



Anthem: "Sing, Children, Sing Hosanna"

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Palm Sunday gets its name from the events surrounding Jesus' riding into Jerusalem on a donkey prior to the Passover celebration. Before this, Jesus had been teaching, performing miracles, and gaining recognition. The people of Jerusalem were excited Jesus was coming to their city to observe the Passover. In their excitement, they waved palm branches and threw their cloaks before Jesus on the road.

In the present day, Palm Sunday is a "paradoxical celebration." At worship services there is a festive atmosphere, and often children enter worship services waving palm branches. The paradox is we celebrate knowing what came next just days after this triumphal entry: Jesus was rejected, betrayed and crucified.¹

Review the anthem lyrics which are based on Matthew 21:1-9.

Anthem Text

Children lined the streets that day spreading branches on His way,
Singing praises to the King, sweet hosannas caroling.

Crowds of people, voices raised, joined in singing loudest praise:
"Glory to the King of kings!" Celebrate and sing!

Sing, children, sing, "Hosana to the King!" Blessed is He!
Let heav'n and nature ring! Shout children, shout to God in one accord.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!
Ride on in majesty. Ride on; blessed is He! Ride on!
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

1) Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey which fulfills prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 and Isaiah 62:11.

2) Hosanna means "Save Now!"

3) The Jerusalem crowd shouted "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" which is found in Psalm 118:26. In Matt. 23:39, Jesus later said people will use this greeting again to welcome the returning Messiah.

4) In the east, a donkey was a noble animal. A king coming on a donkey was a sign that he came in peace. The horse was a mount of war.

5) At FUMC, the ashes used in the Ash Wednesday services are the ashes of the burned palm branches used on Palm Sunday of the previous year.

Jesus was the King of Peace. "He came not to destroy, but to love; not to condemn, but to help; not in the might of arms, but in the strength of love."²

Prayer: Father, on Palm Sunday, I will remember Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey and celebrate just as people of Jerusalem celebrated. It is the kind of praise-filled procession which Jesus deserved and which, for us, takes on more significance because of what we will be remembering this coming Holy Week. Amen

¹ Dunn, Ryan. <https://www.umc.org/en/content/what-is-palm-sunday>.

² Barclay, William. The Gospel of Matthew Vol. 2.