

Madison Mennonite Church
Koinonia Worship

March 28, 2021

GATHERING

Greet one another and add names to the liturgy of those who would like to lead, read, or facilitate. Each blank can be filled by a different person, and all ages are encouraged to participate in leadership! Help non-readers with their lines. Everyone reads the "Many" parts, unmuted for groups reading virtually. Re-mute afterward.

Call to Worship: Leader _____

One: In the current of life, God calls us to deep hope.

Many: God wakens my ear, and I turn to God.

I do not turn toward those who strike me.

I do not hide my face from insult.

One: God helps us, so let us stand up together.

Many: Save us, O Lord! Bind the festival procession with branches. You are our God.

We give thanks for you are good, and your steadfast love endures.

One: Many shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!"

Many: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus, who humbled himself and became our hope.

All: We call out to you, as you call us to deep hope.

Hymn VT #313 [Hosanna, Loud Hosanna](#) - Listen and/or sing along to this song, found in the Voices Together Hymnal. (Hosts may want to cue the song in advance in order to avoid ads.)

Prayer of Confession and Assurance: Leader _____

Confession is a central practice of Lent. Confession is telling the truth. We confess what we have done, what we believe, what we feel, and what we fear. We confess our need for restoration. True confession is a deep dive, sometimes into truths we haven't yet expressed or have a hard time bringing to the surface.

Many: Deep calls to deep.

We call to you from the depths of our hearts.

One: We confess the rapid pace of life that sweeps us off our feet
into whirlpools of expectations,
into eddies of busy distractions.
We confess our need for a steadfast stream of your grace
enduring forever,
saving us.

(Silence. Or name the forces that keep us from deep hope.)

Deep calls to deep.

You call to us from the depth of your love.

Many: Calling us to deep hope.

We come to you, God.

One: Do not despair, says God, for I am the wellspring of hope, and I will not leave you.

Lighting our Candles: Leader _____

Leader: Each week, we light a candle to symbolize Christ's presence with us and the unity we have with our beloved siblings at Madison Mennonite.

Light candles

Leader: Christ, our light, bless our fellowship with your Spirit's presence. May this steady flame remind us of our commitment to each other and to you. Amen.

HEARING the WORD: Reader _____

Reader: A reading from John 12:12-16

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord — the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

Optional tactile engagement: Invite all ages, but children especially, to consider and reflect on good things they expect to have in their lives. They may draw or write about this, gather things from their room, build something with Legos, etc.

Guiding Reflection: Reader: _____

Hope is a tenuous thing. We can be filled with the expectation of goodness in our lives one moment, only to be filled with despair at our circumstances the next. It is impossible to know why this is so, but it seems that not all hope is the same. Sometimes our hope rides the crests of the waves that swirl about us, tossing us first this way and then that, responding to the whims of the world around us. This is the hope of Palm Sunday, I think – the hope that promises to remove our sorrow and pain, the hope of days that are free of difficulty and filled with ease. The Palm Sunday crowds which gathered around Jesus, chanting his name, hoped for a day when they would be free of their hated Roman oppressors. This hope, while powerful, can be fickle, dying as our expectations for happiness are dashed. When this hope dies, we sometimes find ourselves lashing out in bitterness, just as the crowds of Palm Sunday did, joining their voices, just a few days later, with those calling for the crucifixion of the man they had just praised.

But there is another hope, one that dwells in the deep currents of the ocean. This hope does not seek its own happiness, but understands, instead, that when we place ourselves in the path of God's movement in the world, trusting that God's work is meant for all of Creation, there is no bitterness, no disappointment. If there is pain, God will not leave us to suffer alone. If there are challenges, God will stand beside us as we face them. It is a hope which trusts that we will grow eyes that see as God does, and hearts that love like God's heart does. It is a hope which knows that all is well, and always has been, for we dwell in the merciful hands of a steadfast, loving God, a God who created, and was pleased with that Creation, because it was good. This is the hope of Easter, which seeks new life instead of a return to the old.



As we struggle through this difficult time, may we hold deep hope – the hope that longs not merely for a return to normalcy, but rather, the hope that is prepared to forge new life out of this pandemic, trusting in God's steadfast wisdom, mercy, and love. The hope of Easter.

Questions for Group Reflection: Facilitator _____

At its best, worship enables us to strengthen the connections we have to our faith community, to Creation, and to the Divine. Use this time to reflect together, using some or all of the questions below, or spend time in silence or draft your own questions if that is best for your group today.

1. Think about a time when you were possessed of a stubborn hope, a hope that refused to yield to despair, to critics, perhaps even to logic. What do you recall of the experience? What blessings did you receive? What anger or frustration still remains within you as a result of it?
2. What is the meaning of hope in your life? What role does hope play in the day to day events of your life? When has hope been especially important for you to get through the day?
3. Has hope (or the lack of it) ever frustrated you?
4. What does hope have to do with God? Does God need for us to be hopeful?

At the closing of this time of sharing, pray together:

Facilitator: Loving Spirit, we give you thanks for this time of discovery in scripture and discernment with one another. May our hope grow as we learn to trust in the depth of your love for us all. Amen.

RESPONDING in PRAYER and FELLOWSHIP

Sharing Joys and Concerns: Leader _____

The Leader invites each person (children included!) to share any joys or concerns they bring to the group. Remind your group that if anyone does not wish to share, they may simply say "pass." After all, including the Leader, have been invited to share, and if no one has something to add after a first round, join in a spirit of prayer (below).

Level 1B adaptation: *If the group is 15 people or larger, invite people to type their name in the chat if they would like to share, as we do on All-Church Sundays. Call on people in that order. If the group is smaller than 15 people, follow the instructions above.*

Praying Together

Leader: Holy God, we offer these prayers to you this day, trusting in your faithfulness.
We pray for ourselves, for our loved ones near and far. *(a moment for silent prayer)*
We pray for our community, our nation, and our world. *(a moment for silent prayer)*
Loving God,

Many: hear our prayers. Amen.

Sending: Leader _____

Live without fear:

Your Creator has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother.
Go in peace to follow the good road, and may God's blessing be with you always.

Continued Fellowship (as time allows)

Invite children to share anything they've created or worked on during this worship time. You will also want to discuss if your Koinonia Group wants to gather (virtually or in-person) for the Easter Sunrise Service.



*Koinonia Worship 3.28.21
curated by Todd Shenk*

Sources used:

Bible reading from the New Revised Standard Version

Leader resources for Lent-Easter 2021

"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" Sanctuary Choir, First Methodist, Houston

Announcements:

*Children and youth are invited to contribute art to accompany a recording of VT 181 "Creation Is A Song." See Lisa Weaver's 3/24 email for more information and to sign up!

*As we enter into Holy Week, you are invited to participate in as many gatherings as you like -- from [Maundy Thursday Love Feasts](#) to the at-home [Good Friday](#) liturgy to the [Easter Sunrise](#) service and, finally, the all-church Easter Service with Eucharist. (Please note that you need to sign up for the Maundy Thursday Love Feast!)

This Week's Calendar:

Mon Mar 29 - 7pm Next Phase Working Grp

Wed Mar 31 - 8:15-9p Community Care Call

Thu Apr 1 - 5:30, 6:00, 6:30pm - Maundy

Thursday Love Feasts

7:30pm - Care Team

Fri Apr 2 Good Friday (home-based liturgy)

Sun Apr 4 - Sunrise Service

4pm Easter Virtual Hymn Sing

5pm Easter Sunday Worship with

Eucharist

For links to these virtual gatherings, please see the church calendar.



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