



A great crowd met Jesus as he was coming into Jerusalem, crying,
“Hosanna! Hosanna!”

Hosanna is a word from the Hebrew meaning “save us” –
and certainly the people had enough to cry “save us” about.

They lived in a territory occupied by the Roman Empire,
under the Roman Peace which was maintained by violence and fear,
with soldiers and executions.

Many lived in poverty.

They waited for God to send the Messiah, the son of David who would save them.

We, too, may gather today with cries of “Save us.”

We lament over the warfare we see around the world,
the violence in our nation and our city.

We stand in solidarity with immigrant neighbors,
and mourn to see families separated and children caged.

We weep with all who are hungry or lack access to health care.

We come with burdens of grief or mental illness, loneliness or addiction.

It feels like there is a lot to fear right now.

So we, too, may cry, Hosanna! Save us!

Our theme throughout Lent has been, Tell Me Something Good -
grounding ourselves in the good news.

And the theme for today is, the good news inspires us to act.

But so often we feel helpless in the face of all the anxiety, all the struggle,
all the grief we see and we feel.

What can we do?



Last October, a group of nineteen Buddhist monks began a walk across
America — from Fort Worth, Texas to Washington, D.C.

They walked to bear witness to peace, compassion, forgiveness, and healing.

As they journeyed, they captured the attention of thousands,
who followed them on social media and news platforms,
who came out to greet them as they passed through town after town
on their 2,300 mile route.

Methodist Minister Michael J. Christensen wrote on the Religion Unplugged website:

What first caught my spiritual attention back in October, when they began their long walk, was not the number of “likes” on their Instagram feed — though more than a million people now follow their journey online — but the way the monks embody what they teach.

The rhythm of the pilgrimage is simple and demanding. The monks rise before dawn and walk in silence through the early morning hours. They break before noon, often welcomed by a local church, civic group or community center.

Food is offered freely — bread, fruit, warm meals for the road.

Short teachings follow: Simple reflections on forgiveness, compassion, joy, healing, and mindful awareness of the present moment. Then the monks walk again until sundown, when another host takes them in. No evening meal during their fast.

As I watch their live feed day after day, I see people standing bundled in coats and scarves, waiting patiently in cold and snow just to catch a glimpse. I see spiritually hungry strangers hoping for a blessing — for themselves, for loved ones, for healing. I see volunteers offering hot drinks, food, and quiet gratitude. I see the monks respond with gentle words and attentive silence.

Some may say I’ve become obsessed with following these peace pilgrims on social media. But peace scrolling is better than doom strolling. I prefer to think God may be up to something — doing a “new thing” in the world right now — and I don’t want to miss it.

These monks didn’t let their concern turn to despair, but decided to take action — radical, sacrificial action.

They decided to pray with their feet, to embody prayer with their whole lives, for the sake of compassion and mercy.

When they arrived in Washington D.C. on February 10, thousands had come to greet them, to thank them and participate in a small way in their witness for peace and compassion.



Yesterday, thousands of people around the country gathered for the No Kings marches, and for many, it was a similar act of praying with our feet, using our bodies and voices, seeking peace and justice in our nation and our world.

After the demonstration yesterday Lee and I went to the NM United game.
As I was walking in the sunshine listening to the crowds,
 heading back to my seat to join Lee and our good friends,
 I just thought, my life is so good right now.
And that makes it feel even more important that I, given my privilege
 and all the blessings in my life, act of behalf of neighbors
 who are more vulnerable.

The good news of Jesus inspires us to act.
That action is going to look different for each of us –
 protest songs or quiet words of encouragement,
 financial gifts to relieve hunger or hours volunteering at a food bank,
 writing letters or making phone calls to elected leaders,
 collecting coats and making hats for the unhoused in our city
 and at our border.



In the book *Ladder to the Light*, Choctaw elder and Episcopal bishop Steven Charleston shares a series of revelations he has received from Spirit during his morning prayers.

He says that hope lets us literally see the presence and action of the holy in our everyday lives, sharing these words of revelation:

Sometimes, in this troubled world of ours, we forget love is all around us. We imagine the worst of other people and withdraw into our own shells. But try this simple test: Stand still in any crowded place and watch the people around you. Within a very short time, you will begin to see love and you will see it over and over and over. A young mother talking to her child, a couple laughing together as they walk by, an older man holding the door for a stranger – small signs of love are everywhere. The more you look, the more you will see. Love is literally everywhere. We are surrounded by love. The instinct to care is still within us – all of us – so much so that you can see it clearly just by standing still.

The faith with which we see, Charleston writes, penetrates the shadows around us like a searchlight seeking the future. Hope becomes a force that will not be denied.

A few months ago I witnessed a simple act of love that moved me
 and has stayed with me.

Some of you have heard me share this story, but I think it bears repeating.

I was at a Walgreens, and came to the register to stand in line behind a man
I immediately thought was unhoused,
because of the bags he carried and his bedraggled state.
He was buying a few simple food items, and paying for his order all in change.
As he and the cashier counted up nickles and dimes and pennies,
more people came to stand in line behind me,
and I waited for someone to get impatient or make a rude comment.
Instead, the cashier kept counting, quietly saying to the man,
this is great, I'm running low on pennies right now.
When the man had completed his purchase and left,
I thanked the cashier for his kindness
His compassion had preserved dignity in a situation when many
would respond with impatience and shaming.



Living out our faith can be so very simple,
and it can require everything.

Ultimately, it is a way we live, the attitude and action we take
in response to God's great love and grace offered to us.

By the time Jesus was riding on a donkey into Jerusalem that day,
the meaning of the cry, "Hosanna" had taken on new meaning
among the Jewish people.
To cry, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord,"
was a quotation of a psalm, a song-prayer they all knew.
In the prayer, the cry of "save me!" is surrounded by praise,
by the recognition that God is the one who has and does save God's people.
So the cry for help becomes a shout of hope and expectation:
Salvation! Salvation comes!
Blessed is the one who comes, riding on a donkey, in the name of the Lord"

And we, too, wait and watch to see Jesus come into our lives,
Crying Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!
Salvation comes; let all the heaven rejoice!

We, too, seek to live in our Hosanna – putting prayer into action in our lives.

Hosanna! Salvation Comes!

Amen