

April 5, 2020 – 10:00 am

**PALM SUNDAY WITHOUT THE PALMS –
A SONG OF VICTORY
BEFORE THE END OF THE WAR**

If you've been going to church for a few years, you have heard many sermons on Palm Sunday describing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. I think we need to hear something different. I think we need to **hear a Psalm. Today we will give thanksgiving for God who loves us and is with us during these troubling times.**

**The Psalm for this, the Sixth Sunday in Lent
PSALM 118:1-2, 19-29
A SONG OF VICTORY**



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CALL TO WORSHIP: (based on Psalm 118)

This is the day the Lord has made!
We will rejoice, and be glad in it!
The Lord is our strength and our song;
he has become our victory!
You are our God, and we will praise you;
You are our God, and we will exalt you.
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION: A Psalm of Celebration
(loosely inspired by Psalm 118)

Though we have known hardship and pain,
though life has not always turned out as we had hoped,
we will stand here and say:
God's steadfast love endures forever!
Though life becomes more complex,
the deepest questions remain unanswered,
and the mystery of faith deepens, we will say:
God's steadfast love endures forever!
And though the pain of the world
often seems more than we can bear or address,
we will stand firm in our faith and say:
God's steadfast love endures forever!

~ written by Ann Siddall, in *Lent to Easter liturgies: Year C*. Posted on the website of the **Stillpoint Spirituality Centre**.
<http://stillpoint.unitingchurchsa.org.au/>

MESSAGE: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 As you read this Psalm in your Bibles, I'm sure some of the words are very familiar. (Verse 26) "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," is what the people shout on Palm Sunday. "O give

thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever,” is a popular text for hymns written even today.

“Psalm 118 concerns the coming of One who comes in the name of the Lord. The One who comes makes the most marvelous statement: ‘I shall not die but live.’ (verse 17) The celebration that the Lord did not give him over to death is hailed as the day the Lord made. Because of his deliverance, the people of the Lord renew their confession that the Lord is God.” (“Interpretation – Psalms” written by James L. Mays Page 373).

What was going on in the life of the Psalmist who wrote these words? We’ll never really know. The Psalms “are the liturgical poetry of ancient Israel, texts with a history of composition and use before they became Scripture.” (Mays ix) These words have continued to give comfort and enlightenment for all these thousand years.

These words also point out that, whatever was going on at the time, the people realized that the only way they would survive was to confess that “the Lord is God, and he has given us light.” (verse 27). “You are my God, and I will always give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you,” (verse 28).

Have we come to the same realization as those ancient people? In these days of social distance and shelter in place, it is easy to lose our hope, our faith, our assurance that our circumstances will never improve. I encourage you to read this psalm again and find the particular verse that gives you back that hope, that faith, and that trust knowing that God is good.

(Verse 29) “O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.”

**Whether gathered or scattered, God is with us.
Amen.**

If you are on the internet, in the search section type in youtube and “This is the Day” or “God is Good”. You can find “sing along” versions or listen to choirs large and small.

MORNING PRAYERS: Pray for all those affected by the Coronavirus; those who are sick and those who have died. Those who have lost their jobs. Those without food. We especially pray for all the doctors, nurses, technicians, scientists, epidemiologists, and those searching for a vaccine. They care for others, even while putting themselves at risk. We pray for all the truck drivers who bring all the items we need to survive this. We pray for all the leaders in our government who are working so hard to take care of us.

Add your personal prayers.

THE LORD’S PRAYER:

BENEDICTION:

Today we can shout Hosanna, “save us” with new meaning. May this blessed word remain with us in the week ahead, knowing that God is, indeed, saving us. May we help our neighbors as we are able. May we abide by all the guidelines our doctors are giving us. By being apart, we are saving lives. Amen.

PLEASE DON’T FORGET YOUR OFFERINGS.

Peace and Blessings, Pastor Rosemary