

## **Palm Sunday**

**Opening Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, on this day Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly to suffer and to die and was greeted with branches of palm. Let these branches be for us symbols of martyrdom and majesty. May we follow Christ in the way of the cross which leads to life; through Christ who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

## **Processional Reading:** John 12:12-15

<sup>12</sup>The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>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!" <sup>14</sup>Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:<sup>15</sup> "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

## **Song:** What the Lord Has Done in Me

Let the weak say, "I am strong"  
Let the poor say, "I am rich"  
Let the blind say, "I can see"  
It's what the lord has done in me

Hosanna, hosanna  
To the lamb that was slain  
Hosanna, hosanna  
Jesus died and rose again

## **Opening Response:**

P: In the name of the Father, and the +Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

**C: Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**

P: For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.

**C: Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.**

P: For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

**C: Therefore, we give glory to God who raised him up and gave us the promise of salvation.**

**Amen**

## **Confession and Absolution:**

P: Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

**C: Gracious God, we confess our faithless terror at the crossroad of suffering for your sake. We treasure the good life; we cling to the easy life; we fail to hear your call to walk in those ways that might bring us pain and suffering for the sake of others. We often choose to wrap ourselves in our self-made cocoon of personal preservation and seek to escape your call to ways that might put us among the hurting. Forgive our unwillingness to take up the cross marked with the names of the poor and vulnerable. Fill us with the Spirit so that we might overflow with the serving that proclaims your very presence with us.**

P: I have the honor and privilege, by the grace of God, of announcing to you the entire forgiveness of your sins. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and free – free to share the steadfast love of God with all.

**Old Testament Reading:** Isaiah 53:1-6

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

<sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Epistle Reading:** 1 Peter 3:13-18

<sup>13</sup> Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear,<sup>[a]</sup> and do not be intimidated, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; <sup>16</sup> yet do it with gentleness and reverence.<sup>[b]</sup> Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered<sup>[c]</sup> for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you<sup>[d]</sup> to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

**The Gospel** according to John 12:30-36 **Glory to you, O Lord**

<sup>20</sup> Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup> They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup> Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup> “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup> The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people<sup>[a]</sup> to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. <sup>34</sup> The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah<sup>[b]</sup> remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” <sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. <sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.”

After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Children’s Message:** Puppet Skit

MICHELE: Hey kids, I have a special friend who is coming to join me today – her name is Miriam. Please tell her hi!

(Miriam comes in front of the camera holding a palm branch)

MIRIAM: Hi kids, I’m so happy to be here.

MICHELE: Miriam, I’m so glad that you got the branch that I sent you. Now can you repeat after me – and Kids would you help too. Here we go:

HOSANNA! BLESSED is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!"

Let’s try it again..... One more time.....

Miriam: So what’s this all about??

MICHELE: We're celebrating Miriam! It's a special day! It's Palm Sunday!

Miriam: Oh sure, that makes sense. Can you tell me the story about it again? It's one of the best stories in the Bible!

MICHELE: That's a great idea! Let's see Jesus was returning to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. As He came closer to the city, he asked two of his disciples to go ahead of Him. He said, "When you get to town, you will see a donkey tied up. Untie it, and bring it to me. If anyone asks you about taking the donkey, just tell them, 'The Lord needs it and He will bring it back as soon as He is done with it.'"

When they brought the donkey to Jesus, some of the disciples took off their coats and laid them on the donkey's back. They did this out of respect for Jesus. Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem.

As He was traveling, some people saw Jesus coming and came running towards Him. They had heard He might be coming and they wanted to see Him because He had just helped a dead man come back to life.

Miriam: Hey – was that Lazarus – the friend of Jesus who was raised from the dead? I remember learning about him last week.

MICHELE: Right! People knew that Jesus was special. As Jesus and His disciples got closer to town, more and more people watched Jesus. The crowd that surrounded Him started to shout praises to Him for all the miracles He had done. "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Kids can you help me out again – "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"

MICHELE: Did you know the word Hosanna means save us. They thought Jesus was going to save them from the people that ruled over them. And He was - just not exactly in the way that they thought.

MIRIAM: But not everyone was happy about Jesus, right?

MICHELE: True! Some men named Pharisees heard the crowd praising God, and they said to Jesus, "Teacher, why don't you tell these people to stop praising you as if you were God?"

MIRIAM: I LOVE what He told them!

MICHELE: Yes, Jesus replied, "If they are quiet now, even the rocks would cry out!" Just imagine

- even the rocks KNEW that Jesus was God!

(sounding like the lesson is over) And THAT is the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

MIRIAM: I can't even imagine what it looked like seeing Jesus riding in on a donkey!

MICHELE: Yes it was quite the celebration – everyone was shouting and praising God.

Kids can we try it again. “Hosanna! Bless is He who comes in the name of the Lord”

MIRIAM: I sure love this story – it's such a happy time.

MICHELE: It was a wonderful celebration for Jesus but that happiness wasn't going to last much longer. This is the start to the end of Jesus living among his people.

MIRIAM: Can you tell us more???

MICHELE: Miriam, there is so much more to Jesus' story but for today we are going to stop here. We need to celebrate. We need to rejoice and party.

All right kids let's try it a couple more times – all together now.

“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”.

MICHELE: Miriam before you go, can I ask a favor? I have an idea I need your help.

MIRIAM: Sure, what's that?

MICHELE: Well I would like to ask all of the kids who are watching this Palm Sunday service today to draw me a picture for Easter. It can be anything they want to draw and color – and I want them to have their moms or dads or grandparents to send me the picture on my phone so I can share them on Easter morning as we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead. We are going to have some not so happy parts of our story this week but on Easter – we want to have the biggest celebration of all and I think those pictures will help.

MIRIAM: Oh that sounds fun! I'm going to color some Easter lilies – they are so beautiful. See you later – I want to get started right now!

MICHELE: OK Miriam, it was nice having you here today. All right kids I hope you can help me with the pictures – I want you to send them to me so we can fill up our Facebook page on Easter.

### **Message:**

Cross road. They are there for all of us. We may move along from day to day easily, walking in the sunshine, enjoying the view, feeling at peace. And then it comes. A crossroad. A choice point. There we stand, frozen in the spot. Which way now? Right? Left? Straight? What waits

down each of those choices? Which way does our heart call us to go? Which makes sense? Which is God's way?

The answers aren't easy. A crossroad can bring daunting spiritual pain. And it can bring us to our knees. It can even bring destruction. Today we have an expert on the crossroad that Jesus faced as moved toward the cross. We have a Simon, a disciple of Jesus who was with him through his years of ministry and at the last, as he went toward the cross. This Simon is not Simon Peter – this Simon is sometimes called the Zealot.

*So let me first explain to you why they call me a zealot. Zealot means rebel or revolutionary. I had joined a group seeking to get rid of the Romans. Some of my group were marked as wanted by the Roman authorities for acts of what you might call terrorism. The rest of us were quieter about our desire to see Rome out of our country and out of our lives*

*At first, I was not sure how to act, but then I came upon Jesus of Nazareth. Here was one with power and authority, one who could act. I saw him feed thousands. I saw him still a storm. I saw him escape the religious leaders who were lackeys of the Roman government. He kept talking about the coming of the Kingdom of God. I wanted to be in on that kingdom. I thought he could do it.*

*I was so sure he was going to overthrow the Romans and establish the new rule of King David, I didn't even hear his words about his path toward suffering and death. I thought he was talking in images.*

*I was not alone. Most of his disciples were hoping for a new ruler and thought Jesus could be that ruler. Look at what we were seeing. Jesus was immensely popular. People flocked to him. Thousands sought him out. His name was on every lip when he raised Lazarus. Even Greeks, foreigners were attracted to him. Then he did exactly what we thought he should do, he paraded into Jerusalem on a donkey, just like the Scriptures said the new king would do. He came into Jerusalem with the shouts of people proclaiming him the Messiah, the new king.*

*People welcomed him. They shouted a kingly greeting, they threw their cloaks in his way, they called out: Hosanna! God saves! At that moment, he could have been everything we wanted him to be. He could have called the people to rebellion, he could have moved the masses against the Romans, against the corrupt religious rulers, but ... but.... he did not.*

*I understand now, but I did not then. I did not understand how a leader with his authority, with his place as the chosen one of God, with his connection with the Father, could fail to act against the evil around us. How could he do nothing but drive some money-changers out of the temple? And after that, nothing.*

*We did nothing except share the Passover meal and go to the Garden to pray. No speech to the crowd, no commands to act. And worst of all, when we went to the Garden, he was arrested.*

P And moved to trial before the High Priest.

R *I was in complete confusion when they moved to a trial before the High priest. I saw Jesus, with the chance to be ruler, choose to allow himself to be arrested, choose to allow himself to be taken to a mock trial, choose to allow himself to be humiliated before the council and before the Roman governor, choose to go meekly to the cross. How could he make the choice to suffer and die? I could not understand.*

*Jesus once said, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matt. 10:39). After his resurrection I understood. When he invited us into his kingdom, he was not asking us into a place of rule on earth, he was inviting us into a spiritual kingdom, marked by believers who would follow him, even to the cross.*

P You faced your own crossroad then, you faced your own choice whether to continue to follow the risen Christ or seek another leader who might give you the success in rebellion that you sought.

R *Yes, I faced that crossroad. I faced my own choice of whether to continue to follow the risen Christ or seek another leader who might give us success in the rebellion we sought. So did all the other disciples. We could have gone our own way, sought our own successes, found what we thought we needed. But we chose to stay with him. By the power of the Spirit we stayed, even though we knew that it might cost us our lives. Jesus warned us that we would be persecuted, hated and even put to death, but we joined him in his choice, we chose to follow.*

P But we have not walked with Jesus, seen his miracles, heard his voice. How can we make that kind of choice?

R *You all have not walked with Jesus, seen his miracles, heard his voice so I imagine you wonder how you can make that choice. But you have seen him in the hands of those who have loved and helped you. You have seen his miracles in the hearts of those changed by his power. You have heard his voice in the voice of those who have brought you the Word. You have been touched by the same Spirit and can make the same choice.*

P It isn't easy to choose the way of discipleship if it leads to dissention, danger, oppression, suffering.

*It isn't easy to choose the way of discipleship if it leads to dissention, danger, oppression, and suffering. But Jesus calls you to follow, to lose your life for his sake, to take the narrow road of discipleship. And he promises to walk with you, to give you his strength and to receive you into his eternal kingdom. Remember St. Paul wrote: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us ... For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we await for it with patience. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness ... because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:18, 24-28). With that kind of power going for us, how can we fail?*

Romans 8 tells us just that "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39).

Amen

### **Prayers:**

P Let us bring our prayers and petitions to God, who hears and answers the pleas of our hearts. We pray for the nations and peoples of the world and own nation. Send your Spirit into our nation's communities and this into this broken world. With your presence and power comfort those who endure violence and persecution, especially those who suffer for your name. Strengthen the oppressed, the persecuted, the victims of injustice, the victims of wars and all who cry to you for help. Inspire our nation's leaders to be about the task of service to all, especially the needy and vulnerable. Make us agents of healing in this hurting world. In your mercy,

**C Hear us, Lord.**

P We pray for this congregation and your church in the world. Send faithful pastors, teachers and leaders, so that they might lead and guide your people. Inspire your followers to take up their crosses of love and service. In your mercy,

**C Hear us, Lord.**

P Suffering Savior, inspire us by your example of self-sacrifice to willingly carry our own cross of love for you and others. Make us willing to risk in order to be your servants. Give us the strength to choose the way of the cross, even if it means danger, rejection and pain. Lead us to take your healing power to all those around us who cry out for help. Make us able to choose the good you would have us do. In your mercy,

**C Hear us, Lord.**

P We pray for the sick, the suffering, the grieving, the lonely, especially those we name in our hearts. We commit them to your loving care. Heal, help and comfort them according to your will. In your mercy,

**C Hear us, Lord.**

P These and all other petitions and requests we bring before you in the name of Jesus. Let us pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us:

### **Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father who are in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses As we forgive those who trespass  
against us. Lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory  
Forever and ever. Amen

### **Hymn of the Day: Crown Him with Many Crowns**

Crown him with many crowns,  
The Lamb upon his throne.  
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns  
All music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing of him  
Who died for thee,  
And hail him as thy matchless King  
Through all eternity.

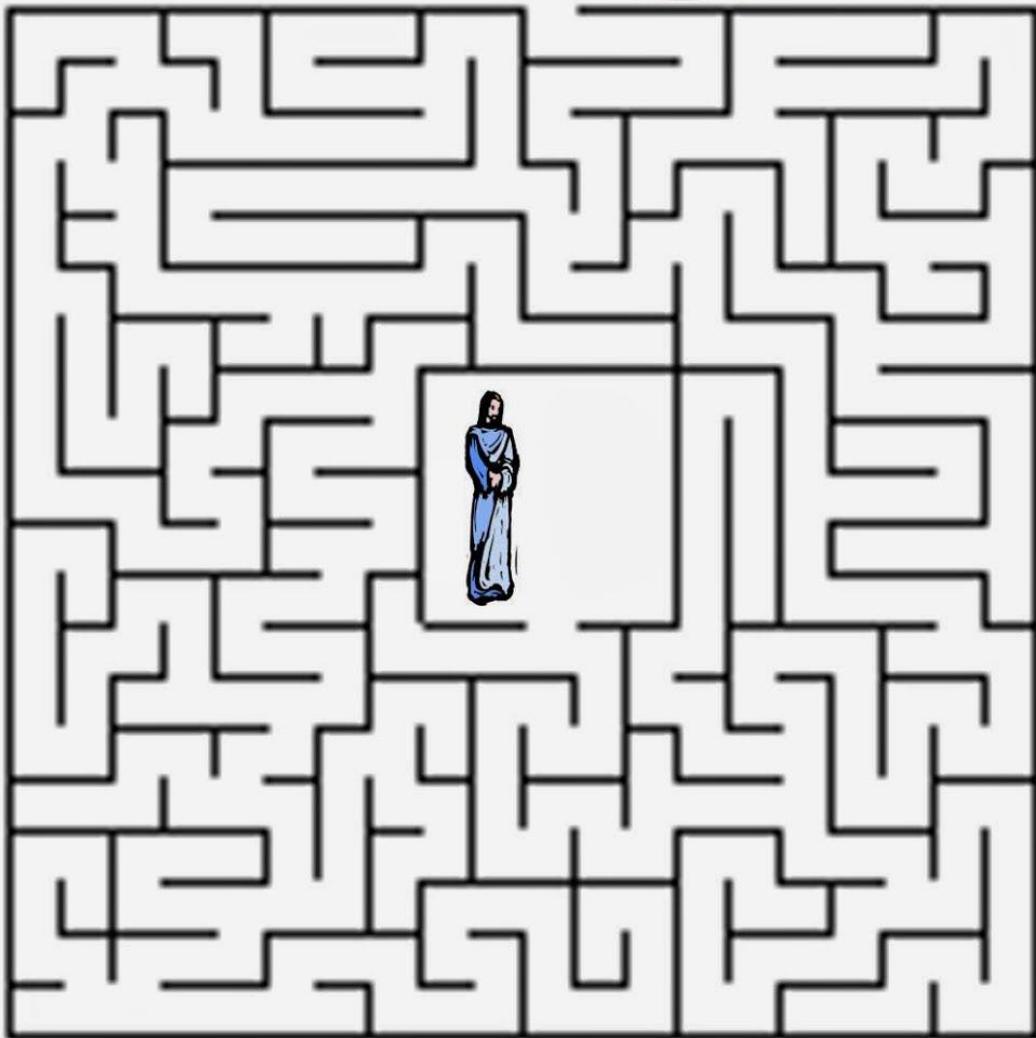
Crown him the Lord of life,  
Who triumphed over the grave,  
And rose victorious in the strife  
For those he came to save.  
His glories now we sing,  
Who died, and rose on high,  
Who died eternal life to bring,  
And lives that death may die.

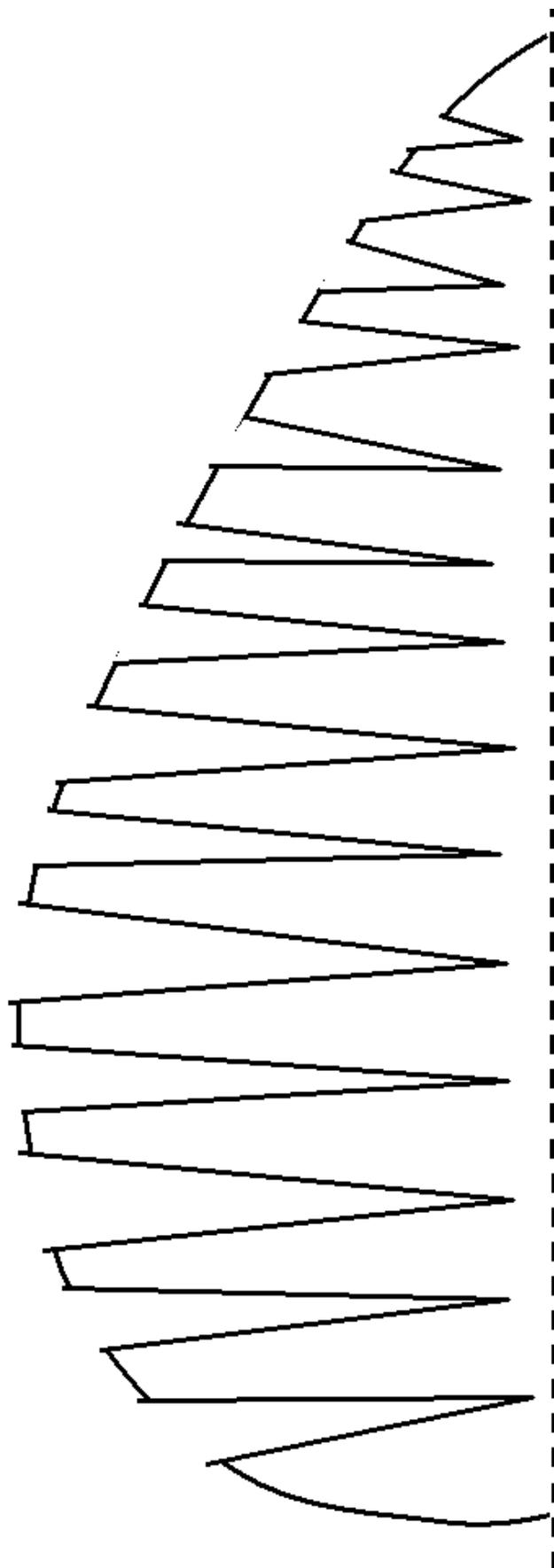
### **Blessing:**

May the grace of our suffering Savior, the love of our all-knowing God, and the presence and  
power of the Holy Spirit be with us now and forever. Amen.



# PALM SUNDAY MAZE





## Paper Palm Leaf

Cut this template along the dotted line.

Fold a piece of green construction paper in half and paper clip the template so the dotted line is along the fold.

Cut through the template and both layers of construction paper along the black lines.

Discard the template (unless you want to make more leaves).

Unfold the construction paper to see your finished palm leaf.

Optional: Tape a green pipe cleaner or thin rolled tube of construction paper to the center as a stem.

