

Sunday, April 5th
Palms to Upper Room Service
Mantua Center Christian Church
MCCC Home Worship

You will need:

A candle and match

Bible

Paper

Bread and Juice (if desiring communion)

Order of Worship

GREETING - CHAD

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised! For no one can measure the Greatness of our God!

Good Morning and Happy Palm Sunday! Welcome to our online worship with the Mantua Center Christian Church. Together we are seeking to have Open Minds, Open Hearts, and Open Arms to reach out to a world in need.

My name is Rev. Chad Delaney. I'm serving today with Sarah Smith and Adam Petrosino. Today you're gonna hear the voices of folks in our congregation reading scripture and we are blessed to have musical offerings from Pam Auble and Ryan and Karly Lind.

If you desire, you can get a Bible to follow along with the scriptures, Bread & Juice for communion, a candle with a match. And you'd like to make a homemade palm leaf then please grab scissors, pen/pencil, and a piece of paper--kids and adults alike. Feel free to "pause" it here and get what you need if desired.

Today is our Palms to the Upper Room Service. Today we will be listening to stories of Tables in Jesus' life and ministry leading up to his Last Supper. After the scripture is read there will be a question provided for your own reflection. Please take time to think and pray upon them. Pause the video and write about them if you would desire. Share with those you are worshipping with. We hope this is an opportunity for you to really listen and respond to these powerful scriptures.

Call to Worship - Chad

Family of God, take a deep breath...Turn our minds and hearts from other things and light a candle to remind us of God's abiding presence.

Light a Candle

Children's Moment - Chad

As we prepare to hear our opening scripture and hymn, we want to take a moment to show you how to make your own homemade palm leaf so you can join in the celebration

Explain

SCRIPTURE - Chad

Ok, now that you have your Palm Leave or are imagining it, you can waive your Palm Branches, imagine the scene, and joining in the celebration of Welcoming Jesus...

Our scripture is

Mark 11:1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, “Why are you doing this?” just say this, “The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.”’ ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, ‘What are you doing, untying the colt?’ ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

‘Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!’ ¹¹ Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

OPENING HYMN - “All Glory Laud and Honor”

INVITATION TO CELEBRATION AND GIVING - Sarah Smith

Good morning church, and a blessed palm sunday to you, where ever you find yourself in the world today. As we center ourselves around the table, I want to invite you into an attitude of giving, and to expand on what that might mean to each of us in the world we find ourselves in.

When we think of giving and stewardship, so often we think of money or physical gifts. In a time where the certainty of a paycheck is a thing of the past for some, we might have to rethink what it means to give of our talents to God.

Because of the many out there who are not able to afford food or bills or to stay indoors, I invite you, if you have the resources, to consider giving to someone in need. Think of the speakers you know whose income is dependent on a physical audience. Consider those who work temp or gig jobs and may be out because of lack of sales. Think of kids that were working jobs that they were laid off for as business switched to skeleton staffing. Your giving could be a direct blessing to them.

I will mention that before the church left the building, we were already discussing the church's finances and where our monetary gifts would be best spent. If you have the means, consider giving on the Church's website. By doing this, you will be ensuring that our paid staff have the security of a paycheck while we are away from one another.

Finally, do not forget to give gifts to yourself. This week I am giving myself the gift of a judgement free appearance: no makeup, comfy clothing, nothing done to my hair. You might take into consideration the things that have been giving you the most anxiety: are you being too harsh about your productivity? Are you giving yourself patience and grace to live fully into your feelings? Are you remembering to drink fluids and eat foods that will sustain your body? This week, identify your needs and give yourself the gift of freedom from whatever it is that you can control to bring yourself peace.

In your giving, do not forget to do what you need to sustain yourself. Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others. But, when you do find yourself in an abundance, do not be afraid to give back to your communities, as with this grace comes blessings tenfold. May you be blessed this week and always with a cup that overflows. Amen.

Table Stories

Meditation - Chad

“Gathering Around the Table”

Church Family, we've spent Lent together in a different way than anyone expected. We began this sacred time with the hopes of reflecting on the Lord's Table with the Eucharist Document offered by the World Council of Churches. Their ecumenical work and conversation yielded FIVE powerful meanings of the Lord's Supper:

The Table as Thanksgiving,

Table as Memorial,

Table as Invocation of the Holy Spirit,

Table as Communion of the Faithful, and the

Table as Meal of the Kingdom.

But here we are...weeks later and much has changed in the world. We had visions of experiencing the Lord's Supper in different ways...but none of us expected to be sheltering-in-place hunting for some bread and juice that would suffice for this sacred meal. Now instead of partaking the elements in the sanctuary with our beloved communion table before us...we now join together at kitchen tables, end tables, bedside tables, patio tables, computer tables, and coffee tables. Never more than now have we recognized that while we are apart from each other, we are indeed bound together in Holy Spirit. Perhaps we can get the World Council of Churches to add "The Table as Overcoming Distance." Wherever we gather, we are still the Body of Christ and Christ meets us here in the bread and cup to extend welcome, grace, and agape love.

Today we begin this Holy Week by hearing stories from Jesus' life that happened around Tables. There were so many to choose from, but we hope each of these will speak a word into this time of grief and distance with a word of challenge and hope. Let's continue to walk with Jesus. Be blessed in the hearing of these stories and may they lead you into greater faithfulness in such a time as this.

Prayer

Let us pray together: Gracious God come to us now, meet us here at our tables, speak a word of comfort to our pain and anxiousness. Speak a word of challenge into our apathy and self-centeredness. In these hours we lift up to you the hurting, the tired, the poor. We lift to you doctors, nurses, first responders, custodial staffs, and caregivers. Give strength and courage where it's needed. In our weakness, be our strength. In these scriptures today, help us so to hear your word that we might understand, in our understanding to experience your abundant Grace, and in your grace to live out love and hope in the Name of Jesus. In his name we pray, Amen.

I. Table of Abundance - Read by Danny Magyarics

Scripture

John 2:1-12

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' ⁴And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' ⁵His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' ⁶Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward

called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.’ ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Table of Abundance

Jesus, at a wedding, provides an abundance of wine for the celebration. In what ways have you experienced God’s abundance this week?

MUSIC - “Hear at thy Table, Lord” #384

II. Table of Welcome - Read by Pete Pruszynski

SCRIPTURE

Luke 5:27-32

²⁷ After this he went out and saw a tax-collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ ²⁸And he got up, left everything, and followed him.

²⁹ Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax-collectors and others sitting at the table* with them. ³⁰The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax-collectors and sinners?’ ³¹Jesus answered, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³²I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.’

REFLECTION QUESTION: Table of Welcome

Jesus found company with “tax-collectors and sinners” and folks within his own faith community (the Pharisees) did not approve.

When have you been judgmental, when you could have expressed a more welcoming spirit?

MUSIC - “All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly” #419

III. Table of Confrontation - Read by C.J. Delaney

SCRIPTURE

Luke 11:37-42

³⁷ While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to dine with him; so he went in and took his place at the table. ³⁸The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not first wash before dinner. ³⁹Then the Lord said to him, ‘Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹So give for alms those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you. ⁴² ‘But woe to you Pharisees!

For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practised, without neglecting the others.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Table of Confrontation

Jesus confronts those within his own faith community for their greed and shallow understanding of God's call to love. When confronted with a truth that is hard to hear...how do you respond? What would be a faithful response?

MUSIC - "These I Lay Down" #391

IV. Table of Righteousness - Read by Pam Auble

SCRIPTURE

Luke 14:7-15

⁷ When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; ⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place", and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.' ¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.' ¹⁵ One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, 'Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!'

REFLECTION QUESTION: Table of Righteousness

Jesus teaches the guests and hosts the art of humility and hospitality--elevating the humble and humbling the haughty. In the world today, where are you seeing people--in the mold of Jesus--putting others first?

MUSIC - "You Satisfy the Hungry Heart" #429

V. Table of Justice - Read by Joy Wyatt

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 21:12-17

¹² Then Jesus entered the temple* and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³He said to them, ‘It is written,

“My house shall be called a house of prayer”;
but you are making it a den of robbers.’

¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard* the children crying out in the temple, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’, they became angry

¹⁶and said to him, ‘Do you hear what these are saying?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Yes; have you never read,

“Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself”?’

REFLECTION QUESTION: Table of Justice

The injustices of buying and selling in the temple outraged Jesus and he reacted fiercely. This reaction is then followed by Jesus’ acts of healing.

When exposed to injustices, how are you likely to respond?

MUSIC - “When You Do this, Remember Me” #400

VI. Table of Preparation - Read by Aspen Baynes

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:1-8

It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus* by stealth and kill him; ²for they said, ‘Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.’

³ While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,* as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴But some were there who said to one another in anger, ‘Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii,* and the money given to the poor.’ And they scolded her. ⁶But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Table of Preparation

While some plot his death, another anoints Jesus with expensive oil, an extravagant act of love. Acts of extravagant love and generosity are called for in the Gospels. How can we express both in these times?

MUSIC - "Take Our Bread" #413 - Played by Pam Auble

VII. Table of the Lord - Read by Ryan and Carly Lind

Mark 14:10-16

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus. They were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised to give him money. So Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus. On the first day of the Festival, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?" So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions: "As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal."

REFLECTION QUESTION: Table of the Lord

Even as Judas plans his betrayal and Peter would later deny him, Jesus still prepares for a last meal with them and all his disciples. When have you felt embraced by Jesus' unconditional love? How can we, like Jesus, express this kind of love in the world?

MUSIC - "Let us Break Bread Together" #425 Ryan & Karly Lind

PRAYER of BLESSING and the LORD'S PRAYER - Sarah Smith

As we enter into an attitude of remote communion, I invite you to find a comfortable praying position. Allow your spine to relax. Roll your shoulders back away from your ears. Unclench the muscles of your jaw. Feel the tension drain away from your core: down your arms and legs, out your fingertips and your toes. Take a deep breath in... and out... Before we partake of the bread and cup together...let us pray...

Sustainer god who walks with us through the trials of life, we come to you today with mixed feelings in our minds and hearts. While we cherish the time we get to spend with the folks who are in our immediate homes, apartments, and communities from a distance, our thoughts turn to all of our friends and loved ones who are outside our realm of protection. We ask for your protection on those who are sheltering in place. We especially ask your protection over our essential employees: those who are risking their own health and safety to make sure that we can protect ourselves and remain comfortable in our homes.

As we honor the start of holy week, we remember your entrance into the city: an act of joy, of celebration, of radical dissent. We ask that you give us little things to celebrate

throughout the week: small victories that we can hold dear to us as we face something that is out of our control. We ask that you show us the small places where we can find joy: in video conferencing, in remote board games, in parades for birthdays and other celebrations. May you give those of us with resources the courage to share what little we have with those around us in the safest way we can. May we find the strength to stay isolated even if our hearts call out for others, for the sake of those in our communities who do not have that choice. Show us the radical loving actions that we can take in your name as we walk through your holy transformation this week.

We recognize, loving mother, that before the sun can rise, it has to set. Before the dawn breaks, there is darkness. For there to be a resurrection, there must first be death. As mortal humans, we have a tendency to shy away from change. In this time where change continues to happen moment by moment, hold our hearts in your warmth and surround us with your loving peace. Remind us that change is holy, and that you will bolster us and protect us from the storm.

Remind us that along with change, you are in the traditions that we hold dear to our hearts, and hear us now, loving God, as united we pray the prayer that your son taught us, saying: our Father...

WORDS OF INSTITUTION - Sarah Smith

Before we close our worship, we take time to come together to the table that God has set. We recall that on the night that Jesus met with his disciples in the upper room, he took bread, broke it, blessed it and passed it among them saying, "Take and eat - this is the bread of life to sustain you for the journey ahead." In a like manner Jesus took the cup, pouring it for each before saying, "Take and drink - this cup is the new covenant of your salvation. As often as you gather together, do this in remembrance of me."

Near or far, small in number or large, as often as we come together at this table, we proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord. Be welcome at this table - remember that this is the Lord's table. All are welcome here, and all means all.

***Benediction**

Thank you all so much for joining us for worship this week. Feel free to LIKE and SUBSCRIBE to our channel. We will be putting up videos until we meet again in-person.

Just a heads-up, we are partnering with our local Disciples Churches -- Hiram and Hilltop -- to offer both a Maundy Thursday service and a Good Friday Service. We will be sure to provide links for those to you.

Now hear these Sending Words from Cheryl Lawrie as we depart. Let us pray her words together.

And now we lay down the palm branches.

And with them we lay down our belief that there is another way for you to be God.

As the last echo of the final alleluia fades, so does our hope that this journey can end in any other way.

The week stretches ahead

glory-less

and pain-full

Whether we walk with all faith or none we look towards the cross,
knowing it is both the most human and most divine of all journeys

travel the road with courage, with love, and with the uneasy peace that is the gift
of faith into this holiest of weeks. Amen.