

March 24, 2024 Worship Guide
Palm/Passion Sunday
Co-Pastors: Rev. Ron Harris and Rev. Karla Sheffy
Worship Musicians: Sue Woods, Cheryl Doty & Abby Worley
Ministry of Music: Sanctuary Choir



Gathering Up Music

Welcome - Welcoming - Tyler Curtis

Welcome to our KVOE listeners and those watching online.

My name is Tyler Curtis and this morning I am your worship reader.

Welcome to Emporia First United Methodist Church. We are all beloved children of God. Together, we are a Christian community committed to accepting, valuing, and loving all. We seek to live, grow, and serve as Jesus taught us: loving one another, transforming lives, and making disciples. Let us now worship.

Prelude and Lighting the Candles - Acolytes: Lucy Barrett & Madison Conley

Confession/Assurance-Rev. Ron Harris

“You Raise Me Up”

Make no mistake, the powers-that-be in Jerusalem sat up and took notice of the actions of Jesus and his motley crew of palm-waving followers on that morning. It was a show of the “power” of love and injustice for the “least of these,” in stark juxtaposition to the military might of the Roman rulers. It was a nonviolent action featuring a man sitting on a donkey – an action that has offered hope throughout the ages. Will we sit up and take notice of the injustice of this world and work to eradicate it in ways that honor that first Palm Sunday parade?

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary
When troubles come and my heart burdened be
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence
Until You come and sit awhile with me

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas
I am strong, when I am on Your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be

Let us pray together:

**Peace-loving God, our first instinct in fighting oppression
is often to take up weapons, utter fighting words, and lash out with vitriol.
But Jesus demonstrated humility and patience, even against his mortal enemies.
In this moment of quiet, we lift up to you those things we'd like to give up for good...
for the sake of The Good.**

Meditative Moment

Hear assurance in what the Psalmist proclaims:

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, "God's steadfast love endures forever." . . . Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. . . . Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and God has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good, for God's steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 118, excerpts)

In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

Glory to God, Amen!

**You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas
I am strong, when I am on Your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be**

The Peace-Rev. Ron Harris

As a people forgiven and freed, we reach out to lift others up, offering the peace of Christ.

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

You are invited to share the Peace with those around you [remembering to send your peace through the camera to those worshipping remotely].

Opening Song

"We Are Marching in the Light of God"

TFWS 2235-b

The Palm Procession

What's Up? with Children—Rev. Ron Harris

I'm gonna believe that you are up to something good

I'm gonna believe that you are up to something good

When I can't understand the things that happen in my life

I'm gonna believe that you are up to something good

Music for Soaring

**"How Great Thou Art"
(75th Anniversary Arrangement)**

Sanctuary Choir

The Word Uplifts

Scripture Reader - Tyler Curtis

John 12: 12-16

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord — the King of Israel!”
Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: “Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”
His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

Sermon

“Sit Up”

Rev. Karla Sheffy

Song

“Hosanna (Praise is Rising)”

Up to Something Good—Rev. Ron Harris “[*Let My Prayers Rise Up*](#)”

Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.

**Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.**

We are watching, O God, for signs of your gentle presence in the midst of insurmountable systems of oppression. We remember the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey as a symbol of hope that endures in this age of violence. Especially in these times of heightened anxiety and fear, we pray that we can be “up to something good” for ourselves, our neighborhoods, and our world. And so this week we start with thanksgiving for these acts of uplifting goodness:

Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.

We call upon you, O God, to incline your ear and extend your love and healing power for these laments:

Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.

We call upon you, O God, to give us the strength and courage to be up to something good for the sake of The Good. In this moment — in our mind’s eye — we imagine and offer our commitment to one small thing this week that will lift someone up, elevate and affirm the good when we see it, and bring a bit more calm or joy where we are. And if we find we are not up to it, we pray we can accept the goodness of others and feel your encouraging love.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray...

Lord’s Prayer

Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.

Offering---Uplifting Messages of Support—Rev. Ron Harris

During this series, we will offer our support for our church activities, mission, and budget in the usual ways, but we will also be creating a visual installation featuring “uplifting messages” to the world. As we listen to our Offertory music, you are invited to write a message that you want to put out into the world on the card insert. We will gather these. We will be adding these to our hot air balloon throughout the season [for use in our social media and display on Easter Sunday outside the church].

Doxology

Offertory Prayer

**Spirit of Redeeming Light, we offer these gifts
in response to the needs that have been made visible to this community.
We ask that you guide us to discover the places yet unseen
where you would have us be a beacon of hope to others.**

Closing Hymn

“And Are We Yet Alive”

UMH 553

Announcements—Rev. Ron Harris

Blessing for the Journey—Rev. Karla Sheffy

And so now go into the world, committed to peaceful acts of resistance,
sitting up and paying attention to the quiet symbols of God’s uplifting presence,
knowing that even in the midst of crushing oppression, you have all you need to be up to something.

When someone asks you, “What are you up to?”
you can respond,
“With God’s help, I’m up to something good!”

Let the people say, Amen!
Amen!

Postlude