

Palm to Passion Sunday, March 29, 2026
Shepherd of the Hill ELCA, 10 am

“Encouraging faith and proclaiming God’s love
by Gathering, Growing, Giving.”



Your presence in the sanctuary signifies your agreement to be on our live broadcast.

INTRODUCTION

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ’s broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God’s astounding work.

GATHERING

Please stand for the parts of the service designated with †

The congregation’s parts are in **bold type**.

(Children will gather with Pastor Natalie at the back of the sanctuary with palms
...children can remain at the altar area after the hymn.)

† **ACCLAMATION**

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

† PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL

The holy gospel according to the 21st Chapter of Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Matthew 21:1-11

¹ When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

⁵ “Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O, Christ.

† BLESSING OF PALMS

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept.

We praise you, O God,
for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ.
Today he entered the holy city in triumph
and was proclaimed messiah and king
by those who spread garments and branches along his way.
Bless these branches and those who carry them.
Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross,

so that, joined to his death and resurrection,
we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

† **PROCESSIONAL HYMN** *All Glory, Laud, and Honor* **LBW 108 vs.1-4**

† **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

KIDS'S SING

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

JESUS ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM – REFLECTION

Pastor Natalie

WORD

The congregation is seated for the readings and gospel Passion.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-9a

The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church's understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

⁴The Lord God has given me a trained tongue, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens, wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. ⁵The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I did not turn backward. ⁶I gave my back to those who struck me and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. ⁷The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand in court together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. ^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 31:9-16

We will read Psalm 31 responsively.

⁹ Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.

¹⁰ **For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.**

¹¹ I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors,
a dismay to my acquaintances;
when they see me in the street they avoid me.

¹² **Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind;
I am as useless as a broken pot.**

¹³ For I have heard the whispering of the crowd;
fear is all around; they put their heads together against me;
they plot to take my life.

¹⁴ **But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord.
I have said, "You are my God.**

¹⁵ My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my
enemies, and from those who persecute me.

¹⁶ **Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love."**

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:5-11

A reading from 2nd chapter of Philippians.

Paul quotes from an early Christian hymn that describes Jesus 'humble obedience in his incarnation as a human being, even to death, and his exaltation and glory as Lord of all.

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name

that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

† **GOSPEL: Matthew 27:11-54**

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the Gospel of Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In fulfillment of scripture and obedience to God's will, Jesus goes to the cross so that a new covenant in his blood may bring forgiveness of sins. Even the soldiers who crucify him recognize him to be the Son of God.

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" ...

...⁵⁴ Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

The Passion of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Praise to you, O, Christ.

† **HYMN OF THE DAY**

My Song is Love Unknown

LBW 94 vs1-4

† **APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

† PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

O God, you announce words of grace and truth. Give wisdom to all preachers in your church both globally and locally. Open our hearts to encounter the infinite life you offer in Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You hold the whole universe. Gather sun and moon, clouds and stars, land and sea, and plants and animals around the cross, so that all creation bears witness to your saving love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your power is sure. Destroy inequity and division in every place, and build your beloved community among all people. Guide judges, attorneys, and juries so that they act with justice and fairness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your heart breaks open at our pain. Send healing and vindication to all who, like Jesus, know the sting of betrayal, denial, abuse, or false accusations. Be with those experiencing pain or loss this day (especially). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your ways show compassion. Let this same mind be in us as we enter Holy Week. Bless those here who will lead worship and tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

O God, your embrace is eternal. Praise and thanks to you for all the faithful departed who rest in your mercy. Deliver us all from death's power and raise us to life in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen.**

† GREETING OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please share a greeting of peace with one another.

OFFERING PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.

You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.

Through your creation, nourish and sustain us in body and spirit
so that we may be a blessing to others. **Amen.**

† 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

† BLESSING

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:
God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,
† bless you now and always. **Amen.**

† SENDING SONG

Christ the Life of All the Living

LBW 97

† DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RINGING OF THE BELL

† SENDING MUSIC

WORSHIP LEADERS

Presiding Leader

Musician

Acolyte

Usher

Video

Reader

Pastor Natalie Leske

Michelle Young

Tim Jenson

Barb Vadnais

Kris Jenson

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



Lighthouse
Middle School Youth Gathering
April 11, 2026
9:00am - 4:15pm
All 5th-8th grade students are invited!

Holy Week Senior Dinner and Communion Service

Shepherd of the Hill's Holy Week Dinner and
Communion Service is on Wednesday, April 1st.
Those 70 years of age & older
and their spouses are invited.
RSVP to Betty Heltne 715-704-0583.

Holy Week Worship

Maundy Thursday Worship 7 pm at Shepherd of the Hill.

Our fifth-grade class Everett Bourget, Hayden Davis, Lila Edin, Ruby Holcomb, and Hallee Salsbury will receive first communion with their families during our Maundy Thursday service.

Good Friday Worship 7 pm at Shepherd of the Hill

Sunrise Service 6 am at Trinity United Methodist

Celebration Worship 10 am at Shepherd of the Hill, All are invited!



Celebrate Easter!

Sunrise Service with Trinity United Methodist!

All are invited to our joint 6 am Sunrise Service on Easter morning, April 5th at Trinity United Methodist in Elk Mound.

Ring the Bells!

Children (of all ages) are invited to bring bells to worship on Easter Sunday. We will add to the celebration of Easter by ringing the bells each time we say or sing the word "Alleluia" during the service. Bells will be available for anyone who wishes to borrow one.

Holy Humor Sunday!

Is the Sunday following Easter Sunday. We celebrate the great joke played on the Devil when Jesus was raised from the dead. Not only did the Devil not end Jesus life, but the way to eternal life was made possible for all people.

You are invited to wear something that fits our theme of Tropical Vacation. If you would like to tell a joke, please share it with Pastor Natalie *before* Holy Humor Sunday for approval. See your April Newsletter for more information about Holy Humor Sunday.

Ushers, readers, communion assistants and livestream helpers are needed.

Helping to lead worship is a very rewarding way to use your talents and gifts. Training and support are offered for all positions. To volunteer or if you have questions, please reach out to Head Usher Tim Jenson for ushering, Kris Jenson, the church secretary for reading and communion assisting, and to Billy Heltne or Tim Jenson for livestreaming.

Thank you for prayerfully considering these forms of discipleship.

***If you are a VISITOR with us today, we are so grateful that God brought you here.
Please share your name and contact info in either the Guest Book or a Visitor info sheet
found in the Gathering Area.***

Pastor Natalie's Office Hours:

Pastor Natalie's office hours are Wednesday from 10 am to 2 pm or by appointment. You may call Pastor Natalie's cell phone 715-829-8324 to see if she can meet you Monday - Thursday.

THIS WEEK AT CHURCH AND BEYOND OUR DOORS

| | | | |
|-----------|------|------------------|--|
| SUNDAY | 3/29 | 8:45 am 10 am | - Sunday School - Palm Sunday <i>- Sunday school sings</i> |
| MONDAY | 3/30 | 6 pm | - AA Meeting |
| TUESDAY | 3/31 | 4-6 pm | - Food Pantry |
| WEDNESDAY | 4/1 | | <i>Holy Week Senior Events</i> |
| | | 11 am | - Social Hour |
| | | Noon | - Meal |
| | | 1 pm | - Worship with Communion |
| THURSDAY | 4/2 | 7 pm | - Maundy Thursday <i>- Fifth Grade First Communion</i> |
| FRIDAY | 4/3 | 10-noon | - Food Pantry |
| SUNDAY | 4/5 | | - <i>NO Sunday School</i> |
| | | 6 am | - Sunrise Service @ EM Trinity Methodist |
| | | 10 am | - Easter Worship with Communion |

Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church

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