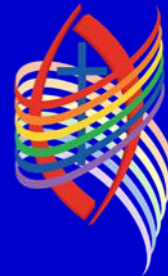




St. Andrew's United Church, North Bay

Reaching Out



a weekly online newsletter for members and friends of the
St. Andrews faith community, shared for the purpose of
bringing peace, hope and comfort during these special times.

A Reflection for Palm Sunday

Tracy Davis, DLM



When I was first discerning a call to ministry, there was a verse of scripture that really spoke to me. You might say it resonated with me spiritually. The verse was this:

A voice cries out, in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

I can't explain it, but for some reason that verse hits me right in the spine.

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight": On the one hand, I think, Wow. What an amazing image, how amazing that God would call a human being to be a part of the divine story. And at the same time I think, What on earth? Prepare the way...of the Lord? How are we supposed to prepare the way of the Lord? Aren't we all supposed to follow Jesus, not precede him? Whenever I hear "Prepare the way of the Lord" I am reminded that sometimes Jesus does just lead us, or carry us. Sometimes Jesus sends us ahead, calling us to journey into new places and to do unexpected things.

Today's story is just the kind of story where that happens. It's kind of easy to miss that – what with the donkey and the colt and the cloaks and the hoopla and the palm branches and the shouts of Hosanna and the turmoil in the streets of Jerusalem. This is Jesus' parade, of course,

and he is the center of it all – the recipient of all that attention and pomp, the king, the prophet Jesus of Nazareth.

But I was a theater person in high school and college, so I'm always looking at the stage instructions in these stories—who's standing where, who's moving, who's on the outside of the action and who's in the center.

Let's take the disciples, for example. Jesus sends them to a nearby village to retrieve a donkey and a colt. But not to a village they've already been, not to a village where Jesus had just visited and the memory of him is fresh in their minds. *No*, Jesus says,

*"Go into the village ahead of you.
Go to that place you haven't been,
go to that place I haven't taken you yet,
go to that place that's still up the road
always." ... "There will be a donkey and colt
there, and if anyone says anything just tell
them, 'The Lord needs them.'"*

Now, we know that the disciples did what they were told; they let Jesus send them on ahead with these very cryptic instructions. But I have to wonder if they protested a little bit. They didn't know what they would encounter there. Were there dangers on the road? We are very close to Jerusalem—hostilities are starting to build and it won't be long before they boil over. It's not hard to imagine them putting up a bit of a fight...

*“Do we have to go to that village up ahead?
Why don't we go back to that village we just left?
They know us there. I think I saw a donkey and
a colt at old Eli's house. We don't know what
we'll find in this village up ahead. It's unknown
territory. Maybe they're hostile to us.”*

Or perhaps:

*“Y'know what, Jesus? Why don't you go on
ahead and we'll tag along behind. You will make
a much more convincing argument than us
anyway. “*

*“Y'know, we dropped our fishing nets in order to
follow you. Not to go ahead of you.”*

You see, it takes faith to follow Jesus. And we are called to do that.

But it takes blind faith to go ahead of Jesus, into the unknown.

It takes irrepressible faith to walk down a road your feet have never walked before.

It takes Palm Sunday faith to go ahead into the unfamiliar. It takes Palm Sunday faith to go ahead of Jesus, knowing that the road leads us through the events of Holy Week...So let us be bold and be sent by Him.

Thanks be to God.



**On this day of great rejoicing,
Lord Jesus Christ, when we welcome
You as our King and Saviour,
we also walk in the shadow of Your cross.**

Hosanna! We cry.

**Blessed are you who come
in God's name to save us.**

Hosanna!

**A PRAYER
FOR
PALM
SUNDAY**

**Strengthen our faith on this Palm Sunday
so that when the time comes
to carry the cross we might still
call out to You with heartfelt praise.
Give us the grace and the courage
to follow You this Holy Week
from death to resurrection,
from darkness to the fullness of light.**

We need You,

Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Hosanna!

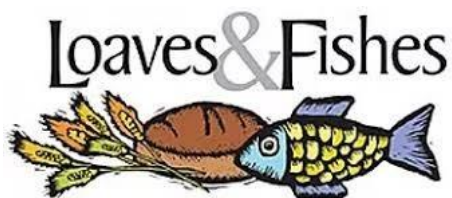


ONLINE SERVICES THIS COMING SUNDAY

Thanks go to Rev. Ted Harrison and the folks at *Trinity United* who have recorded a **Palm Sunday Service** and will be placing it on the **Trinity YouTube channel**. Thanks also to our Minister Tracy who is one of the contributors to this special time of worship. These *YouTube* videos can be watched at any time. To visit the channel, click on this link: [Trinity United Church YouTube Channel](#)

- An alternate online service for Palm Sunday is provided Our United Church Moderator, Rev. Dr. Richard Bott. He shares a reflection on Matthew 21:1-11, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Here is the link: [Moderator's Online Worship - Sunday, April 5, 2020](#)

There will also be an online Trinity service for **Good Friday** and **Easter Sunday**. These services will be available through the [Trinity United YouTube Channel](#).



Foodbank News

We have been able to offer our foodbank over the last couple of weeks and have fed over 200 people. This past Thursday (April 2), we were not able to offer as we don't have a screening tool in place for our volunteers. In addition, we lack a cleaning staff as our dear Lucy is under the weather.

We have used social media as a way of soliciting donations and we have been very successful. Many people who are not members of the Church felt the need to donate and we are so very grateful.

Cassellholme is organizing a food drive for our foodbank next week and the employees are being challenged to bring as much as they are able. The CEO of *Cassellholme* is offering full days off with pay for the two people who bring the most food. As a staff group working in long term care in this difficult time, we embrace the opportunity to give to the marginalized in our community.

Please know that donations of **non perishable items** as well as money are always welcome. If you can help, please contact Tracy by leaving a message at **705-472-7680** and she will get back to you.

You can also donate using "Canada Helps" (see below) and choose the *Loaves and Fishes Foodbank* option.

HOW YOU CAN HELP ST. ANDREW'S "WEATHER THE STORM" FINANCIALLY!

1. Become a monthly **PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) member** by downloading a form and mailing it to St. Andrew's. Complete PAR details and forms can be found at: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/give-regularly>
2. Drop off a **cheque** in the mail slot that is located in the Green Church door on Cassells Street.
3. Give via the "**Donate Now**" button located here, or on our website (<https://standrews-northbay.ca/donate/>) Please note choosing this option allows you to use a credit card however the tax receipt will come from *Canada Helps* **directly to you by e-mail** and they take a 3% admin fee.





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Dear Congregation,

Difficult times. We are missing our church, Sunday worship, Wednesday worship, even the interminable meetings. We miss meeting with our friends, dropping into the Church to speak with Tracy to share a thought, or a problem. The phone and internet just don't quite fill the void.

I find turning to prayer and meditation help. I know when I open myself to the possibilities, I feel the presence of our Heavenly Parent. The Spirit does like to challenge us, to the breaking point, but then gives us the opportunity to grow to meet those challenges. This is definitely a time of growth.

We are working at ways to be church in this time of growth and thank the Spirit for our wonderful caring Minister Tracy who is helping us all keep in touch. She has been working hard with the pastoral relations committee to set up a phone tree and send out cards to our members.

We have held an executive meeting at a building that no one enters but myself which I disinfect daily and is big enough to maintain more than an eight-foot distance from each other. At this meeting we had long discussions on many difficult issues the church is facing these days. We developed an agenda for a council meeting. This meeting will take place with a computer program called *Zoom*. We hope all council members will join us. It should prove to be an interesting meeting, both by content and method.

My prayers are with your all. May the peace of Christ also be with your, hold you in the warmth of an embrace and strengthen you through this time.

Patricia Kirton-Bailey
Chairperson
St. Andrew's Church Council

