



# Covenant Lutheran Church, ELCA



*We welcome you to Worship on Passion / Palm Sunday  
March 29, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.*

The People of Covenant are called to:

**Gather, Grow, and Go Serve**

...with God's Love!

# Welcome! Thank you for joining us for Worship today!

**WORSHIP ORDER – Sunday, March 29, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.**

*Congregation participation is given in **bold**.*

*ELW = Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Red Hymnal)*

## **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

*We will gather outside under the car portico to begin worship.*

*Palm leaves and bulletins are available from the ushers.*

## **Land Acknowledgment**

Covenant Lutheran Church acknowledges and honors the Indigenous Peoples and their ancestral homelands on which we gather. We stand on stolen ancestral homelands of the Ho-Chunk and the many other Indigenous Nations that have been historical occupants here. We respect Native Americans as caretakers of this land and Mother Earth. We strive to emulate the stewardship they first demonstrated. We embrace Indigenous People in love and gratitude. May we always seek a greater understanding of the Native community and their history as a whole as we aspire to work in meaningful partnership.

## **Welcome**

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week with the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

In this busy week, Jesus gathered with his friends to celebrate a final meal on Thursday, endured an hours-long trial before his death on Friday, and rested in the tomb before Sunday's resurrection.

Later in the week, we invite you to return to follow Jesus each step along the way. Maundy Thursday Worship is at 6:30 PM with First Communion and Stripping of the Altar. Good Friday Worship is at 6:30 PM.

Today, we hear the entire story of this final week, and we will let the shape of the story drive the shape of our worship. For example, we often celebrate Holy Communion toward the end of worship. But Jesus' last

meal with his friends appears in the middle of this story, so Holy Communion will center our worship experience today, too. We begin with our Blessing of Palms.

### **Acclamation**

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

### **Hosanna in the highest!**

### **Blessing of the Palms**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray: 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.**

### **Palm Procession Gospel**

Matthew 21:1-11

*The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.*

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” <sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: <sup>5</sup> “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.” <sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup> they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the

road. <sup>9</sup> 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!” <sup>10</sup> When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup> The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The Gospel of the Lord, **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Let us go forth in peace, **in the name of Christ. Amen.**

## PROCESSION

*The assembly follows the cross into the building, singing the processional hymn.*

**Processional Hymn**      *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*      ELW 344

### Children’s Time

**Sermon**      Pastor Wendy Moen

**Bell Choir**      *Ride On, King Jesus* African American Spiritual  
Arr. Stephenson

### Prayer

Let us pray:

Jesus, we have celebrated the day people acclaimed your triumph. Now prepare us to hear the story of your final days. Use this story to show us what we expect from you; what we offer you; what we take from you. Use these words to show us how much you give us in return. **Amen.**

### The Passion Reading

*The Passion according to the gospel of Matthew, portions of chapters 26 and 27. **Glory to you, O Lord.***

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,

**“What will you give me if I betray him to you?”**

They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'"

So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another,

**"Surely not I, Lord?"**

He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said,

**"Surely not I, Rabbi?"**

He replied, "You have said so."

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

*Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.*

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace. **Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another our need for repentance and God's mercy.

**Holy God, we confess to you our faults and failings. Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word; we take for ourselves instead of giving to others; we spoil rather than steward your creation; we cause hurt though you call us to heal; we choose fear over compassion. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, as we seek to follow in your way of life. Amen.**

Hear the good news: God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. This promise is for you!

God embraces you with divine mercy, † forgives you in Christ's name, and revives you in the Spirit's power. **Amen.**

### **Exchange of Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Let us share a sign of peace safely with one another.

### **Announcements**

#### **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 these gifts of bread and wine,  
draw us into the death and life of your Son,  
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.

We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

### **Holy Communion**

Where is our God?

**God is here in this place.**

Where are your hearts?

**We have given them to God.**

What shall we do in the presence of our God?

**We shall give our thanks and praise.**

It is right to offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; for after he entered Jerusalem in triumph, and before he suffered and died, he carved a moment away from the pressure of the world to set the table that would draw all people to God.

## Words of Institution

Matthew 26:26-29

People of God, hear the words of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." <sup>27</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

## The Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the power of the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

## Invitation to Communion

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

## Communion Hymns

*Lamb of God*

p. 191

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

ELW 803

*Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross*

ELW 335

*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

ELW 324

## Post Communion Blessing

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

*The Passion Story Continues, interspersed with prayers and hymns...*

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

### **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. We especially pray for...

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.**

**Hymn**

*Go to Dark Gethsemane, vs. 1*

ELW 347

Again Jesus went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying,

**"The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him."**

At once he came up to Jesus and said,

**"Greetings, Rabbi!"**

and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

**Hymn**

*Go to Dark Gethsemane, vs. 2*

ELW 347

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?"

**Hymn**

*Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed, vs. 1*

ELW 337

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before all of them, saying,

**"I do not know what you are talking about."**

When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath,

**"I do not know the man."**

After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath,

**“I do not know the man!”**

At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.”

Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

**Hymn**

*Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed, vs. 2*

ELW 337

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.”

But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations

they make against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said,

**“Barabbas.”**

Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said,

**“Let him be crucified!”**

Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more,

**“Let him be crucified!”**

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” Then the people as a whole answered,

**“His blood be on us and on our children!”**

So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying,

**“Hail, King of the Jews!”**

They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying,

**“You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”**

In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying,

**“He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’”**

The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. 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!"

Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

# SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## **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.**

## **Dismissal**

You came in celebration. You leave in solemnity.  
But still you carry the promise of God's love burning deep in your hearts.  
Go in peace. Serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**



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Attributions for this Sunday's liturgy:

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## Announcements:

- ✝ **Holding Space** will be meeting at 2:30 PM on Tuesdays in the Gateway Room in March
- ✝ **'Hospitality Bags'** and **'Sew at Home Bags'** by main doors- Take what you can help with
- ✝ **Endowment Foundation Scholarship applications** for the 2026-2027 school year are due April 1. Apply online at: <http://tinyurl.com/Foundation-Scholarship>. Contact Beth Kennedy, 608-279-1656, or [secretary.covenantfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.covenantfoundation@gmail.com) with questions
- ✝ **Lunch Bunch** will meet on April 1<sup>st</sup> at the Night Owl in Evansville – No Fool's Joke! 😊
- ✝ **Maundy Thursday Worship** with First Communion will be April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 PM
- ✝ **Good Friday Worship** will be on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 PM
- ✝ **Easter Breakfast** will be on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM, followed by **Easter Egg Hunt** at 9:00 AM
- ✝ **Easter Sunday Worship** will be on April 5<sup>th</sup> at the same time as usual, 9:30 AM

## WORSHIP NOTES

**Pastor:** *Pastor Wendy Moen* **Acolyte:** *Emma*

**Assistant Minister:** *Jean Sime* **Lector:** *Kimberly Currie*

**Greeters:** *George Craig, Carol Pritchard*

**Communion Worship Assistants:** *Kimberly Currie, Jean & Norm Sime*

**Organist/Pianist:** *Meghann Proper*

**Ushers:** *Karl Nissler, Sue Richards, and Doug Juve*

**Sound/projection:** *Jude Surrell*

**Altar Guild:** *Cynthia Liddle*

**Communion Prep:** *Philayne Chose*

**Fellowship Hosts:** *Linda Soleimani & Dan and Deb Oakland*

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