

Palm Sunday: A Home Observance¹

Concerning the Service

The service begins with a form for the Liturgy of the Palms from the Book of Common Prayer and then allows for movement from the door through four “stations” in the home, with the stations chosen as seem fitting in the particular configuration of the house. (Make this decision prior to the beginning of the rite.)

The rite may conclude with a simple meal.

In choosing stations, one might best give the sense that the house has been covered “end to end.” Alternatively, if it makes sense of the house, the stations might cover the “four directions” – north, south, east, west. In a one room or very small space, the rite can move from corner to corner or other spaces as convenient.

A single person could eliminate biddings and responses as appropriate.

As with all house blessings, those who are able to do so can move from station to station, while those who may be mobility-limited can remain in a central room while the procession moves and the prayers are offered, loudly enough for all to hear.

Most of the history of Palm Sunday, local branches were used. In places where palms are not native, any sort of branches that are available may and should be used, as indicated in the Book of Common Prayer, p. 270 “The branches of palm or of other trees or shrubs . . .”

Gather in a room spacious enough for all. The presider greets any others participating. Branches of any sort or palms may be distributed to all.

Now, proceed to a place at or near the front door.

Presider Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

All **Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.**

Presider Let us pray.

We praise you, Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The following gospel is now read aloud, without introduction or conclusion.

Matthew 21:1-11

The presider now says three times:

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

All **Hosanna in the highest!**

¹ A service for the observance of Palm Sunday during the pandemic 2020, adapted/created from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*'s proper liturgy for Palm Sunday and from the liturgy for the “Celebration for a Home” in the Episcopal Church’s *Book of Occasional Services* 2018.

The service then continues with a procession to four stations in the home or may simply continue with the Collect at the bottom of page 3.

If a procession is used, the Presider says

Let us go forth in peace;
All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

“All glory, laud, and honor” or another hymn or song could be sung in unison, with or without an instrument between each station.

THE FIRST STATION

Proceed to the first station. When stopped, these verses of Psalm 118 are read:

Presider Open for me the gates of righteousness;
 I will enter them
 I will offer thanks to the Lord

All **This is the gate of the Lord;
 he who is righteous may enter.**

Presider I will give thanks to you, for you answered me
 and have become my salvation.

All **The same stone which the builders rejected
 has become the chief cornerstone.**

Presider Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
All **Hosanna in the highest!**

THE SECOND STATION

Proceed to the second station. When stopped, these verses of Psalm 118 are read:

Presider This is the Lord’s doing,
 and it is marvelous in our eyes.

All **On this day the Lord has acted;
 we will rejoice and be glad in it.**

Presider Hosanna, Lord, hosanna,
 Lord, send us now success.

All **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord;
 we bless you from the house of the Lord.**

Presider Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
All **Hosanna in the highest!**

THE THIRD STATION

Proceed to the third station. When stopped, verses of Psalm 118 are read:

Presider God is the Lord; God has shined upon us;
form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar.

All **You are my God, and I will thank you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.**

All: **Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
God's mercy endures for ever.**

Presider Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
All **Hosanna in the highest!**

THE FOURTH STATION

Proceed to the fourth station. When stopped, these verses of Psalm 78 are read:

Presider Hear my teaching, O my people;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

All **I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.**

Presider That which we have heard and known,
and what our ancestors have told us;
we will not hide from their children.

All **We will recount for generations to come
The praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
and the wonderful works God has done.**

Return to a central room. If a procession through the home is not used, the service resumes with the following Collect.

Presider The Lord be with you. (or God be with you.)

All **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory until he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All are seated, and a person appointed reads:

Reader A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians.
Philippians 2: 5-11

Reader The Word of the Lord. (or Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.)

All Thanks be to God.

Silence is kept.

Now another person appointed reads the gospel.

Reader A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.
Matthew 27: 1-66

Reader The Word of the Lord. (or Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.)

All Thanks be to God.

After a moment of silence:

Presider That love would go so far as this... that God's Son would die for us, for our salvation! Let us keep silence in thanksgiving and contemplate this great love.

Silence is kept for a time. Then...

Presider Now I invite your prayers for all the needs of the world God so loved, silently or aloud.

After the prayers are offered:

Presider Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said.

Presider Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Participants may adjourn to a simple meal. If branches or palms were held during the service, they might be strewn about the dining table, and a Bible placed on the table in clear sight of all.