



**Plymouth United Church of Christ** Rev. David Huber, Pastor

2010 Moholt Drive, Eau Claire WI 54703 ☎ 715-835-5475 🌐 pcucc.com



PlymouthUnitedChurchOfChrist

## Greetings

Greetings to you in the love and peace of Jesus Christ!

## Crossing the Threshold

During Lent, we have taken six weeks to move through one week—the last week of Jesus’ human life. This has allowed us to expand time—to “freeze frame” important moments and dig deeper into our faith story, and our own stories. This morning marks the end of Lent and the beginning of our commemoration of Holy Week, and so let us speed up time a bit as we first remember the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem.

## Opening Hymn

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEPSQyVgXhw> (this video is the choir and congregation, with brass and organ, of First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, NE)

“Hosanna, loud hosanna,” the little children sang;  
through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang;  
To Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast,  
the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed amid a cheering crowd,  
the victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud.  
The one whom angels worship rode on in lowly state,  
and glad to see the children, slowed down the donkey’s gait.

“Hosanna in the highest!” That ancient song is ours.  
We hail our great Redeemer and sing with all our powers:  
“Hosanna, Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice.  
Hosanna! In your presence forever we’ll rejoice!”

## Crossing the Threshold

We found our place in the parade, and considered OUR place in the picture— our role as supporters of Jesus’ mission in the world. And then we found ourselves in the midst of the chaos and throngs of people in Jerusalem for the Passover. We stopped there suspending the action for a moment, wondering how we could join Jesus in clearing out our own lives and hearts, our own places of worship, to make them a more welcoming place for the love of God to reside fully. We followed Jesus as he continued to teach in the city and among the people at the temple. His teachings filled our hearts as they filled those long ago, and we remembered the call to proclaim justice in the midst of injustice wherever we find it. We joined the disciples at a table of extravagant affection and overflowing love, and then another supper where all our assumptions about the way the world works were turned upside-down.

This week, we join Jesus in the Garden. Gethsemane is the moment when a chain of events begins that cannot be halted. Once Jesus is taken into custody, there is no going back. So we pause a moment with him in the garden just before his arrest, and we feel with him the temptations that arise when facing difficult circumstances—to run, hide, use whatever power we have to change things, fight it, perhaps even bargain with God. We walk among the sleepy disciples who just can’t grasp what is about to happen. With the shut downs and home-sequestering of these times, it kind of feels like being in the garden of Gethsemane, doesn’t it? Alone or almost alone, wondering and praying, “Must this be done, God?” Let us enter the story.

## Music Response

*(During lent we have been singing these words are part of our entry into worship—what we call Crossing the Threshold, between regular time and worship time. If you remember the melody, feel free to sing this; if you don't, then just say it as a prayer and an invitation to yourself to enter the gospel story we are reading today, and to enter into the long story of Christianity that we are part of.)*

Enter  
Enter the passion  
Enter the place we belong  
Not just looking on  
For this is our passion  
Enter the passion

Enter  
Enter the passion  
Enter the place we belong  
Not just looking on  
For this is our passion  
Enter the passion

## Confession

Here we are, Jesus. We find ourselves alongside you in a garden of grief for the suffering so many of this world endure. We are tired. We don't know what to do next. And so we sleep sometimes, hoping to awake from a bad dream. Forgive us, O God. Help us face this hour knowing you are always here. You only ask the same of us: to be present, to be awake, to be in this place called here and this time called now. You entered our story through Jesus, now help us to enter fully into the story of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

## Assurance of Pardon

Know this: We can open to let the story remind us that no matter what we face, or how we fail to meet the demand of the moment, second chances are possible. You are forgiven and freed, encouraged and loved by a God who wants you to live fully.

**Psalm 31:9–16** *(This is the assigned Psalm to pair with and complement Jesus' passion story, which we will be reading in the Gospel lesson.)*

Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.

I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.

I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.

For I hear the whispering of many—terror all around!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God."

My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

## Scripture

Mark 14:32–36

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

**Sermon** Available online at <http://pcucc.com>

## Hymn

“Journey to Gethsemane”

Sing along or simply enjoy this version by a soloist with a guitar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD6tcMroY0A>

Journey to Gethsemane, go and feel the tempter’s power;  
Your Redeemer’s conflict see, watch the anguish of this hour;  
Do not hide or turn away: learn from Jesus how to pray.

**Offering** (*Your offerings can be brought to the office or mailed in.*)

## Prayers of the People

### Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

### Benediction

The Divine Artist offers us such poignant beauty each day in our own stories, in the stories around us, especially in the heartbreak and pain and joy and awe of a simple moment turned significant. Search for clues for living this life with more attention and intention. May you be blessed by the sacred frames that surround the moments of your life that you dare not miss. Amen.

*This liturgy was written by Worship Design Studio, modified by Pastor David, and used with permission.*

# *Spiritual Care Package*

## *Questions for Reflection*

As this week unfolds, spend some time each day pondering the mind of Christ. What is the shape of his compassion? Describe the image of such great love. Finally, what does it feel like, physically, to be so utterly cared for?

## *Household Prayer: Morning*

I rise, O God, awakened by your Word, to live another day. Lead me in your path. Show me the steps to take toward greater faith. Hold me in your care as I move through this Holy Week where the shadows deepen even in the daylight. Hosanna! Save me now, dear God! Amen.

## *Household Prayer: Evening*

I come to the darkness of night, O God, tired and ready for a sweet respite in your care. Keep me safe from all harm, and bring me to the morning light with renewed strength. In Jesus' holy name, I pray. Amen.

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# **God is still speaking,**