

*Sunday, March 29, 2026*  
*Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday*



BETHLEHEM  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org)



## PRELUDE

Fughetta on “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

(VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN)

Austin C. Lovelace  
tune, Melchior Teschner

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ’s broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God’s astounding work.*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Hallelujah! Sing Hosanna!

words, Dora Ann Purdy  
tune, Hebrew folk song / arr. Glenn Eernisse

BLC Youth Singers

## CHILDREN’S MOMENT

### PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Matthew 21:1-11

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

**Hosanna in the highest.**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**Narrator:** A reading from Matthew. When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them,

**Jesus:** Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, “The Lord needs them.” And he will send them immediately.

**Narrator:** This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

**The Prophet:** Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

**Narrator:** The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

**Crowd: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!**

**Narrator:** When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, Who is this? The crowds were saying,

**Crowd: This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.**

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **BLESSING OF THE PALMS**

We praise you, O God, for entering into Jerusalem, and for entering into Fairport as well as every community that tells this story today. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow Jesus throughout this Holy Week, that we, too, might follow the way of the cross and live in newness of life, for us and for all creation. We pray this in the name of the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Let us go forth in peace,

**in the name of Christ. Amen.**

<b>GATHERING HYMN</b>	All Glory, Laud, and Honor	ELW 344
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### **GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. O God of mercy and might, in the mystery of the passion of your Son you offer your infinite life to the world. Gather us around the cross of Christ, and preserve us until the resurrection, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **First Reading: Philippians 2:5-11**

*Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.*

<sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, though he existed in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be grasped,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him even more highly  
and gave him the name  
that is above every other name,

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name given to Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **REFLECTION**

## **OFFERING OF MUSIC**

So Lowly Does the Savior Ride

words, Almer T. Pennewell / G.M.M. (st. 3)  
music, Gilbert M. Martin

The Chancel Choir

## THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor. If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.*

## OFFERING

*Thank you for your offerings that support the ongoing ministry that we share. Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting [blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry](http://blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry) or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.*



## OFFERTORY

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your  
pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system ends with a double bar line. The second system ends with a double bar line. The third system ends with a double bar line.

store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,  
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God our provider,

**you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### THE LAST SUPPER

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

We pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

**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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

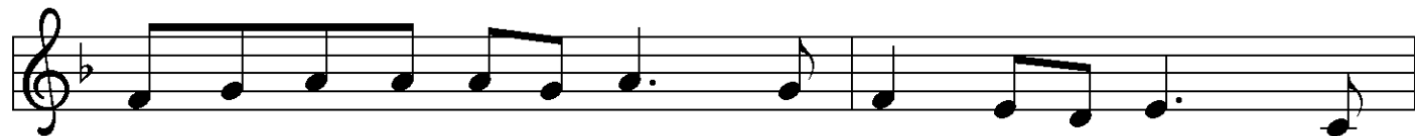
Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

**Thanks be to God!**

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant.*

## THE COMMUNION



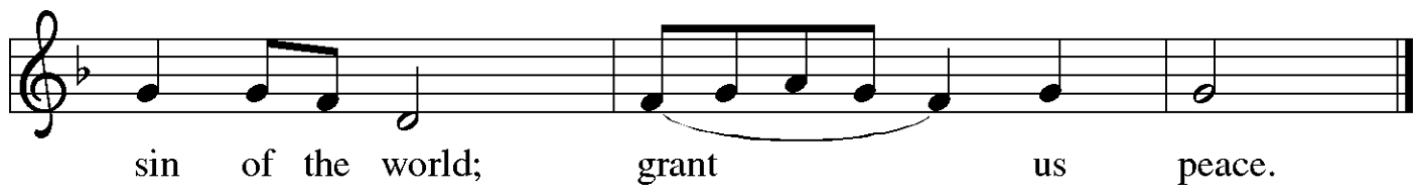
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



*Communion is served at the rail. The ushers will direct you forward by the center aisle. You may kneel or stand, remaining at the rail as long as you desire and return to your seat by the outer aisle. Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant.*

## HYMN FOR COMMUNION

Lamb of God

ELW 336

**Refrain:** sung by All

O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God, I love the  
 ho - ly Lamb of God. Oh, wash me in your pre-cious  
 blood, my Je - sus Christ, the Lamb of God.

Cantor:

1. "You only Son, no sin to hide, but you have sent him from your side to walk upon this guilty sod and to become the Lamb of God. **Refrain**
2. "Your gift of love we crucified. We laughed and scorned him as he died. The humble king we named a fraud and sacrificed the Lamb of God. **Refrain**
3. "I was so lost, I should have died, but you have brought me to your side to be led by your staff and rod and to be called a lamb of God. **Refrain**

## HYMN FOR COMMUNION

Stay with Me

ELW 348

The musical score is written for two voices, Treble and Bass clefs, in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "Stay with me, re - main here with me, watch and pray. Watch and pray." The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final cadence in the key of B-flat major.

**All:** Sing the hymn continuously along with cantor's part.

### **Cantor:**

1. *Stay here and keep watch with me. Watch and pray, watch and pray!*
2. *Watch and pray not to give way to temptation.*
3. *The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak.*
4. *My heart is nearly broken with sorrow. Remain here with me, stay awake and pray.*
5. *Father, if it is possible let this cup pass me by.*
6. *Father, if this cannot pass me by without my drinking it, your will be done.*

## PRAYING IN THE GARDEN

*Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.*

Remembering Jesus who shared his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, we join our prayers to all those who seek God's saving power.

*A brief silence.*

#1 O God, you announce words of grace and truth. Give wisdom to all preachers in your church both globally and locally. Open our hearts to encounter the infinite life you offer in Jesus. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

#2 You hold the whole universe. Gather sun and moon, clouds and stars, land and sea, and plants and animals around the cross, so that all creation bears witness to your saving love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

#3 Your power is sure. Destroy inequity and division in every place, and build your beloved community among all people. Guide judges, attorneys, and juries so that they act with justice and fairness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all who serve in youth and family ministries at Bethlehem and across the church, that they will be supported and affirmed for their work of caring for youth, nurturing faith, encouraging service, and helping young people discover and use their gifts; and for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. May our partnerships remind us of your abundance. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We know that all people matter in your eyes and you know their cares and concerns, their hopes and joys. We pray for those whose needs are known to us.

*We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:*

- Damon K, brother of Bob K who died on 3/11

*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Nancy F who is hospitalized at Highland Hospital
- Terri K who is recovering from a broken leg
- Wesley, grandson of Pat E, who is recovering from a health crisis
- Bob P, who is recovering from surgery on 3/10

Hear the names of those we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**Amen.**

<b>HYMN</b>	Jesus, I Will Ponder Now	ELW 345, st. 1
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Jesus, I will ponder now  
on your holy passion;  
let your Spirit now endow  
me for meditation.  
Grant that I in love and faith  
may the image cherish  
of your suffering, pain, and death,  
that I may not perish.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 27:11-54**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

MATTHEW 27:11-26 – JESUS IS TRIED

Narrator: Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him,

Pilate: Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus: You say so.

Narrator: But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him,

Pilate: Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?

Narrator: But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them,

Pilate: Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?

Narrator: For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them,

Pilate: Which of the two do you want me to release for you?

Narrator: And they said,

**Crowd: Barabbas.**

Pilate: Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?

Narrator: All of them said,

**Crowd: Let him be crucified!**

Pilate: Why, what evil has he done?

Narrator: But they shouted all the more,

**Crowd: Let him be crucified!**

Narrator: So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,

Pilate: I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.

Narrator: Then the people as a whole answered,

**Crowd: His blood be on us and on our children!**

Narrator: So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

<b>HYMN</b>	Jesus, I Will Ponder Now	ELW 345, st. 2
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Make me see your great distress,  
anguish, and affliction,  
bonds and blows and wretchedness  
and your crucifixion;  
make me see how scourge and rod,  
spear and nails, did wound you,  
how you died for those, O God,  
who with thorns had crowned you.

MATTHEW 27:27-44 – JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Narrator: Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying,

Soldier: Hail, King of the Jews!

Narrator: They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying,

**Crowd: You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.**

Narrator: In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying,

Chief Priests: He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son."

Narrator: The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

**HYMN**

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now

ELW 345, st. 3

Yet, O Lord, not thus alone  
make me see your passion,  
but its cause to me make known  
and its termination.  
For I also and my sin  
wrought your deep affliction;  
this the shameful cause has been  
of your crucifixion.

## MATTHEW 27:45-61— JESUS DIES AND IS BURIED

Narrator: From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice,

Jesus: Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?

Narrator: That is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,

**Bystanders: This man is calling for Elijah.**

Narrator: At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said,

**Bystanders: Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.**

Narrator: Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said,

Centurion: Truly this man was God's Son!

Narrator: Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said,

Chief Priests: Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, "After three days I will rise again." Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, "He has been raised from the dead", and the last deception would be worse than the first.

Narrator: Pilate said to them,

Pilate: You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.

Narrator: So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **CHORAL BENEDICTION**

O God, You Search Me

text, Psalm 139, adapt.  
text / music, Bernadette Farrell

*O God, you search me and you know me.  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.  
When I walk or lie down you are before me:  
Ever the maker and keeper of my days.*

*Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,  
You have known its meaning through and through.  
You are with me beyond my understanding:  
God my present, my past and future, too.*

*Brief Silence*

### **BENEDICTION**

You came in celebration, you leave in solemnity. But still you carry the promise of God's love made known in † Jesus burning deep in your hearts.

**Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Walk with Jesus.

**Thanks be to God.**

*During the season of Lent we omit the Postlude and provide space for reflection following worship.*

## **BLC Pastors**

The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

## **BLC Musicians**

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

### **Additional musical leadership provided by:**

BLC Youth Singers: Delaney Allen, Emelia Allen, Noah Allen

Alejandro García Giraldo, Ivanna García Giraldo

Madeleine Hoffman

Cantors: Kathy Moragne, Hans Walter-Peterson

Percussion: Margie Gaul, Dave Wideman

Piano: Michael Koncilja

Violin: Jane Morale

**Thank you** to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with one of the pastors following worship or send an email to [volunteersupport@blcfairport.org](mailto:volunteersupport@blcfairport.org) and we'll follow up!

**Communicate with us:** Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

**What's happening at BLC this week?** Visit the Calendar of Events at [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org). Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

**Church office hours:** Sandy Squires holds office hours on Wednesdays from 9-1 and is responsive to phone and email Monday through Friday during usual business hours. Please communicate your needs through the church office by phone (585) 223-0634 or by email [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org). Our co-Pastors are available Sunday – Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling the church office or emailing [pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org)

**Lent and Holy Week at Bethlehem**

**Holy Week and Easter**

During Holy Week we follow Jesus' journey from his triumphal entry into the city to a desolate cross to an empty tomb.

*Check out the weekly Star and Ready for Worship emails for more information about Holy Week worship.*

**Palm/Passion Sunday, March 29 at 8:55 am** (in person and livestream)

**Maundy Thursday, April 2** (in person and livestream)

**Noon** (in person and livestream) – Individual Absolution and Holy Communion in the Sanctuary

**6 pm** (in person only) – Remembering Jesus' last supper with his disciples, we will begin worship with a shared meal at tables in the Narthex and end in silence in the sanctuary after the altar is stripped

**Good Friday, April 3 at 7 pm** (in person and livestream) – **Tenebrae Service**

**Easter Sunday, April 5 at 8:55 am** (in person and livestream) **and**

**11 am** (in person only)

**Easter Breakfast served 9:45 – 10:45 am**

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

**PRE-REGISTER NOW!**

**JULY 20-23, 2026**



**AT ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN IN PITTSFORD**

**BLC is partnering with St. Paul's, Pittsford again  
for this FREE summer's VBS program!**

**Ages Pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

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All liturgical texts are drawn and adapted from *Sundays and Seasons*

Holy Communion, Setting Three; Music: Richard W. Hillert © 1978, 2006 Richard W. Hillert (adm. Augsburg Fortress)

“Create in Me a Clean Heart”, Music: J. A. Freylinghausen

“O God, You Search Me” Text and Music: Bernadette Farrell © 1992, Bernadette Farrell (adm. Oregon Catholic Press)

“Fughetta on *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*” Tune: Melchior Teschner; Music: Austin C. Lovelace

© 1989 Concordia Publishing House

“Hallelujah! Sing Hosanna!” Words: Dora Ann Purdy; Music: Traditional Hebrew folk song

Arranger: Glenn Eermisse © 2012 Celebrating Grace Music, Inc.

“So Lowly Does the Savior Ride” Text: Almer T. Pennewell and Gilbert M. Martin (st. 3)

Music: Gilbert M. Martin © 1998 The Sacred Music Press

## True Humility

The servanthood of a teacher in Isaiah 50:4–9a, the outcast in Psalm 31:9–16, those who bow down in Philippians 2:5–11: scripture teaches humility. On this day we move from Christ's triumphant ride on a humble donkey to the humiliation of the cross. The humility of the characters in the passion story is in question: Judas, Pilate, the Twelve, chief priests and elders, Barabbas, the crowd, the soldiers, two bandits. Among other things, their lack of humility is what brings about the passion of Christ. There is only one truly humble person in this story: Jesus the Christ. Matthew's humble Jesus cries out from the cross to ask God why he has been forsaken.

Only in the stories of the resurrection do other humble characters appear: the centurion, the women, Joseph of Arimathea. A careful look at the complexity of humility in the palm and passion stories could set up a reflective theme carried through to Easter. Who in each story do we regard as humble? Why? How does our humility compare? Are there characters who seem to gain or lose humility in the course of the story from the triumphant entry to the resurrection? A deep and meaningful understanding of humility is a worthy and lasting gift to take away from the season of Lent and the celebration of Easter.

Joseph of Arimathea is a particularly good character on which to base an understanding of humility. A close look at all references to him in the Gospels, and a bit of creative narrative, create an image of a truly humble believer. He is referenced in both canonical and apocryphal texts. His devotion represents deep humility that leads to the very finest of good works as he cares for the body of Jesus.