

BLESSINGS ALWAYS
April 9, 2025
Association Minister Message
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PALMS. PASSION. In our present-day political climate, differing opinions often lead to arguments or loss of friendships. Lost in conversations is the unwillingness to have respectful discussions because contrary views are considered wrong, immoral, sinful, illegal, or unethical. Interpretations of laws or even scripture have generated mistrust, hatreds, and violence. When we are helpless and disregarded, we struggle with how to love and offer peace and reconciliation in the midst of conflict.

This Sunday's Gospel readings offer two different perspectives as we journey into Holy Week. *PALMS* or *PASSION*. Praise or suffering. Joy or pain. Loyalty or betrayal. The *PALM* readings are about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem with all the adulation honoring Jesus like crowds had done for kings in the past. The crowds waved their *PALMS* as Jesus rode past them on a borrowed donkey, shouting, "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!*" (Luke 19:38). The crowds had hope that Jesus might be the one who would lead them to new freedom from the captivity held over them by the Romans. In the midst of Passover remembrance, the *PALMS* included shouts of hosannas of glory days of the past with hopes for future glory days.

The words of the *PASSION* journey led to suffering and death. Recognized is the powerlessness that the crowds had and how Jesus seemed unable to change the situation. It is interesting to note that Jesus' followers were silent, watching from a distance, and struggling with their helplessness to act to save Jesus. For three years Jesus' followers heard words of love, peace, and forgiveness. Jesus offered a way of lives being redeemed and creation being restored. Even when Jesus gathered His disciples for His Last Supper with them, they still did not understand who He was.

The disciples remembered the triumphal entrance and sadness around the Table. The sacrifice on the cross would become Resurrection power and they would finally understand who Jesus was. Their lives would be changed because of Jesus words and actions. *PALMS. PASSION.* The journey is ours, too, as we struggle hearing Jesus' words and understand the power of Jesus' love in our lives. As we become witnesses to the power of Resurrection in our lives there will be *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*