

## PREPARING AT HOME

March 19-25, 2018

*Focus reading:* Mark 11:1–11 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=383637415>)

*Other lectionary readings:* Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29; Isaiah 50:4–9a; Psalm 31:9–16; Philippians 2:5–11; Mark 14:1–15:47; Psalm 51:1–12; Hebrews 5:5–10; John 12:20–33

*Theme:* Love Arriving

Churches around the world will recreate the Palm Sunday parade in ways that warm peoples' hearts. Palm-waving children will sweetly sing "Hosannas." In some cases, donkeys will even be recruited to re-enact the celebration. Yet, according to many biblical scholars, the images we bring to life are only half the story. According to scholars Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, there were two parades that day. The one that we celebrate was a peasant procession that entered Jerusalem from the east. The peasants were cheering Jesus, a man who taught about the kingdom of God. But there was another parade that day that was entering Jerusalem from the west. Led by Governor Pilate, this other parade put soldiers and military might on display. It was an imperial procession that declared the power of empire. It was no accident that the two processions occurred at the same time. Imperial processions were customary during festivals, such as Passover, as a warning to the faithful who were entering Jerusalem. Trouble would not be tolerated! Jesus, too, was making a deliberate statement. He was bearing witness to an alternative kingdom. He was making a bold political statement as well as a religious one. The conflict that was demonstrated by these two different processions was one that would drive the events of the week ahead – the week known as Holy Week.

## TAKING A STAND

Jesus boldly stood for justice, for what he knew God wanted for all of creation. Do you know of anyone who is doing that today? About what kinds of things might you need to take a stand? What makes that hard to do? What might help to make it easier?

## ONE GREAT HOUR FISH BANKS

Our One Great Hour of Sharing offering is coming to a close. Have you been using the Sharing Calendar? Perhaps you will want to name places and people in need of peace and contribute a particular amount (even a dime) for each place or person named. Bring your fish banks to worship on Palm Sunday to put them in the fishnet!

## PRAYER

Loving God,  
Help us to honor Jesus  
as our King and Savior  
by standing up for what is right  
when others stand with us  
and when they do not.  
Amen.

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