

**First Congregational Church, UCC
Palm/Passion Sunday
April 5, 2020
Rev. Dr. Daniel Ling**

**Our Mission:
Feeding the hungry in body, mind, and spirit
“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome at First Congregational Church.”**

Welcome

Statement of Oneness (unison)

We are made in the image of God; thus, as we grow in faith and mature in spirit, that image shall shine all the more clearly. Like Jesus, we are children of God; thus, as our birthright, we shall live all our days surrounded by unconditional love. Humanity, the Image of God, is beautiful in God’s sight, part of a magnificent creation; therefore, we are beautiful in God’s sight.

The Scriptures declare that the entire Kingdom of God is within us. Also, we live our lives immersed in Divinity. We gather to celebrate that sacred and wondrous Truth.

Many hurtful and unjust things happen in our world, motivated by hatred or fear. Yet, also there is love in our hearts. Let us declare that love, acknowledge it is of God, and promise to grow in love day by day. Amen

Call to Worship

Psalm 118 (The Message)

One: Thank God because God is good and God's love never quits

All: Far better to take refuge in God than to trust in people

One: I am not afraid now for God's now at my side

All: Who would dare lay a hand on me?

One: Blessed are you who enter in God's name

All: From God's house we bless you

***Hymn**

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates (2 verses, see enclosed – page 5)

Morning Prayer (unison)

Dear God, we know you are a kind, patient and gracious God. Help us to be more like you every day. We confess that sometimes we get carried away and think more highly of ourselves than we ought to. Jesus taught us how to be humble in so many ways. Teach us again to practice humility by being merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love the way Jesus taught and showed us. Amen

Scripture Reading Matthew 21:1-11 (The Message)

When they neared Jerusalem, having arrived at Bethphage on Mount Olives, Jesus sent two disciples with these instructions: “Go over to the village across from you. You’ll find a donkey tethered there, her colt with her. Untie her and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you’re doing, say, ‘The Master needs them!’ He will send them with you.”

This is the full story of what was sketched earlier by the prophet:

Tell Zion’s daughter,
“Look, your king’s on his way,
 poised and ready, mounted
On a donkey, on a colt,
 foal of a pack animal.”

The disciples went and did exactly what Jesus told them to do. They led the donkey and colt out, laid some of their clothes on them, and Jesus mounted. Nearly all the people in the crowd threw their garments down on the road, giving him a royal welcome. Others cut branches from the trees and threw them down as a welcome mat. Crowds went ahead and crowds followed, all of them calling out, “Hosanna to David’s son!” “Blessed is he who comes in God’s name!” “Hosanna in highest heaven!”

As he made his entrance into Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken. Unnerved, people were asking, “What’s going on here? Who is this?”

The parade crowd answered, “This is the prophet Jesus, the one from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Lenten Symbol Readings:

The Voice of the Thorn Bush

I have grown here beside this road for many years. I have seen many pew greens stretch upward past me, to the gates of the city of Jerusalem. Today a parade went by. A man with a different look somehow, went by on the donkey. Men, women and children crowded around. Of course, they all avoided me. And I got a good glimpse of it all. There was something in the face of that man that I have never glimpsed in another face. One of the persons in the crowd said “You see! You see! Look the whole world is following this man, Jesus, into Jerusalem.”

The Voice of the Palm Branch

I have a lovely growing place. Here I stand on the small rise above the winding road leading to the gates of Jerusalem. The breezes ripple through my bow making me sway and dance. The sunlight dapples my leaves. Because of this I have often been involved in this parade. It's a simple matter to reach out and break off one of my graceful branches. I don't mind. A couple of weeks ago a small group of persons were going up to Jerusalem to plead for pardon for some crime or other. They broke my branches and waved them in front of them and moaned and shouted. I like it better when my branches are waved as a sign of status and power. This happens sometimes. Mighty warriors gallop by here as people wave my branches and scream. Today's parade was different from any other I have ever seen. There was such a feeling of joy. It was mostly the children who picked my branches and waved them. Ahh, those beautiful dark eyed, barefoot children! They were on top of the world laughing, smiling at the man on the donkey. The people were calling him King. But I don't know. He is like no King I have ever seen. Or warrior either. A funny thing about him, there was such a glow from his face. A radiance really. My sun speckled branches dimmed in comparison. He glowed with an inner light that somehow made all the rest look like we are in the shadows. There is something different here. There is a deep sense of excellent graces that shine on him.

The Voice of the Clay Pot

I am just a simple clay pot ducked from the ground kneaded and shaped by a skillful potter. I have been by the roadside since the day my owner dropped me here. On the day of the parade there was such a confusion. Sandals trampled on me, working me into the ground. I remember a jumble of toes and shoes and animal hooves. At one point, clothing was thrown over me. Then I looked up as the parade passed by. I barely glimpsed the man on the donkey. But he threw out something fresh and beautiful from the skin of his body, a fragrance. Once, I had been carried by a field of

blossoming trees in the spring. It was the same fragrance. Then a lovely woman stopped, loosened me where I was embedded in the soil. She looked at me and then looked at the disappearing figure on the donkey. She seemed to have some sort of vision of what I could be. A vision somehow shaped by the man on the donkey. “I will plant some flowers,” I heard her say. “Your little clay pot will be a container for something beautiful.”

Sermon

Humility in Action

Prayer Requests and Offertory Reminder

***Hymn** **Crown Him with Many Crowns** (2 verses, see enclosed – page 6)

***Benediction** (unison)

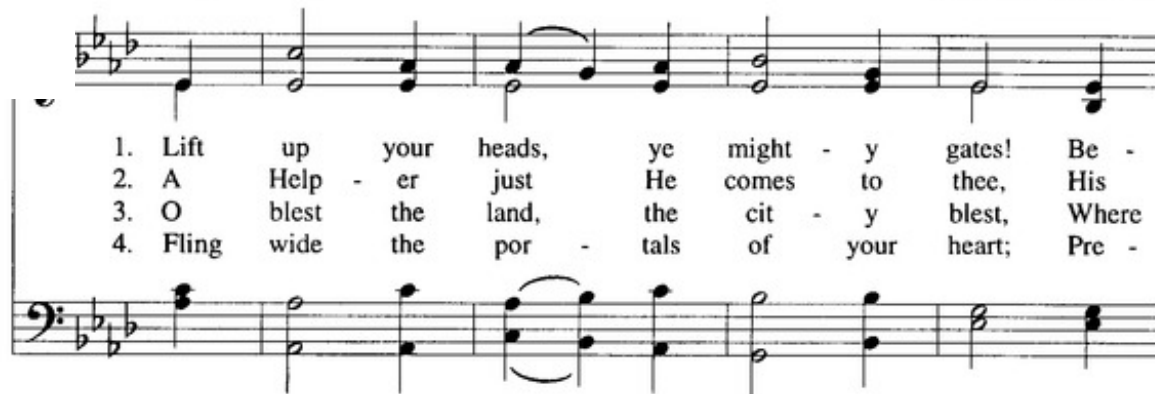
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the comfort, guidance and challenge of the Holy Spirit be with each one of you now and always. Go in peace and the peace of God be with you. Amen

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

88 88 88 66

! hoch die Tür
Lissel, 1590-1635
Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.

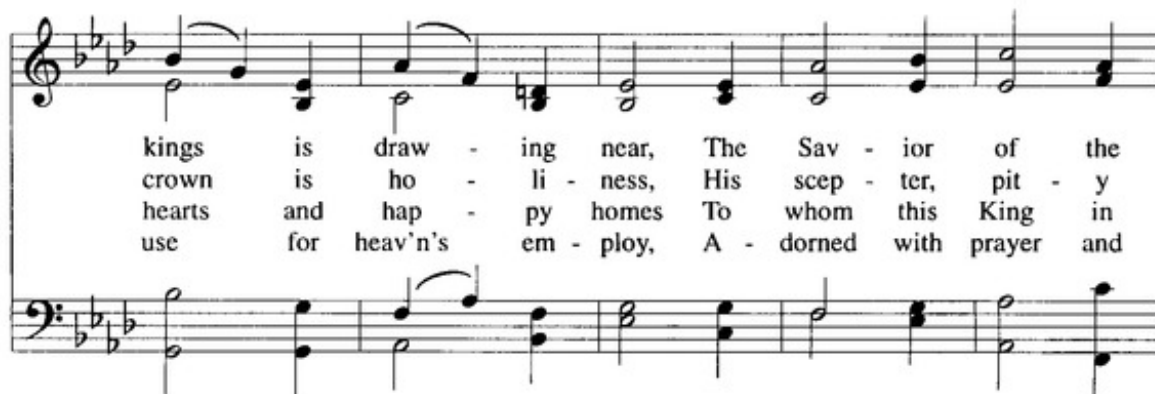
MILWAUKEE
A. Lemke, 1820-1913



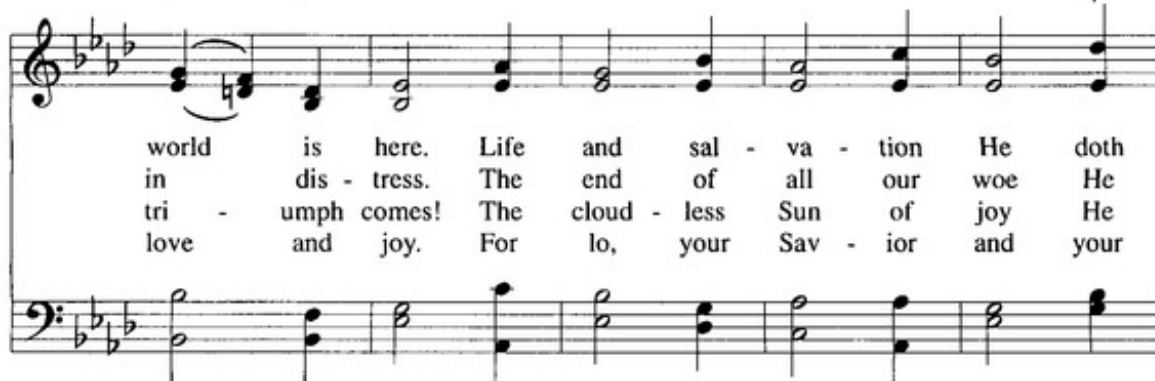
1. Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates! Be -
2. A Help - er just He comes to thee, His
3. O blest the land, the cit - y blest, Where
4. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; Pre -



hold, the King of glo - ry waits; The King of
char - iot is hu - mil - i - ty, His king - ly
Christ the Rul - er is con - fessed! O hap - py
pare a tem - ple set a - part From earth - ly



kings is draw - ing near, The Sav - ior of the
crown is ho - li - ness, His scep - ter, pit - y
hearts and hap - py homes To whom this King in
use for heav'n's em - ploy, A - dorned with prayer and



world is here. Life and sal - va - tion He doth
in dis - tress. The end of all our woe He
tri - umph comes! The cloud - less Sun of joy He
love and joy. For lo, your Sav - ior and your

Crown Him with many crowns

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

George Job Elvey (1816-1893)

Crown Him with ma - ny crowns, The Lamb up - on His throne; Hark!
Crown Him the Lord of love! Be - hold His hands and side Rich
Crown Him the Lord of life! Who tri - umphed o'er the grave, Who
Crown Him the Lord of heav'n! One with the Fa - ther known, One

5

How the heav'n - ly an - them_ drowns All mu - sic but its own! A -
wounds, yet vi - si - ble a - bove, In beau - ty glo - ri - fied. No
rose vic - to - ri - ous in the strife For those He came to save. His
with the Spi - rit through Him_ giv'n From yon - der glo - rious throne, To

9

wake, my soul and sing Of Him Who died for thee, And
an - gel in the sky Can ful - ly bear that sight, But
glo - ries now we sing, Who died, and rose on high, Who
Thee be end - less praise, For Thou for us hast died; Be

13

hail Him as thy match - less King Through all e - ter - ni - ty.
down - ward bends His wond' - ring eye At my - ste - ries so bright.
died e - ter - nal life to bring, And lives that death may die.
Thou, O Lord, through end - less days A - dored and mag - ni - fied.