

Possible Prayer of Church ☞ 1st Sunday of New Church Year, November 30

As You bid us to come and go up to the mountain of our LORD and to the House of our God, let us go in prayer, confidently believing that our LORD will both hear and give answer to our petitions and supplications.

To You, O LORD, we lift up our souls and in You we put our trust. Do not let us be ashamed of our hope but come quickly. Sustain us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may have joy at the Advent of Christ, our Savior. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Gracious Father, You have made us glad to enter into Your presence to hear the good news of our Savior and receive Your gifts. Preserve Your Church against all her enemies, and lead us to walk in Your ways and to follow Your paths, that when Jesus returns in His glory we may welcome Him with glad hosannas. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

LORD of love, visit our homes and defend us from the temptation to walk in the works of darkness, that husbands and wives may love one another and raise their children in the faith. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Almighty God, behold our nation and its leaders and protect our armed forces, taking them under Your care and blessing. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Show compassion to the sick, the suffering and those in need [*especially **Our Savior & Faith Prayers***], ...and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in personal prayer. Relieve their pain, increase their faith, and grant healing and peace in accordance with Your wisdom and will. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Heavenly Father, Your Son humbly rode into Jerusalem to the shouts of “Hosanna!” so that He might give us righteousness and salvation by His death and Resurrection. Mercifully grant that we would repent of our sins and rejoice in His presence as He visits us with His body and blood in His Holy Supper this day. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Holy God, You declared that the days were coming when You would accomplish our salvation, and in Your time You caused Your Son, the righteous Branch, to spring up for David. By Your grace, keep us joined as branches to Christ, that we might bear fruit until the day He returns in glory; for He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

ADVENT-1 Matthew 21:1-9 WHO’S REALLY COMING THIS ADVENT?! 11.30.25 F.OS.

PRAYER: Lord God, Heavenly Father, we thank, bless and praise You forever, that You sent Your Son to rule over us poor sinners, who for our transgressions did justly deserve to remain in the bondage of sin and Satan. In Him You have given us a meek and righteous King, who by His death became our Savior from sin and eternal death. We beseech You to so enlighten, govern and direct us by Your Holy Spirit that we may ever remain faithful to this righteous King and Savior, and not after the manner of the world, be offended by His humble form and despised Word; but firmly believing in Him obtain eternal salvation. We ask this in Jesus’ Name, **Amen.**

FAMILIAR STORY As familiar as this text is to many of us, the event was even **more familiar to the inhabitants of Jerusalem**. Not that they had seen it many times before, but familiar in that it had been rehearsed many times in their imaginations. Even the smallest Jewish child knew that when the Messiah finally arrived to claim His throne, He would enter Jerusalem during Passover week riding a donkey. The message that Jesus was sending by doing this couldn’t have been clearer had He hung a sign around His neck saying “I am the Messiah”. Indeed, we know the message was clearly understood, since Jesus, now performing His part, the people began to say their lines of the script; they begin to sing from **Psalm 118, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”**, since again, even the smallest Hebrew child knew, this is how you were to greet the Messiah when He arrived. In the end, the only thing odd in this account is that Matthew even bothers to mention the verse from **Zechariah**, since it would have been on the mind of any Hebrew witnessing this event, and would have come to the mind of every Jewish reader by the time they got to verse 2.

[FINAL] IRONY Which, in the end, makes for a tragic **bit of irony**. Here you have the inhabitants of Jerusalem keenly aware of every bit of symbolism in Jesus’ actions, and yet almost none of them know what’s going on. They see by His actions that Jesus is now more openly than ever claiming the title of Messiah, and they are just **giddy with anticipation**; anticipation that with the advent of the Messiah the people of God will finally find liberation. “*Finally,*” they thought, “*Someone will deal with corruption in our society and our government. Finally someone will deal with our oppression. Finally someone will deal with all the sin that is out there bringing grief into our lives, and finally we can live in peace. Hosanna in the highest!*”

SHORT-LIVED But, as we know, the Hosannas did not last long. Because during the days that followed Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, He did turn His attention toward corruption and oppression, but not the corruption and oppression they had anticipated. He told Parables which warned against rejecting the Word of God, ending them

with words like, ***“I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it”*** [Matthew 21:43]. He called Jerusalem ***“the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her.”*** He told Parables, many of which we’ve heard [near the end of] the church year, warning the people of God not to be found comfortable in self-righteousness, lest when the end comes they be found outside the Kingdom of God. Jesus, now more open than ever about being the Messiah, was also more open than ever about the salvation the Messiah would bring. Salvation not from the sin of others, but from your sin.

SIN OF OTHERS! Understanding this, it isn’t hard to see why the mood in Jerusalem and the attitude toward Jesus changes so quickly over the course of that week, to see why so many people from the crowd in this text will later be part of the crowd that shouts ***“Crucify Him!”*** The crowds snickered when Jesus called Herod a fox, chastising him for his guile and shady dealings. They were delighted when Jesus chastised the Scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, but when Jesus turned toward them, and warned them of their self-righteousness and hypocrisy, the cries of ***“Hosanna”*** turned into cries of ***“Who do You think You are?”*** Sin is a popular topic of conversation only when someone else is the subject under consideration.

SAME FOR US TOO A truth we well understand. Like those who welcomed Jesus as He entered Jerusalem as Messiah, our eagerness to welcome Jesus is often conditioned by ***whose sin He is addressing.*** We are ***very eager*** to welcome Jesus and hail Him as our ***King***, our Messiah so long as His message is one that strikes out at the sin of others. We are often eager for messages that condemn the deceit ***of others***, and yet we are quick to justify ***our gossip***. We are content to hear messages that condemn homosexuality, but when pornography is condemned, we are quick to excuse our occasional uses. We are pleased by messages that condemn all who misuse, manipulate, abuse or reject the Word of God, but offended by a message that questions why I’m not in church more often. ***Our*** eagerness, ***our*** Hosannas, can turn just as quickly, because of ***our*** hypocrisy, ***our*** self-righteousness, ***our sin runs just as deeply*** as it did in any of those who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday.

TODAY’S THEME Which is why Jesus’ message to us is the same as it was to that crowd: ***Your and My S A V I O R Comes.***

[LAW] SPEAKS TO ME! Jesus comes as *your* Savior from ***your*** sin. He calls *you* to ***repent of your*** gossip, of your lust, of your despising of His Word. He calls you to repent of your hypocrisy, your sin, because He died on the Cross to save you and rose from the dead to bring you new life. As Christians we are to be concerned about

morality. As Christians we should want our homes, our neighborhoods, our society to produce the behavior that God requires, and we rightly speak out against behaviors that do not. But more important, as Christians we are to remember that the message of ***God’s Law is a very personal one***; it speaks first of all to me as an individual. It is a nuance we often miss in English, but in the Ten Commandments when it says, ***“You shall not...”*** it is always the ***SINGULAR You***. In other words, in giving the Ten Commandments God means to speak to ***each and every one of us***, saying, “You, ***Andrew Burmeiser***, [fill-in ***your name*** here] *you* are not to have other gods; *you* are not to dishonor My name; *you* are to honor your parents.” As Lutherans we say God’s Law has three main uses: it can curb immoral behavior, it can guide me in correct behavior, but ***most important*** it is a mirror that exposes my sin. God means to condemn each of us personally so that the ***message of the Gospel***, the message of forgiveness can be applied just as personally, just as individually. The pastor does not stand up here and say, ***“Sin [in general] is forgiven”*** but ***“YOUR sins are forgiven.”*** We bring our children OR adults] to Baptism, and in baptizing them we use their names as a sign that God’s forgiveness is being given to them personally. You come up to the altar and as individuals you are given Jesus’ Body and Blood; ***“given for YOU,”*** says the pastor, ***“for the forgiveness of YOUR sins.”*** It is for good reason we don’t sing,

***Jesus loves US, this we know ... But rather,
Jesus loves ME, this I know For the Bible tells ME so.***

OTHERS? NEED CHURCH? It is our nature to want the church to especially be a purveyor of morality, a place where the evils of the day will be condemned and where we will be told not to do those bad things. But then, ***our nature is sinful.*** Jesus, ***Our Messiah***, calls us to recognize this. We tend not to see our own sins as something oppressing us; because after all, we are familiar and comfortable with them. We think of them as small problems that we can deal with later, comforting ourselves with the idea that even with those little sins in our lives we’re still pretty good people, ... better than most.

THIS IS WHO COMES Jesus would remind us today [Advent-1] on the First Sunday of the New Church Year, that to be a better, more righteous sinner than most is ***still a sinner***; it is still to fall under the judgment of God. What sets us apart is not our morality, but our Messiah. We celebrate the Advent of a ***Messiah we know***; He is the One Who comes to take away the sin of the world, to take away ***MY*** sin, speak forgiveness and comfort ***TO ME***, so that one day I might be with Him in Heaven. That’s why we join the “chorus of ages and angels” singing OUR ***Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the LORD! IJ’N, Amen. SDG***