





## UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE

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Office: (306) 752-2288 Email: [melfortuc@sasktel.net](mailto:melfortuc@sasktel.net)  
Website: [www.melfortunitedchurch.com](http://www.melfortunitedchurch.com)  
Worship Time: 10:30 AM – Streamed live on Facebook  
Ministers: All of us  
Worship Leader: Rev. Charles McKenzie  
Music: Jodi Allen Corbett  
Music Director: Mavis Peters  
Office Administrator: Mavis Busby  
Caretaker: Faye Greier  
Today's Greeter:  
Scripture Reader:

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

**March 28th, 2021**  
**PALM/PASSION SUNDAY – YEAR B**  
(Sacrament of Holy Baptism Service)

### WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*As we gather for worship today we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 Territory. We honour the Cree and Métis people for whom this place has been a homeland for thousands of years. We respect the sacredness of our home and the ground on which we walk and we are grateful to gather here in peace and hope.*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS, ANNIVERSARIES & CONCERNS:**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

There is no power like the power of the people to bring change, because the power of the people won't stop!  
Say what!?

There is no power like the power of the people to bring change, because the power of the people won't stop!  
Which side are you on, friends? Which side?

Justice for our children is justice for all

**All: and we will strive for justice until freedom is one.**

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Which side are you on friends? Which side?

Justice for our children is justice for all

**All: and we will strive for justice until freedom is one.**

Save us, O God, have mercy and save us.

Open to us the gates of righteousness.

**All: Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest heaven!**

Hosanna in the highest.

## **OPENING PRAYER/PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:**

*(in unison)*

**We want to be respectful tenants of your beautiful garden**

**God, marveling at the beauty and complexity of  
your creation and our relationship to it.**

**Forgive us for all the ways that we**

**Have hurt your good creation,**

**And guide us as we strive for a healed world.**

**Amen.**

## **HYMN (VU 123) “Hosanna Loud Hosanna”**

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE:**

With Christ’s help,

**All: we will return to the garden.**

Through Christ’s passion,

**All: we will weep by the tree.**

For Christ’s sake,

**All: we will proclaim the good news:**

Nothing can separate us from Jesus Christ, our liberator.

### **PRAYER RESPONSE (VU 128)**

*“Sanna, Sannanina”*

## **WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD TO US**

**CHOIR ANTHEM: “Ride on King Jesus” – D. Moore**

<https://youtu.be/Gi4f2JBzvyE>

**SPECIAL MUSIC:** “*Out of Deep Unordered Water*”

- Performed by Mavis Peters/Jodi Allen Corbett  
During the Baptism

**BAPTISM SERVICE:** Klara Elizabeth May Carson

**MINUTE FOR MISSION:**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

**Liturgy of the Palms**

**HEBREW READING:**

**PSALM 118:1-2, 19-29**

*The stone that the builders  
rejected.*

**GOSPEL READING:**

**MARK 11:1-11**

*Jesus' joyful entry into  
Jerusalem.*

**PALM SUNDAY SERMON:**

This Palm Sunday is not the way Palm Sunday is traditionally honoured. Where is the parade of people walking around the sanctuary? Waving palm branches. Shouting hallelujah.

I think we all miss that.

The scriptures mention the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. A parade. The people in Jerusalem had heard of Jesus, and they were expecting great things. Could this be the new king? The one who would destroy the Romans? Could it be?

But there was another parade happening at the same time. The army of the Roman occupation was arriving in Jerusalem. The army, lead by Pontius Pilate, was going to nip any uprising in the bud. Pilate didn't come from Caesarea to observe the Passover. He came every year to Jerusalem with calvary and weaponry, on horseback and in military pomp and might to inspire fear in any Jew intent on overthrowing the Roman occupiers.

The Passover was a time when Jews from around the Mediterranean arrived in Jerusalem to perform the religious rites necessary for the Jewish faith. These people brought with them a hatred of the existing Roman rule, and the Jewish collaborators. The tension that existed in Jerusalem was heightened, and it was a

perfect breeding ground for insurrection. Pilot was right to be concerned. He was ready to crush any dissension. In Pilot's world: might, power and wealth create right.

Pilot's parade had chariots, horses, lots of well armed soldiers.

Jesus's parade had a donkey, palm branches and ordinary citizens.

Which parade do you think the news media of the time would have covered?

We live in a society which idolizes independence, possessions, wealth. The society being promoted by Jesus, which we call the kingdom of God, values cooperation compassion and justice.

Which parade are you in today?

The season of Lent was created by the church to provide a time of reflection, questioning and redirection. It was a time when new members received instruction into the way of Jesus. The week of Easter was the final training time, and baptism during this time was common.

Today we are blessed to be able to celebrate a baptism.

It's been a long time since we had a baptism. Maybe later in the year, we can get back to actually having baptisms that the whole congregation can share in. For that is part of what makes baptism special. We have welcomed a new member into not only our community of faith, but God's community.

I miss walking down the aisle, to introduce Klara to her new family. I'm sure everyone else misses being able to see her smiling face. But soon, maybe too soon for her parents, she will be wandering up and down the aisle exploring this magnificent sanctuary, discovering all the members of her new family.

Within the United Church we recognize two sacraments. Baptism and communion.

Because of our heritage of founding churches, there are four main views that co-exist in our understanding of baptism. It is not uncommon for us to have combinations of all four in our baptism understanding, but usually within a worshiping community, one view is dominant and so influences policies and practices relating to baptism.

The four main views that co-exist are:

- A theology that focuses on grace
- A theology of covenant
- A theology whose emphasis is on belonging
- And an understanding of baptism as a rite of passage.

A theology of grace is central when people say that no matter what, God's love is most important. God reaches out to humanity, and the church better not stand in the way of God. Baptism is a visible sign of God's grace. A sign of God's unpredictable action and timing. A sign of God's love.

Who deserves to be baptised:

- The infant who is incapable of knowing right from wrong
- The adult who has studied and worked to become a good church member
- The sweet older person who has been a blessing to all
- The impossible to satisfy curmudgeon.

None of these — all of these. For it's not about deserving, it's not about what we think. We are baptised because God loves us.

The theology of grace sees baptism as outreach. We know the Spirit of God will be at work in that person their whole life. We trust that God may use the life of the person being baptised to spread kindness and justice in the world.

The second position that has been dominant in the United Church sees baptism as covenant. Covenant theology sees baptism as the rite of entry into the church. Once this rite is completed, you are incorporated into the institutional church from which you can then go out back into the world to try and make a difference.

Covenant theology tends to be somewhat legalistic in that God has promised to be with God's people, and we the people agree to be God's people. By our active participation in the church activities of worship and faithful actions we are known to be God's people. So the parents of children promise to live a faith filled life, and raise the children in such an environment. The members of the congregation promise to support the parents in this endeavour by providing spiritual support to both the parents and the children.

The third understanding of baptism stresses the action of the Christian community. Baptism is seen as an entrance into a way of life together with others in the Body of Christ. There is no Christian without church. The emphasis is on belonging. The church becomes

a place where we can know ourselves and know our identity. We can attend a Christian church anywhere in the world and meet our brothers and sisters in faith.

Just as a child learns how to be a member of a biological family by listening to the family's stories so too the baptised person learns about their Christian family by living in the family, and listening to Christian stories.

The belonging view of baptism believes the church provides a nurturing environment for the new member. Just like a family has to adjust and adapt when a new member arrives, so the church must adapt when a new member joins.

The final and fourth understanding is a quite recent understanding. It is an acknowledgement that all cultures have a means to mark or celebrate milestones in people's lives. Significant events, like birth, maturation, sexuality and death need to be recognized.

The birth of a child is significant and there needs to be some formal way to recognize it. For the parents, it marks a change in their lives. For the extended family it provides a chance to gather, to affirm that something special has happened. Although the child is named before the baptism, baptism provides an official recognition of the name.

Many parents who have no religious background, know that with the birth of a child, something awesome has occurred, and they want some public ritual that affirms their belief. Within our society, the Christian rite of baptism is seen as the only way for this to happen.

There may be some who seek baptism out of fear. No current theologies of any Christian church say that an unbaptised child who dies will go to hell, yet that fear remains deeply embedded in many people's psyches. Baptism then acts as a rite of passage in the hope of safety for the child.

Since within even the United Church of Canada there are different understandings of the meaning of baptism, you can imagine that there are variations within the worldwide community. A baptism performed by the United Church of Canada is recognized as valid by members of the World Council of Churches and by the Roman Catholic Church.

That's probably more than you want to know about baptism. Baptism is something to celebrate. Klara has become a member of the Christian community. She has been named. We have acknowledged that she is loved by God. She is surrounded by the spirit of God. A spirit we all feel and celebrate. Amen.

## **OUR RESPONSE**

### **OFFERING:**

*(Please use the offering box at the front/back of the Sanctuary as you exit. Thank you!)*

### **OFFERTORY HYMN (VU 538)**

*"For the Gift of Creation"*

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (in unison)**

**We will go into this Holy Week with loud protests. We will cry to God with our whole hearts. Save us, please save us.**

**From the brokenness and corruption of our world, from greed, hunger and oppression, from exploitation, degradation, pollution and corruption. Save us from our broken covenants. Save us from lawlessness.**

**We will go into this Holy Week lifting high the good man Jesus, the Christ. Jesus who taught us about radical love, showed us how to pray, gives us hope that a new world and a new way where all people are of equal worth and value is possible if we choose to join him.**

### **PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE:**

I invite you to join me in praying the prayer that Jesus taught.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **SENDING FORTH**

**HYMN (VU 124) *"He came riding on a donkey"***



## **COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:**

May we always hunger for justice until all are fed.

May we always strive until there is justice and food for all.

May we never rest until all are at peace.

May it be so.

## **CHORAL BLESSING:** *“When you Go From This Place”*

### **PRAYER RESOURCES:**

*\*Seasons of the Spirit – Seasons FUSION Lent Easter 2021; The United Church of Canada Lent Easter 2021, Year B, Gathering Resources for Worship Planners. Used with permission*

### **NEXT WEEK’S (April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021) READINGS**

*Act 10:34-43/Isaiah 25:6-9*

*1 Corinthians 15:1-11*

*John 20:1-18/Mark 16:1-8*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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### **THIS WEEK AT MELFORT UNITED CHURCH**

Choir – Wed, March 31<sup>st</sup> @7p.m

#### **Pastoral Care - Contact Information**

Should you need emergency pastoral care please call Ron Nielsen  
@ 306-921-7794 or 306-752-4119.

#### **Transfer or Applying for Membership**

If you wish to transfer or apply for membership in our church, please contact the church office or a member of the Membership Committee.

#### **Easter Sunday Service**

The Easter Sunday Service on April 4<sup>th</sup> will be pre-recorded. It will be available for viewing through the Melfort United Church Facebook page and a link will be provided with the bulletin for April 4<sup>th</sup> but the church will be **closed** that day.

#### ***Stewardship Seconds***

*Stewardship starts with the question “What shall we do?” after hearing how much God loves us.*