



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person*

2400 Eighth Avenue West • Seattle, Washington 98119

Mailing: P.O. Box 17029 • Seattle, WA 98127

206.284.1960 • [www.queenannelutheran.org](http://www.queenannelutheran.org)

✘ *Staff* ✘

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Children's Ministry Coordinator	Terry Anderson
Parish Administrator	Barbara Bash
Sexton	John Bryant

✘ *In Worship Today* ✘

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Intercessor	Susan Evans

*This service of worship can also be listened to online on our website.*

*Go to [queenannelutheran.org](http://queenannelutheran.org) and click on "WORD OUT" to find audio, video, and print resources for worship at home, as well as resources to use with children.*

*Visit our YouTube channel for other worship services, educational forums, music and messages for children, and other organ music.*

# PALM SUNDAY

March 28, 2021

A "Word Out" audio transcript



## Prelude

*Chorale prelude on MARTYRDOM*  
C. Hubert H. Parry (1848 -1918)

## Welcome

**P:** Welcome, this Palm Sunday to Queen Anne Lutheran Church. Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the good news in proclamation, spoken and sung; a time where you can be still, and know God is God.


This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts: Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability: agitated, grieved, scared, forsaken. Though we lament Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsty for the completion of God's astonishing work.

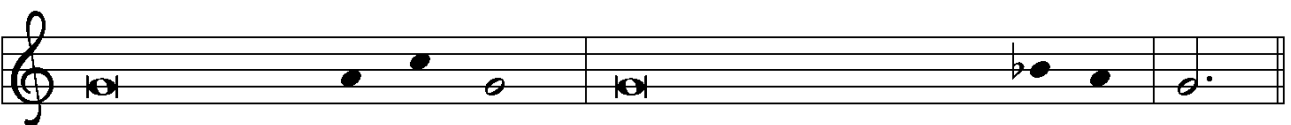
## Greeting

**P:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**G:** And also with you.

☞:   
Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.

  
Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.



☐: Christ humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above ev'ry name.

☞: (*as above*) **Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord. Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.**

**The Holy Gospel:**

**Mark 11:1-11**

☐: The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the eleventh chapter.

☞: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

☐: <sup>1</sup>When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, [Jesus] sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup>and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.' " <sup>4</sup>They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, <sup>5</sup>some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" <sup>6</sup>They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take

it. <sup>7</sup>Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup>Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup>Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

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

<sup>10</sup>Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>11</sup>Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

**P**: The Gospel of the Lord.

**G**: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon

*Thy Kindness Come*  
Pastor Dan Peterson

Perhaps you’ve never heard of Aziraphale and Crowley. Aziraphale was the angel charged with the modest task of guarding the Garden of Eden with a flaming sword. He decided, however, to abandon his post and gave the flaming sword to Adam and Eve out of concern for their well-being. Since then, he has acquired a taste for the finer things in life, one he developed over the centuries. These days he lives in London where he owns and operates an antiquarian bookshop.

It’s fitting work. Aziraphale likes his clients, and he loves being surrounded by old books.

Like Aziraphale, Crowley has lived on earth since the dawn of creation. Unlike Aziraphale, however, Crowley is not an angel. He was the serpent in the Garden of Eden who tempted Eve. His original name was “Crawly” thanks to the punishment he received from God who forced him to walk on his belly for tempting Eve. Today he walks upright, although if you look closely you’ll notice he likes to wear snakeskin boots. Perhaps that’s for the sake of nostalgia.

He also likes nice cars.

Aziraphale and Crowley, angel and demon respectively, are the most unlikely pair. Not only did they serve two radically different masters; their personalities were radically different as well. Yet over time – and they certainly had a lot of it – Crowley and Aziraphale formed a bond. They became accustomed to life on Earth and liked it. On the eve of Armageddon, the final battle between heaven and hell, now over two thousand years since the birth of Christ, they joined forces to save the world they had grown to love.

\*\*

Aziraphale and Crowley may be new to the dictionary of angels and demons. Yet unless you subscribe to Amazon Prime, you would never know who they are. Neither character is mentioned in the Bible. They come, rather, from the mind of Neil Gaiman who (along with Terry Pratchett) wrote and produced the 2019 comedy “Good Omens” in which the angel and demon here appear. Irreverent and witty, the series received accolades as well as a number of awards in the United States and in the UK. It also generated some backlash.

The backlash came from a Christian religious organization called “Return to Order,” which submitted a petition with 20,000 signatures to Netflix demanding its removal. The television show, they contended, was blasphemous in its treatment of Satanism and in its use of a female voice for God. Unfortunately, they also made a *minor* mistake: *Netflix was the wrong streaming service!* “Good Omens,” as I mentioned previously, was on Amazon Prime!

It’s bad enough that “Return to Order” petitioned the *wrong* streaming service, a move that generated a hilarious reply on the part of Netflix and one that should have at least cost someone their job! A bigger problem was the blatantly sexist nature of the petition itself. Apparently the voice of God is male because God is male, the great “white guy in the sky,” as the author Mary Jane Rubenstein calls “him.” But surely, I think to myself,

there has to be a better option for how Christians might respond to a series like “Good Omens.”

And here’s the good news: there is.

\*\*

As a pastor, I do not share Return to Order’s perspective. “Good Omens” was (in my opinion) a funny television series that offered something the petition for its removal overlooked: in the midst of witty dialogue one can occasionally find gems of theological insight worth pondering. At no moment in the story is this more apparent than in the “answer” Gaiman gives to the question of why Jesus died.

The scene occurs at the edge of Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. Up to this point the story has followed Aziraphale and Crowley, the odd couple, as their friendship develops over the course of centuries. They participate in famous chapters of human history, and now they find themselves witness to the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. Crowley in particular is puzzled by the crowd and their incessant longing for his death. He hears the jeers of the crowd as they mock the one many of them had declared “who comes in the name of the Lord” (Mark 11:9b).

Crowley turns to Aziraphale. “What was it he said that got everyone so upset?” he asks Aziraphale with an (almost) childlike curiosity.

“Be kind to each other,” Aziraphale replies.

“Oh yeah,” Crowley says dryly, “That’ll do it.”

\*\*

Aziraphale’s answer to the question of why the crowds clamored for Jesus’ death uncovers something we sometimes overlook in Mark, Matthew, and Luke: namely, the stark contrast between how the crowds initially received Jesus and how they feel about him after his capture and arrest by the Judean authorities. “Mark simply wants us to see the human capacity for both coming to Jesus and for killing him,” observes New Testament Professor Ira Brent Driggers. It’s as if the evangelist is holding up a mirror

so we can see how quickly our fellow human beings can grow fangs, succumb to mob-mentality, and descend to the basest of our capacities.

What we saw on January 6<sup>th</sup> in Washington, D.C., we see this Sunday in Mark: crowds inexplicably driven to destroy what they previously revered and glorified – “patriots” storming our nation’s capital; Judeans crucifying one of their own. How did they get to this point? Why did they, in the case of the Judeans, turn on Jesus and cause him to die?

Biblical scholars offer a variety of compelling reasons for why the crowds betrayed Jesus after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We see it in today’s Gospel reading. Mark writes, “Then [Jesus] entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve” (11:11). Having demonstrated what would seem to be the anticipation of the restoration of Israel, in other words, “Jesus enters Jerusalem, but only to reconnoiter it [i.e., to scope it out] before launching his aggressive face-off with the rulers the next day” (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, p. 79).

Of course, you know “the rest of the story.” Jesus drives out the money-changers and the livestock from the temple. He infuriates the Judean leaders who, in turn, stir up the crowds. In just a couple days, thanks to the help of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, they crucify him. And with good reason. As Raquel Lettisome observes in the *Fortress Bible Commentary*, “The ministry that has the crowds following [Jesus] and his entry into the city amid cries of messianic expectation makes Jesus a threat to both Jewish and Roman leaders (p. 200).

The reason Jesus died, then, was this: he drew crowds and Romans (as I stated in a previous sermon) don’t like crowds. The crucifixion, in turn, constitutes the Roman way of dealing with even the slightest hint of subversion. The scene at the temple marks the beginning of the end: there Jesus calls attention to himself as a potential insurrectionist. The Jewish leaders out of fear and jealousy (see Mark 15:10) convince the crowds that he must die. The Roman authorities sanction the will of the Jewish leaders and crucify him as an act of state-sponsored terrorism.

We have, then, at least two clear reasons for why Jesus died. First, he was perceived as a threat to the leadership of his own people. Second, while the Romans knew nothing of his mission or ministry, they considered him a threat too, simply for the fact that he drew large crowds. Anyone with that ability could potentially be a threat to the order of Roman rule. Crucifixion was the surest way to prevent that from happening.

But what about the crowd itself? We can explain their desire to crucify him in part as an expression of mob-mentality, but how did Jesus originally draw them to himself in the first place?

Aziraphale and Crowley have an answer. Let's return to what they say.

\*\*

You remember the exchange. Crowley asks what it was that got everyone so upset. Aziraphale replies by saying it was Jesus' message of kindness — and that, in a way, is true. Jesus restored people to wholeness by reintegrating them into community. He healed them. He heard them. He welcomed them. He opened the kingdom to children. He blessed the peacemakers, the outcasts, the poor, the hungry, the downtrodden. He insisted his followers take care of the least fortunate among them. Long before the scene at the temple, he turned the tables (figuratively speaking) upside down. And in spite of the hell-bent version of Jesus, the fiery apocalyptic preacher we find in the gospel of Matthew, the overwhelming biblical record indicates he was otherwise compassionate. He was kind. And through him, God's kingdom of kindness had come!

When Crowley and Aziraphale witness Jesus' death, they see the fickle nature of our human condition, how quick we are to turn on those in whom we once placed our confidence and trust. Jesus originally drew these people because of his compassion; and because of his courage and integrity, he carried his mission all the way through to its bitter end by standing up to the authorities among the Romans as well as his own people in the name of love.



But in the end is the beginning, at least when it comes to God's reign. Jesus' way of life, his compassion, his kindness, may have been ended by other human beings, but God vindicated him, showing us the way to eternal life here and now.

You and I can share in that life as we lean into God's kingdom of kindness. Reach out to others who may need help. Make that telephone call. Send that note. Be kind to people you see in the neighborhood. Donate to charity. Give of your time. In so doing you help in fulfilling the kingdom Jesus inaugurated, God's kingdom of kindness.

\*\*

There are of course multiple reasons for why Jesus died. Teaching people to be kind to one another, as Aziraphale said, was (in a manner of speaking) one of them. But that death is overcome every time you and I do as he did, loving one another as he first loved us.

This holy week, as we look to the cross from the edge of Golgotha, let us be kind to each other as he was to us, testifying to the power of his Spirit that continues to blaze within us as well as among us whenever we gather in his name.

Amen



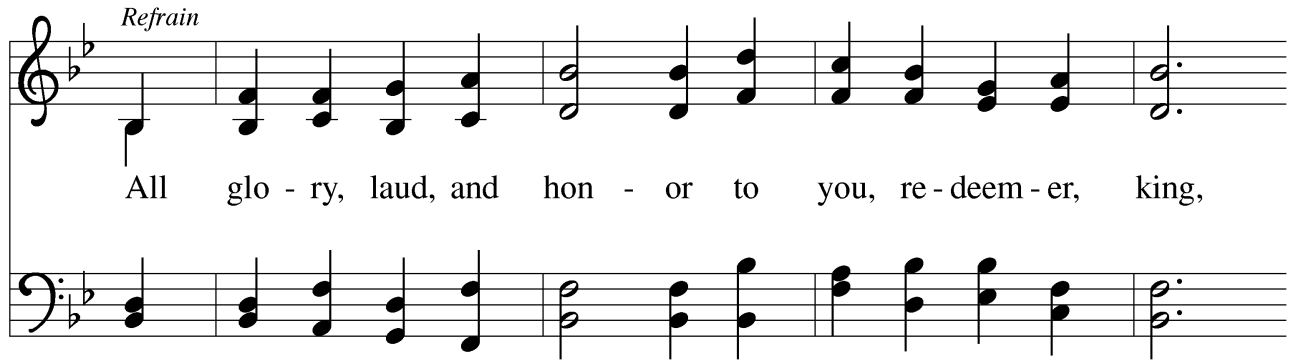
# Hymn of the Day

St. 1, 3, & 5

# All Glory, Laud, and Honor

ELW 344

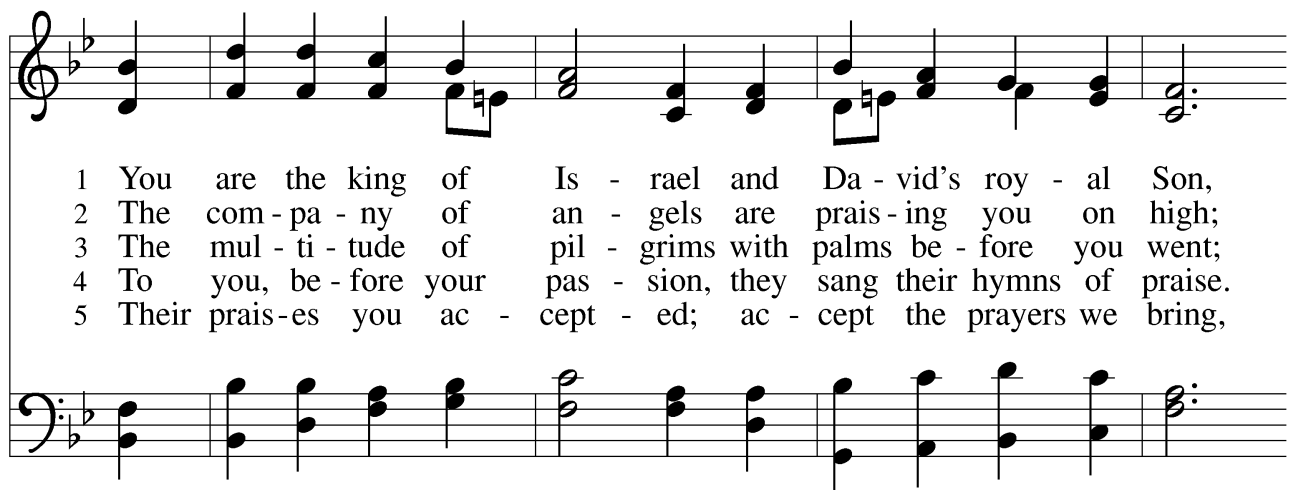
*Refrain*



All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to you, re - deem - er, king,

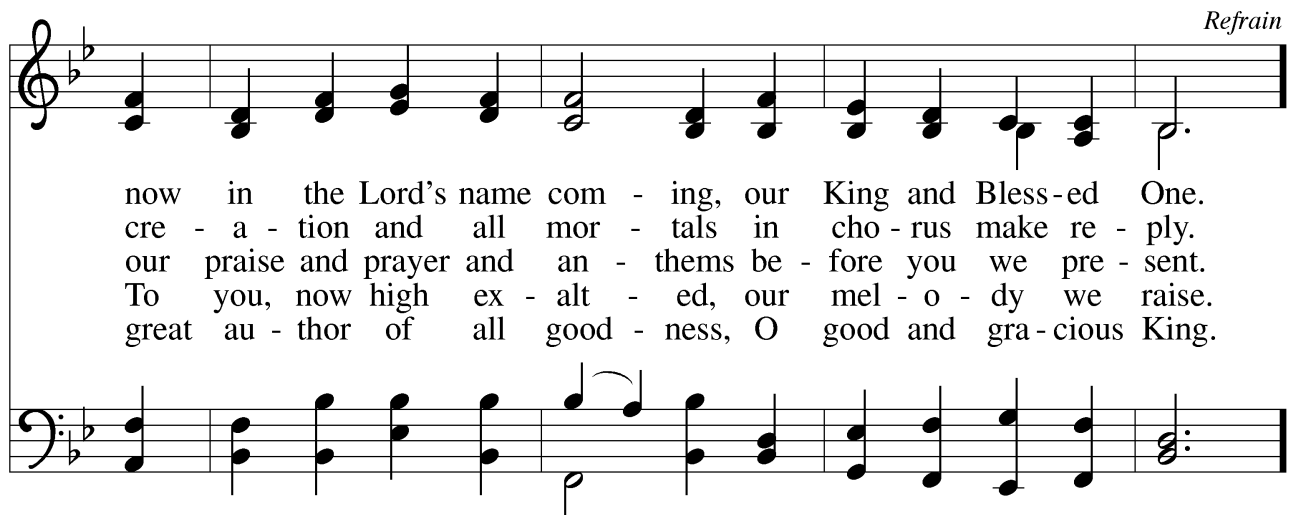


to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.



1 You are the king of Is - rael and Da - vid's roy - al Son,  
2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels are prais - ing you on high;  
3 The mul - ti - tude of pil - grims with palms be - fore you went;  
4 To you, be - fore your pas - sion, they sang their hymns of praise.  
5 Their prais - es you ac - cept - ed; ac - cept the prayers we bring,

*Refrain*



now in the Lord's name com - ing, our King and Bless - ed One.  
cre - a - tion and all mor - tals in cho - rus make re - ply.  
our praise and prayer and an - thems be - fore you we pre - sent.  
To you, now high ex - alt - ed, our mel - o - dy we raise.  
great au - thor of all good - ness, O good and gra - cious King.

## Prayers of the Church

**A:** Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

**A:** In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Give your church humility. Redeem your people from pride and the certainty that we always know your will. Heal us and empower us to confess Christ crucified. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** In creation, life springs from death. Redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore lost habitats and endangered species. Create new possibilities for areas affected by climate change, grant relief from natural disasters, and nurture new growth. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. In all nations, instruct the powerful, that they would not exploit their power but maintain justice. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them, that they serve those in greatest need. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** On the cross Jesus joined all who feel forsaken. Abide with those who are condemned to death. Defend those who are falsely accused. Console and strengthen those who are mocked or bullied. Accompany all who suffer; grant respite and renewal. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** You called followers to tend Jesus' body in death. Sustain hospice workers and funeral directors. Bless this congregation's ministries at times of death: those who plan and lead funerals, those who prepare meals, all who offer support in grief. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** For whom and what else do the people of God pray?

*A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.*

**A:** Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** You inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as your Son. We praise you for the faith you have given to people of all places and times. Give us also such faith to trust the promises of baptism and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C:** **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**P:** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**C:** **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**

**and 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.**

### **Announcements**

**P:** We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of the quill, our newsletter. We invite you to go to our website at [queenannelutheran.org](http://queenannelutheran.org).

**P:** Receive now the blessing:

### **Benediction**

**A:** Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**P:** Eternal God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless and preserve you.

**G:** Amen.

### **Dismissal**

**P:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**G:** Thanks be to God.

### **Postlude**

*Chorale prelude* on HERZLIEBSTER JESU  
Helmut Walcha (1907–1991)

### **About today's music**

Today's organ prelude and postlude anticipate the events of Holy Week with two chorale melodies that are likely familiar to many of you. We begin with a dramatic setting of the melody for "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" (ELW 337) by noted English composer and teacher C. Hubert H. Parry (1848–1918), whose students included Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. The postlude is a hauntingly plaintive treatment of "Ah! Holy Jesus" (ELW 349) by German organist Helmut Walcha (1907–1991). Walcha set the pedal part as an *ostinato* (repeating pattern), perhaps evocative of either the heartbeat of Jesus or of the inevitability of the unfolding Passion Week sequence of events. Walcha, who was blind, performed one of the early audio recordings of J.S. Bach's complete organ works for a series of monaural vinyl records, and then repeated the feat several years later for a stereophonic release. — *Cantor Kyle*