**MACEDON RANGES PARTNERSHIP SERVICE – Lent 6B**

**26th – 28th March 2021**

You may like to follow our service on our video. You can find it on our Worship Services page on our website at <https://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/worship-services> or on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/GlIHxaI_QKk>

Our service invites you to read the scriptures, pause, meditate and pray. Allow the stories told to lead you. We suggest reading the passages when suggested below. We are touching on several of the scripture readings in one way or another this week.

If you would like to look at previous videos on our YouTube channel, go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb4hzdO-YgzmrIRVC-oby_w>

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge all the Aboriginal Groups who have cared for and nurtured the land on which we meet: the Wurundjeri; Woi Wurruung; Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung.

We acknowledge their leaders: past, present and emerging for it is in them that Australia’s future lies.

You are welcome here, as we reflect in different rooms and districts, States and Countries around the world, our spiritual connectedness through Christ Jesus, is remembered.

**WELCOME** & **CALL TO WORSHIP:** by Bruce Prewer

Grief and joy are about to be mixed.

Palm Sunday, or Passion Sunday, ushers in the most poignant week in the church calendar.

It begins with shouts of praise as Jesus of Nazareth, hero of the common people,

enters the Holy City, yet in so doing, marches inexorably towards his bloody death.

Have the mind-set which you find in Christ Jesus,

who although he was of God, did not grab for equality with God,

but emptied himself, living as a common servant.

**HYMN TiS 333: ALL GLORY PRAISE AND HONOUR**

**PRAYER of APPROACH & CONFESSION:** by Moira Laidlaw

Lord Jesus Christ,

we praise you with heart and life and voice,

not only with outward signs such as palm branches

or the occasional “Hosanna”, but with lives truly turned towards you.

Lord Jesus Christ,

when our words and actions reflect a reluctance  
to confess you publicly as Lord of our lives:   
**Forgive us.**   
When we fear that humbling ourselves, would be seen by others as weakness,

or some kind of defect in our character:   
**Forgive us.**   
When we have betrayed your love for us through our lack of love for you,

for others, and for ourselves :   
**Forgive us.**   
When we find ourselves glossing over the events of your passion and death

because we look forward to Easter as a time to enjoy holidays and have fun.   
**Forgive us.**  
Lord Jesus Christ, fix your mind in us; and remake us in your likeness.

**Amen**

**ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS** (Philippians 2:6-8) by Moira Laidlaw

Hear the good news:

*“Jesus, though he was in the form of God,*

*did not count equality with God as something to be exploited,*

*but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave...*

*and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.”*

Through his obedience   
we are therefore freed from whatever sin enslaves us.   
**Thanks be to God!**

**BIBLE READINGS:** Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Isaiah 50:4-9a, Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 11:1-11 (John 12:12-16)

**HYMN TiS 526: LORD JESUS CHRIST YOU HAVE COME TO US**

**REFLECTION** from *Spill the Beans*

The combination of the two Readings this week make for some interesting reflection. The links are obvious— the ‘gates of righteousness’ and Jesus entering Jerusalem, the sounds of praise, reference to processions and the waving of branches are in both, and of course in the older tradition the beseeching for a Saviour and then everything in the Gospel narrative pointing to the honouring of this demand in the person of “the One who comes from the Lord”.

The longing of God’s ancient people are granted in the person of Jesus Christ. As the biography of Jesus’ days on earth reach the endpoint, the intensity of his arrest, death and resurrection only confirm to us the flow of the Word of God, who created the world, wept over and loved his failing people, and acted decisively to alter the course of the covenantal relationship through

sacrificial grace and resurrection. Palm Sunday is a glorious day on which to give thanks for that love, and although the grizzly last days of Jesus are remembered in the week ahead, and rightly make us a contritional people, we know the end of the story is new life and new hope.

Sadly, so often we see this whole concept through the eyes of the world. We take success as something to be attained, something for the self, and something that means job done and operation complete. Jesus’ own followers back in the day made this mistake.

They sought revolution, dynamic reversal and took time to come to terms with the fact God did not give them that.

Jesus was not going to be like a Royal King, but rather a Suffering Servant. So we learn that the ways of God are quite different from the ways associated with leadership and power in the world of our making. Jesus was not sent to bring victory to his people and his followers alone. Going back to the understanding of covenant, what Jesus taught, introduced, and ultimately made possible, was a communal opportunity for all people, a change, a chance for all people. This was not a case of job done; it could/can never be that! God’s work is a work in progress, and it is to God’s followers of every generation that God, in Jesus Christ, submits a clarion call to come and follow me.

When we emerge from Palm Sunday celebrations we are sent back into the world. We are not invited to merely greet that world with a smile and good feeling, buoyed up from a good old sing-song in church. No, we are called to be radically different and to turn the world on its head. We are the ones who are tasked with finding and overthrowing the causes and perpetrators of all injustice that perpetrates a blight on humanity.

**TEAM REFLECTION**

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:** by Bruce Prewer

God our Saviour and Friend, in spite of our outward brave faces, inwardly in our souls we need to sometimes weep a while.

*We need to weep with and for those children who instead of enjoying a happy childhood, know far too much  about war, hunger, poverty, mental and physical abuse, illness and dying.*

We need to weep with and for those young people who having grown up in pleasant circumstances, now have their hopes and ideals dashed by a cynical world.

*We need to weep with and for those among the indigenous people of our land who have lost all sense of self respect and dignity and who are now captive to a sense of futility.*

*We need to weep with and for prisoners of conscience who suffer deprivation and violence, and citizens who have been tried and sentenced for crimes they did not commit.*

We need to weep with and for those within the care of the church who have been misused or exploited; and those who have suffered emotional violence or have been sexually abused.

*We need to weep with and for you, loving God. For you are the completely Loving One who “bears our griefs and carries our sorrows,” not wanting a single soul to perish. As we share a little of the grief of your costly love, may we also participate in your outreach among those around us*. ***Amen!***

**REFLECTIVE PRAYER:** from *Spill the Beans*

Christ our Lord,

you took on our human frame,

you dwelt among us,

you lived and died to save us;

how can we ever thank you?

You bore our demands to save us,

you listened to our shouts

for the promised Messiah,

you tried to show us

what that really meant,

but we didn’t listen.

You know how easily

the crowds change their minds;

you watched as they

called “Save us!” one day

to “Crucify him!” only days later;

how is it that you still love us?

We are so glad that despite our faults and failings

you do love us and you continue to invite us

to take up our cross for your sake

and the kingdom’s.

Help us Lord, to answer your call. AMEN

**SENDING OUT AND BLESSING:** from *Spill the Beans*

We have entered Jerusalem

and prepare to walk through Holy Week.

We are in Jerusalem with Jesus

and prepare to accompany him on the Via Dolorosa.

We go.

We reflect.

We prepare.

**HYMN: TiS 341 MY SONG IS LOVE UNKNOWN**

**OFFERING**

You may like to consider giving an offering to your congregation via direct deposit. Details for each are:

* Gisborne: Gisborne branch, Bendigo bank, B.S.B. 633 108, A/C: 1512 83736
* Romsey: Bendigo Bank, B.S.B. 633 000, A/C: 161501200, Account name: UCA Romsey Uniting Church
* Mia Mia – Kyneton: Commonwealth bank, B.S.B. 063 517, Account no.: 1002 1775