has purged our stains,
He took his seat above'
Lift up your heart,
lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
the keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus giv'n.
Lift up your heart,
lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord and judge shall come
and take His servants up
to their eternal home.
Lift up your heart,
lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Charles Wesley, Public domain
CCL No 5664

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgyUp0i2MnQ>

Janet now reads the Bible passage for today, Matthew 21, 1-11

"The triumphal entry"

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet:

"Say to the Daughter of Zion,
 'See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
 and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

"May God bless his word to each one of us."

Those watching today rather than reading can see a short video from Whiteboard ministries, entitled: 'The story of a very important donkey' It is an animated version of the Bible reading we have just heard, which may help some of all ages to understand the significance of it in a fresh way.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vrELDWUP3k>

Shirley leads us in our prayers of intercession.

"Lord Jesus Christ you entered Jerusalem in quiet humility, taking the form of a servant, even to the point of death on the cross, emptying yourself so that we might be filled.

 Come again now and establish your kingdom.

Come afresh to our troubled world, with all its needs, its tensions, its problems, and its evil.

 Come again now and establish your kingdom.

Bring healing where there is division, love where there is hatred, hope where there is despair, joy where there is sorrow, confidence where there is fear, strength where there is weakness, healing where there is sickness, life where there is death.

 Come again now and establish your kingdom.

Lord Jesus Christ, reach out to your church and world, despite the weakness of our faith, and the rejection of so many. May your will be done on earth even as it is in heaven.

Come again now and establish your kingdom, for in your name we pray. Amen

Dear Father,

We thank you for each day that you give us, for sunshine and rain, we need both. For the early signs of spring, daffodils, crocuses, buds on the trees, knowing that out of death you bring life. For the love of family, friends and neighbours and the care and communication that has been such a positive during lockdown. For our church family, the love between us, the compassion and care for others and the desire that we have to share the love of Jesus our saviour.

We remember those countries in our world who are unable to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine. We pray that we in the UK particularly will have compassion and find a way to champion the way forward to enable others to be blessed as we have been.

We remember too all those in many countries who are living in poverty, especially at this time we think of Myanmar. We pray that the violence will cease and that peace will reign. Be with them Lord and undertake for them in their many struggles.

We remember too Brian and Jackie Chilvers our BMS World Mission partners. Give them patience and fortitude as they wait for the okay to start their work in Chad. Your timing Lord is perfect.

Following on Lord; something that we talked to you about in our last prayer meeting reminded me of a quote I once heard from a man called Edmund Burke which was quoted in a speech by John F Kennedy in 1961: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Dear Father, help us to be not only bold in prayer but to trust the prompting of your Holy Spirit to speak out aloud and in written word. Stir us up to defend the honour of your name and the truth of your word in the holy Bible. As the song says: "Restore the Lord the honour of your name, in works of sovereign power, come shake the Earth again, that men may see and come with reverent fear to the living God whose kingdom shall outlast the years."

And now nearer to home: we have thanked you Lord for our families, church, family and friends, but now in the quietness of our hearts we bring before you all those who need your healing touch in body, mind and spirit.

(Silence)

And finally a reflection prayer for this last year.

It is so hard, loving God, to express all that is in our hearts today.

So much has made us sorrowful, and we commend to you all who have died, all who mourn, all who are still ill, and all separated from their loved ones.

So much has made us anxious. And we bring to you all who are burdened by worries about their health, their jobs, their education or their finances.

So much has made us thankful. The care of the NHS, the vaccine, the work of so many in their communities.

It is so hard, loving God, to express all that is on our hearts today but you know it all and we put our trust in you. Amen."

Time for music again, this time a Graham Kendrick song for Palm Sunday, *Make Way, Make Way*. When it is sung by a group of people it is generally sung with an echo - seen in brackets here - sometimes mens voices followed by the ladies!

Make way, make way for Christ the King in splendour arrives.
Fling wide the gates and welcome Him into your lives.
 Make way! (Make way!) Make way! (Make way!)
 For the King of kings (For the King of kings)
 Make way! (Make way!) Make way! (Make way!)
 And let His kingdom in.

He comes the broken hearts to heal, the prisoners to free.
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance, the blind shall see.
 Make way! (Make way!)....

And those who mourn with heavy hearts, who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown, he'll beautify.
 Make way! (Make way!)....

We call you now to worship Him as Lord of all,
to have no gods before Him, their thrones must fall!
 Make way! (Make way!)....

Graham Kendrick
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alCQ7fb0hEA>

Colin now brings his message for today.

John 12.9-19

Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!"

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him. Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised

him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸ Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

A False Spring

We all know what a False Spring feels like, don't we? After all, we've had our fair share of them in recent years. How we long for spring and the renewal of life each year! And especially this year after what seems like endless months of incarceration due to the Covid-19 virus. Stiff from a long winter of snow, ice and rain, we are aching to get out into the garden and mow the lawn and smell the flowers, and even into the countryside, or to the seaside for a fun day out. To say we welcome spring is really to understate our feelings. We yearn for it! We long to see the daffodils springing forth, like trophies of better things to come. We get into these months of March and April and there are some warm days, and indeed some of the warmest days of the year – this has certainly been a pattern in recent years. 'Unseasonably warm,' we observe. Buds on trees begin to swell. Time to clean the walking boots and check the bicycle. And then we sink back into the misery of winter. Those tulips that heralded the start of some better weather now stand bedraggled in the garden, seemingly drowned in torrential rain, looking like awkward guests who have arrived too early at a party. And old-timers say: 'We told you so. We've lived in Lancashire far too long to be surprised by an early spring. Ne'er cast a clout till May's out!' With a grudge, we pull out our boots and coats from their premature storage. The pall of winter settles down again. The false spring has done its work.

On a promising day of spring over 2000 years ago, Jesus rode into Jerusalem. A recent event had encouraged His followers to believe the springtime of God's kingdom-rule was budding. One who marched among them — at a respectable distance, no doubt — was Lazarus, recently risen from among the dead. Along the path, crowds shouted praise because of his deliverance from the tomb. He was living and breathing evidence of Jesus' power! 'Hosanna!' they sang, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!' The people's redemption-song stunned Jerusalem's officials who sought to put Jesus and his grave-cloaked friend to death. Because of what happened we have named this day 'Palm Sunday'. We call it 'The Triumphal Entry'. As parades go, it was probably no match for our modern carnivals, but even so it had quite an impact.

Indeed, for those who marched into the city that Sunday, it was a breath of spring air. For Israel, winter's long wait seemed over. The lonely night-time vigil of the Kingdom was past. The Messiah had come! Deliverance from Rome seemed in sight. Visions of great King David danced in their heads, for he had founded Israel as a nation; he had established Jerusalem as a capital, a royal court, and a seat of government. Israel had been powerful and respected. The poor and oppressed were treated with justice. Such glory had long departed, and its renewal was long overdue. Now these simple folk saw, as the religious and political leaders did not, the Kingdom in the pangs of rebirth. God would rule again! The supremacy of Israel would again be felt among the nations. The LORD again would dwell in his Temple. No doubt they recalled the prophecy of Zechariah:

‘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.
I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.
He will proclaim peace to the nations.
His rule will extend from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.’

But it was a False Spring! Soon their songs choked in their throats. Hosannas became dust in their lungs. The joyful crowd which swelled the chorus became the angry mob. Their song of triumph turned into a coarse chant: “Crucify Him! Crucify Him! We have no king but Caesar.” The expectations of many lay lifeless on the ground.

And so this scene is repeated, played over and over in each generation, with a donkey and palm branches. It may be the story of our own Christian pilgrimage. We, like those pilgrims of old, no doubt began our Christian lives with noble motives, high hopes, clear visions, strong resolve. We were, as they were, eager to shout ‘Hosanna!’ Our lives now seemed to have a noble purpose. The enthusiasm of those around us was contagious. Then came the burdens of life, such as family problems, work-related stresses, possibly even times of unemployment, money issues, illnesses, age and its struggles, and even this Covid pandemic, when we realized we had not counted the cost of what life can throw in our path. It may even seem that the enemy has out-flanked us. As a result, it may now be prudent to look the other way and to take up a tamer song. Our joyful spirits and ideals are put aside for more “practical” approaches to our lives. And we allow ourselves to admit that what we thought was a time of promise was only a False Spring. And here we are, still reeling from the effects of the Pandemic! But yet even a False Spring can be a taste; a promise of things to come. Though the winter has not had its last hurrah, spring and summer will indeed come!

So take heart! Palm Sunday is a symbol of great things to come, of resurrection. The False Spring reminds us we cannot move from Palm Sunday to Easter, and the time of great things, without passing over Golgotha and through the tomb. For it is true that as soon as we are born we begin to die. It is also true that before we can begin to live we must learn to die, to put aside the things of this weary body and this weary world. Only when we have mastered that lesson can we be free for abundant living. But how can we master that lesson, you may ask? Let us recall the Lord’s words: *‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.’* We have passed from death to life. There is no need to live in the shadow of death, nervous as birds that can be frightened by a mere clap of the hands. Once we have come to grips with that truth we can get on with what is important. Realizing winter

returns after a False Spring but knowing that true spring will come, we can abandon pretense and get on to living with purpose, empowered by the Spirit of the Risen Christ.

In other words, death has been conquered and we can sing with praise:

'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:54-57) We do not despair then. Today is only a kind of False Spring. Christ did not ride into a mere religious citadel, no matter how much or how often we call it a "Holy City." He rode to His destiny to seal His fate as the Lamb of God and the future of all who believe in Him. This story is a symbol of things to come, of things as they can be, for that False Spring assures us the Kingdom will come to those who have eyes of faith. Even as the shadow of a cross hangs over this parade, making our celebration short lived, let this festive day — these songs of joy and triumph — encourage us to walk in faith toward a garden of agony and a hill of suffering, confident that night will pass and a day of renewal will be ushered in. That False Spring says 'Not yet. Wait a little longer. We must first pass the cross and the tomb.' *'And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen'* (1 Peter 5:10).

The last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, was written to encourage believers who were suffering severe persecution. It starts in the first chapter with a fantastic vision of the Risen Christ and ends with a vision of a new creation in which Christ is truly exalted in the midst of his people who are free from all the trials and travails, traumas and tragedies and of this life. He is the Alpha and Omega of this Universe. And he can be the Alpha and Omega of our lives, too; one on whom we can rest, certain in the knowledge that whatever happens to us in this life, our future is secure in him, that we will rise to a new order of existence and splendour as did Jesus on that first Easter. The Apostle John who had these visions while exiled on the Isle of Patmos for the testimony of the Gospel also sent three letters to his fellow believers. In his first letter he seeks to encourage those Christians with these words: *'See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'*

Indeed, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday on a humble donkey, the poor man's beast of burden, but as the Book of Revelation tells us in Chapter 19, there is coming a time when he will return to Zion riding, not on a colt, but on a 'white horse' as the triumphant Saviour and Redeemer to take up his rightful place as the King of kings and Lord of lords. It has been our great privilege and pleasure in this life to put our faith and trust in this Jesus, the Man of Calvary, as our Saviour and Friend, and to rejoice in the fulness of what we are and what we have in him through his cross-work. That is why this season of the year is always a fantastic time for Christians, for we are able to dwell on the greatest week in the history of the human world, one that started with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Today, let us add our voices to those of the crowd and the host of heaven: 'Hosanna in the Highest Heaven!' Amen.

We bring our time of worship to a close as we share together in a song, Blessed be the name of the Lord.

The version used by Colin is a medley, with 3 different versions of the same words leading into each other. As you are in the privacy of your own home, you may even be brave enough to do the actions for the first one!!

This lively song uses Old Testament pictures of God to remind us that he cares for us. Try adding actions to the chorus: put your hands together in a point over your head for 'strong tower', run on the spot when singing 'The righteous run into it' and on the word 'saved' hold both hands in the air with palms upward.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,
blessed be the name of the Lord,
blessed be the name of the Lord Most High!

(Repeat)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower,
the righteous run into it,
and they are saved.

(Repeat)

Glory to the name of the Lord,
glory to the name of the Lord,
glory to the name of the Lord Most High!

(Repeat)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower,
the righteous run into it,
and they are saved.

(Repeat)

Holy is the name of the Lord,
Holy is the name of the Lord,
Holy is the name of the Lord Most High!

(Repeat)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower,
the righteous run into it,
and they are saved.

(Repeat)

Blessed be your name in the land that is plentiful
where your streams of abundance flow:

Blessed be your name.

Blessed be your name when I'm found in the desert place
though I walk through the wilderness:

Blessed be your name.

Every blessing you pour out I'll turn back to praise,
and when the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say:
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your name.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your glorious name.

Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, blessed be the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, blessed be the name of the Lord.
Your name is a strong and mighty tower; your name is a shelter like no other;
Your name, let the nations sing it louder,
nothing has the power to save but your name.
Blessed be your name,
blessed be the name
blessed be the name of the Lord

CCL No 5664

<https://youtu.be/zxpOHTtj-bM>

Tim shares a blessing.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, may the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you his peace. Amen

We hope you'll be able to join us for virtual fellowship:

Sundays at 11.45, Meeting ID: 962 5576 8258, Passcode: 491306.

Wednesdays at 2.30pm Meeting ID: 954 0425 3654, Passcode: 064246.and the

Prayer meeting on Thursdays at 7.30pm. Meeting ID: 923 9680 7071, Passcode: 411034

Its very easy to join on the phone, and it would be lovely to hear your voices again!

Just ring 02034 815237, then use the ID and password as above when you are prompted.

AS YET YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO JOIN US FOR THE SERVICE ITSELF!!

**It may be that we are able to meet at Bethesda on Easter Sunday morning, please contact one of the Deacons to check if this is the case and you would like to be present in person.
Happy Easter.**

