

PALM SUNDAY

Celebrating God's creation and reflecting on our responsibility.

"THE STONES CRY OUT"

Service designed by Rod Botsis, Moderator of UPCSA

Patrick: Welcome, announcements and then explains the link between Palm Sunday and today's theme of taking care of God's creation. (Making the link between Palm Sunday and God's creation: our American intern, Patrick Dunn, covered this beautifully and in a nutshell this is what he said: God formed Adam from the earth and placed him in the Garden of Eden to take care of it. After the Fall, creation began to be abused for our own purposes. We are God's creatures and our fates are intertwined. All creation waits to be freed from the bondage to decay. On Palm Sunday, with hosannas being shouted by the crowd, the Pharisees responded by saying, Jesus should not be called king. However even the "stones will cry out" and all creation turned to face the Creator. Creation is waiting to shout Hosanna. At the moment, humanity catches on to what creation knows - sees its Redeemer coming. Humanity needs to acknowledge this).

Patrick: Call to worship and opening prayer.

Men's group: Sing "*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.*" a song by Graham Kendrick

Patrick: Song: **Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest/Glory, Glory, Glory to the king of kings**

Patrick: leads - ***A Litany of Gratitude***

Leader:

We are all God's creatures
All creation belongs to God

Response: We rejoice in all life.

Leader:

We live by the sun
We move with the stars

Response: We rejoice in all life.

Leader:

We eat from the earth
We drink from the rain
We breathe from the air

Response: We rejoice in all life.

Leader:

We live beside all creatures
We give thanks for their gifts

Response: We rejoice in all life.

Leader:

We depend on the earth
We see God through its beauty

Response: We rejoice in all life.

Leader:

We have the privilege of seeing and understanding

We have the responsibility of caring

We have the joy of celebrating

Response: We rejoice in all life.

Leader:

We are full of the grace of creation

We are graceful

We are grateful

All: We rejoice in all life

Followed by prayer of confession:

We who have lost our sense and our senses--our touch, our smell, our vision of who we are: we who frantically force and press all things, without rest for body or spirit, hurting our earth and injuring ourselves: we want to stop.

We want to rest. We need to rest and allow the earth to rest. We need to reflect and to rediscover the Spirit of God that lives in us, the breath exhaled on all living things, the Spirit that calls us to communion.

We declare a Sabbath, a space of quiet; a place to repent and recovering the great, forgotten truths; for learning how to live again.

Patrick: Ending prayer with: **All heav'n declares...**
Stand and sing: Joyful Joyful we adore thee

Rod: GOOD NEWS

Men's group: ***Touch the earth lightly*** (sung by men first, congregation second time)

Rod: Readings

Tony: Sermon

Men's group: ***Creation sings the Father's song*** (sung by men first, congregation second time)

Patrick: announces offering during which a recording of "All creatures of our God and King" is played.

Patrick: Intercessory prayers, starting with song: "**O Lord hear my prayer**" (sung 4 times)

Patrick: closing song: "**Come people of the risen King**"

Patrick: Benediction (***from the Lorica of St. Patrick***):

**We bind unto ourselves the name
The strong Name of the Trinity
By invocation of the same
The Three in One and One in Three
By Whom all nature hath creation
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word
Praise to the Lord of our salvation
Salvation is of Christ the Lord.**

1. Making the link between Palm Sunday and God's creation: our American intern, Patrick Dunn, covered this beautifully and in a nutshell this is what he said: God formed Adam from the earth and placed him in the Garden of Eden to take care of it. After the Fall, creation began to be abused for our own purposes. We are God's creatures and our fates are intertwined. All creation waits to be freed from the bondage to decay. On Palm Sunday, with hosannas being shouted by the crowd, the Pharisees responded by saying, Jesus should not be called king. However even the "stones will cry out" and all creation turned to face the Creator. Creation is waiting to shout Hosanna. At the moment, humanity catches on to what creation knows - sees its Redeemer coming. Humanity needs to acknowledge this.
2. The song "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" is a song by Graham Kendrick
3. The hymn "Touch the earth lightly" I found on an American Christian Eco website. The song writer is Susan Murray.
4. The readings were Genesis 1 and Matthew 7: 7-12
5. The song "Creation sings the Father's song" is by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty
6. During the playing of the recording of "All creatures of our God and King", a visual ppt was displayed with photos of SA scenes, animals etc concluding with a slide asking our congregation what our responsibility is - in our community. (Our church secretary can email you the PPT presentation if you like)
7. The song "Oh Lord hear my voice" is a Taize one.
8. "Come people of the risen King" is also a Stuart Townend song.
9. Patrick chose the St Patrick benediction because of its Celtic origins - and explained that the Celtic approach focused on the trinity and how nature reveals who God is.
10. The sermon was preached by Tony Robinson, our colleague minister and I'm sure he could give you his sermon too. He covered what we have done to the environment, God making us kings over the universe, creation broken through us, from curse comes blessing, from decay comes restoration. We are part of God's restorative plan, fulfilled in the death of Jesus.