

## God's Ways are not Our Ways

Palm Sunday 2025

St. Katherine's, Williamston

April 12, 2025

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry

Come Holy Spirit and enkindle within us the fire of your burning love. In your most blessed name we pray, Amen.

Good Morning!

What I want for all of us to remember now and to hold in our hearts going forward, is that nothing in our world ever really plays out the way we think it should. Nothing ever quite goes how we imagined it in our minds. And the very few times that it does, only sets the stage for us to be even more disappointed the next time when all of our longed for, prepped for, hoped for plans go completely off the rail.

Palm Sunday, Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, shows us utterly and completely that plans do not go as we think they should.

Imagine if you will the disciples, they are getting ready for Jesus to go to Jerusalem, their movement is growing, people are following, the crowds are increasing day by day.

He comes into Jerusalem, on donkey, not a gleaming stallion, a mighty horse, but a humble donkey, but still though his feet may be dragging on the ground, the crowds have gathered around. They are spontaneously yelling "*Hosanna, Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.*" Folks start spreading palms in front of his procession. A stunning amazing movement is coalescing before the apostles very eyes.

And then, Judas, not understanding, or understanding but not agreeing with Jesus' grand plan, takes matters into his hands, seeks out the scared, frightened religious authorities and offers to hand Jesus over. I think, not because he doesn't believe in Jesus, but because he longs for change so very much and Judas thinks Jesus needs his help; needs his ability to read the political tea leaves of life. Judas thinks, "If I hand him over to the religious authorities, publicly, then the people will riot, the people will rebel and we will have the crowds on our side, mobilized and ready to throw off the Roman oppressors, come what may!"

But let's remember what I said in the beginning, "Nothing ever plays out the way we think it should." Or even more succinctly, "God's ways are not our ways."

Because Jesus would not fight. Jesus would not call the people to arms. Jesus' way was not one of rebellion and revolution, but rather one of sacrifice, love, and care. Sacrifice, love and care, that looks a lot like giving up, giving in, and letting the oppressors win. Jesus lets himself be taken away, he sits through a trial, endures beatings and even, to his disciples' horror and pain, he walks to his death, carrying the cross. He looks to all like a wretched

criminal, on display, meek, weak, close to being done. The glorious movement, throwing off the oppressors' chokehold is a dream now dead in a ditch. This is not what Judas or the apostles' thought would be...

Think about it, be with the apostles, with Peter, Mary, James, John, Thomas, Andrew, see Jesus barely be able to walk to Calgary. This is not what they thought it would be.

So much in our lives can feel as if it's all gone awry. So many of our plans, our hopes, fall to the side. We know that feeling we know that despair. This day, this week, calls us to face this pain.

We thought our church would grow...we thought our candidate would win...we thought things would be different, we thought the diagnosis would be ok, we thought we'd get the job, we thought it would be different. And it's not. Because God's plans are not our plans, and God's ways are not our ways. But what we do know, as we face our sadness, what we know from then and we know as people of faith now, is that in the midst of this we are not alone. God has not left us. God has not abandoned us. In our pain, in our sadness, God is with us. Though we may go to the cross, we know this day and on Friday coming, we know that we are not alone. We know through it all that Resurrection means there is always something more.

God's ways are not our ways, but we are God's people. So, we walk with Jesus to the cross. We walk this week, with each other, we walk with him. We bear witness to that pain, and we stay and wait. Because we know that God remains. God loves. We are God's very own: then, now, forever.