

The *memorial* church operates under the assumption – stated or implied – that the church’s best days are in the past. The memorial church is sincere and sober, an Ebenezer in the truest sense. Worship spaces are reverently frozen in time. Lionized former pastors hold vigil through life-sized paintings in the foyer. Various brass plates, etched with the names of bygone donors, serve as constant reminders of the largesse of the men and women of yesteryear. The memorial church reflects fondly on a once-filled sanctuary (we used to have to set up folding chairs!) and believes that it would happen again if only the world will come to appreciate the Ways of Old. Members, doleful but dutiful, work to keep the torches of their cherished orthodoxies burning.

The *movement* church is hallmarked by the firm conviction that her best days are still to come. An unquenchable passion for the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven propels the movement church forward. Members of movement churches are always on the lookout for new and creative resources to help them live out their mission. They’re paying close attention to discern where the gospel might find new footholds in their culture. They’re preparing men and women from their ranks to live into consequential leadership roles. Movement churches frequently find themselves in uncomfortable situations; what’s new is rarely safe and simple. It takes more faith—a deeper faith—to operate with emerging and ambiguous variables. But because movement churches are committed to Jesus, they relish this kind of frontier life.

Tim Breen — “Don’t Be a Memorial Church, Be a Movement Church”

God of all time, as we prepare to worship you today and this week, help us to call to mind these past events in Jesus’ life so that we can sense their significance for our present lives and for the future you are preparing for all creation. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

The Worship Sourcebook



Monday Morning

So [Jesus and his disciples] approached Jerusalem. They got as far as Bethphage and Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, when Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead with a specific task.

“Go to the village over there,” he said to them, “and as soon as you enter it you will find a colt tied up—one that nobody has ever ridden before. Untie it and bring it here. And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing that?’ then say, ‘The master needs it, and he will return it at once.’”

They went off and found the colt tied up beside a door, out in the street; and they untied it.

Some of the bystanders said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They gave the answer Jesus had told them, and they let them carry on. So they brought the colt to Jesus and laid their cloaks on it, and he mounted it. Several people spread out their cloaks in the road. Others did the same with foliage that they had cut in the fields. Those in front, and those coming behind, shouted out,

“Hosanna! Welcome in the Lord’s name!
Here comes the kingdom of our father David!
Hosanna in the highest!”

Jesus entered Jerusalem, went into the Temple, and looked all round. It was already getting late, and he returned to Bethany with the Twelve.

Mark 11:1-11, New Testament for Everyone

Cry out with joy, O daughter of Zion!
Shout jubilantly, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Look—your King is coming;
He is righteous and able to save.
He comes seated humbly on a donkey,
on a colt, a foal of a donkey.



He who comes in the name of the Eternal will be blessed;
we have blessed You from the house of the Eternal.
The Eternal is the True God; He shines His light on us.
Let the feast begin. Bring the sacrifice.
You are my God, and I give You thanks;
You are my God, and I praise You.
Give thanks to our Eternal Lord; He is always good.
He never ceases to be loving and kind.

Psalm 118

The first Sunday of Holy Week is commonly called either “Palm Sunday” or “Passion Sunday.” Those who call it “Palm Sunday” tend to focus on the entry of Christ into Jerusalem to shouts of “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:9). For congregations that celebrate the day as Palm Sunday, it’s important to capture the irony of the day. This is the day on which Jesus entered the city in triumph, but as a part of his journey to the cross; this is the week in which the crowd’s cries of “Hosanna” would soon turn to “Crucify him!” One helpful approach to Palm Sunday worship is to begin by focusing on the procession into Jerusalem and then to concentrate on the suffering and passion of Jesus. Worship on Palm Sunday, as well as other Holy Week services, often invites members of the congregation to think of themselves as participants in a kind of dramatic reenactment of scriptural events. Thus children or perhaps the whole congregation may be invited to process while shouting “Hosanna!” The goal of such reenactment is to recount the narratives memorably and to help the congregation sense the significance of the narratives for what they teach us about Jesus’ ministry, about God’s being and character, and about the nature and scope of redemption in Christ.



The Worship Sourcebook

We praise you, O God, for your redemption of the world through Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph and was proclaimed Messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Let these branches be signs of his victory, and grant that we who carry them may follow him in the way of the cross, that, dying and rising with him, we may enter into your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Presbyterian Book of Common Worship

Whatever else lurks in Mark 11:1–11, it is a story in which a guest receives gracious and generous welcome. Several prophetic passages echo through the story, in addition to the explicit quotation of Ps. 118 in v. 9. It is not at all clear that these passages were already connected with whatever messianic expectations Jesus’ contemporaries may have had, as those historical questions are notoriously difficult to answer. It is clear, of course, that Mark interprets Jesus in light of these passages; that is, Mark reads them messianically and uses them to depict the welcome Jesus receives. At the very least, Jesus enters Jerusalem as a pilgrim of special standing, one the people see as a messenger of God. His arrival will surely bring with it blessings to Jerusalem and to its inhabitants, and he in turn will be blessed by the association with this holy place.

Texts for Preaching - Year B

God has not taken his people out of the world,
but has sent them into the world
to worship him there and serve all humankind.
We worship God in the world
by standing before the Lord in behalf of all people.
Our cries for help and our songs of praise
are never for ourselves alone.
Worship is no retreat from the world; it is part of our mission.
We serve humankind
by discerning what God is doing in the world
and joining him in his work.
We risk disagreement and error
when we try to say what God is doing here and now.
But we find guidance in God's deeds in the past
and his promises for the future,
as they are witnessed to in Scripture.
We affirm that the Lord is at work,
especially in events and movements
that free people by the gospel
and advance justice, compassion and peace.
God sent his Son
to proclaim release to those who are bound,
to announce that God's promised kingdom is at hand,
to urge everyone to repent and believe the good news.
The Lord is moving toward the time
when the glorious liberty of the children of God
will be manifest throughout the whole creation.

Presbyterian Declaration of Faith