

Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading  
Palm Sunday Worship Service 10:30AM 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
Jill Bird leading and Rev Zoltan Biro preaching  
[www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk)  
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## GENEROSITY

We are standing at the beginning of the greatest week in history. We come to remember with thanksgiving. Let us bow our heads and stand in awe of our GOD.

For God loved the world so much that he **gave** his only Son JESUS, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. John 3.16

**Lord we come to worship you and adore you**

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, The holy One, is here;  
Come bow before him now, with reverence and fear  
In him no sin is found We stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, The holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord Is shining all around;  
He burns with holy fire, With splendour he is crowned:  
How awesome is the sight Our radiant king of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord Is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord Is moving in this place:  
He comes to cleanse and heal, To minister his grace -  
No work too hard for him. In faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord Is moving in this place. MP 50

**FAMILY TIME Palm Sunday BIBLE READING 1: Matthew 21. 1-11**

You are the king of glory, you are the Prince of peace,  
you are the Lord of heaven and earth, you're the sun of righteousness.  
Angels bow down before you, worship and adore, for

you have the words of eternal life, you are Jesus Christ the Lord.  
Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna to the King of kings!  
Glory in the highest heaven, for Jesus the Messiah reigns. MP 790

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest  
Lord we lift up Your name, with our hearts full of praise  
Be exalted, O Lord, our God Hosanna in the highest

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is the King of kings. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is the King of kings.  
Lord, we lift up Your name, with hearts full of praise,  
Be exalted, O Lord, our God, Jesus is the King of kings

Glory, glory, glory to the King of Kings Glory, glory, glory to the King of Kings  
Lord we lift up Your name, with our hearts full of praise  
Be exalted, O Lord, our God Glory to the King of Kings MP 242

### **Spoken as a declaration**

All hail King Jesus All hail the Lord of Heaven and earth  
All hail King Jesus All hail the Saviour of the world Bethel Music 2021

### **Children and young people leave for their classes**

### **BIBLE READING 2 Malachi 3. 6-12**

Make way, make way For Christ the King In splendour arrives  
Fling wide the gates and welcome Him Into your lives

*Make way (Make way) Make way (Make way)*  
*For the King of kings (For the King of kings)*  
*Make way (Make way) Make way (Make way)*  
*And let His kingdom in*

He comes the broken hearts to heal, The prisoners to free  
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance The blind shall see

And those who mourn with heavy hearts, Who weep and sigh  
With laughter, joy and royal crown, He'll beautify

We call you now to worship Him as Lord of all  
To have no gods before Him their thrones must fall! MP 457

### **SERMON**

Good morning, everyone, over these past weeks we have been talking about growing the seeds that God has already planted in us. We've looked at **inner growth**: prayer, reading the bible, fasting, reflection. We've explored **outward growth**: simplicity, solitude, service, submission.

Today, we continue learning about **corporate growth**, how we grow **together** as the people of God. We will be focusing on generosity and the habit of giving. This topic is fitting to be looked at on **Palm Sunday**. It is not just about waving branches or shouting "Hosanna." It is about a **community responding together** to the arrival of their King. A whole crowd, moving in the same direction, offering what they had.

But I want to be clear from the beginning: giving is **not just about money**, giving is about **taking part together in the generosity of God** in time, energy, care and also finances.

## 1. God Is the Source of All Generosity

*(Malachi 3:10-12)* God speaks these striking words: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. Test me in this and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven...”

These words tell us something fundamental: God is not asking for something **from** us. He is inviting us into something **with** Him. Everything we have already comes from His hand. Our role is not to create blessing, but to **align ourselves with the flow of His provision**.

Let me put it this way. When we give to God, it’s easy to fall into the trap of thinking of it as a duty or a demand, like paying a tax to the government, a necessary obligation that takes something away from us. But giving to God is entirely different. Instead of parting with our resources reluctantly, we’re invited into a joyful partnership with Him.

Imagine you’ve received a hamper full of delicious treats as a gift. You don’t have to share it with anyone, but when you open your home and offer those treats to friends and family, the joy multiplies. The act of sharing doesn’t diminish your gift, instead, it increases everyone’s delight, including yours. In the same way, when we give to God, we’re not losing out; we’re participating in the flow of His generosity and allowing His blessings to reach others through us.

Unlike a tax, which is compulsory and often resented, giving to God is a response to His kindness and abundance. It’s an act of gratitude, recognising that everything we have comes from Him in the first place. As we give, we’re aligning ourselves with His heart, becoming channels of His love and provision for others, and experiencing the joy of being part of something bigger than ourselves.

Imagine a cup under a running tap. If you keep pulling the cup away, it stays empty. But if you leave it under the flow, it fills and eventually overflows.

God says, “Bring... and see.” Giving puts us **under the flow of His provision**.

So, giving is not about emptying ourselves until there’s nothing left. It’s about trusting the source. The cup stays full not because it clings tightly to what it has, but because it remains under the tap. When we live generously, we discover that God’s supply is not scarce, and His flow does not run dry.

## 2. Giving is an Act of Worship *(Matthew 21:1-9)*

Now let’s turn to Palm Sunday. Jesus enters Jerusalem, and the city erupts in celebration. Cloaks are laid on the road. Branches are cut and waved. Voices cry out, “Hosanna!” But look closely, **the people gave what they had**. They didn’t have gold. They didn’t have thrones. They gave garments, branches, and praise. And this tells us something important: **Worship always involves giving**. Not just singing. Not just attending. But offering something of ourselves.

Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey. That means someone had to say, “Yes, you can use what belongs to me.” It was a small act. A simple yes. And yet it became part of one of the most important moments in history. You never know what God will do with what you release.

Once I heard a story about a missionary who served in the poorest part of DR Congo. When she attended a service in a village, she was surprised that instead of an offering plate, or bag, they were giving around a large woven basket. People did not have money, but they gave what they had: maize, chicken, or vegetables. It was strange, but the story doesn't stop there. Because when the basket reached one of the members, he put it down on the floor and stepped into it... It was a symbol of giving himself to God. Later this young man became a minister of another church.

### 3. Giving Connects Us as a Community

This is why giving belongs in **corporate growth**. In Malachi, the tithe goes to the **storehouse** the shared life of God's people. In Matthew, the crowd acts **together** in worship. Giving is personal, but it is never private.

Have you ever started a fire. You can't do it with a single piece of wood. It is very difficult to start a fire with only one piece of coal. But pieces together, they burn brightly. Giving is like adding fuel to a shared fire. It sustains ministry. It fuels mission. It enables care for one another. It supports our worship life. We give so that the **whole body thrives**.

### 4. Giving Requires Trust

Let's be honest, giving can feel risky. That's why God says something unusual in Malachi: "Test me in this." This is the one place in the bible where God invites us to test His faithfulness.

Look at this package of seeds. I have two choices. I can go home and eat them now and be satisfied for a moment. Or I can plant them and trust that something greater is coming. Eating brings immediate satisfaction. Planting requires trust, but it offers growth.

Giving is planting. It says, "God, I trust You for more than what I'm holding."

Now if we go back on our Palm Sunday story, we see that the crowd gave: their possessions, their praise, and their hope. But there's a deeper layer, because Palm Sunday is connected to Good Friday. Just days later, the same crowd would fall silent, or worst start shouting, "Crucify Him". Why, because true giving is not spontaneous, it must become a **habit**. Palm Sunday reminds us that generosity is not just a moment, it is a way of life. Habitual giving strengthens our trust in God.

### 5. Application: How Do We Practice Giving Together?

- A. Give regularly** Not only when it feels emotional or convenient.
- B. Give sacrificially** Like cloaks laid on the road—costly and meaningful.
- C. Give joyfully** Palm branches were not laid down reluctantly.
- D. Give trustingly** Believing that God sees, provides, and multiplies.

**So how do we go from Hosanna to Habit, from seed to fruit? The answer is simple: We must release what we've been given, just like Jesus was willing to release his life to save us all!**

Closing Prayer

**Lord, You are the giver of every good thing. Teach us to trust You with what we have.  
Open our hands. Open our hearts, and make us a generous people.  
For Your glory and for the good of others. Amen.**

All to Jesus I surrender All to Him I freely give  
I will ever love and trust Him In His presence daily live

I surrender all I surrender all  
All to You, my blessed Saviour I surrender all  
All to You, my blessed Saviour I surrender all

All to Jesus I surrender Only at Your feet I bow  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken Fill me with Your love and power

All to Jesus I surrender Burn in me now, sacred flame  
Be my joy and my salvation Glory, glory to Your name MP 25

### **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION Thomas and Polly**

Glorious Lord, we come before You on this Palm Sunday, praising Jesus Christ, our King of glory. As He entered Jerusalem in humility and power, we lift our voices to honour Him—Hosanna in the highest! May our hearts, like the crowds, respond with true worship, surrender, and obedience.

**Amen.**

Gracious Lord, we pray for Your church. Grant us both physical health and spiritual strength. Renew our faith, deepen our love, and unite us in Your truth. Grow in us hearts of generosity, that we may freely give our time, resources, and love to one another, reflecting Your abundant grace. We pray for newcomers—may they feel welcomed, known, and drawn into Your family. Bless every Connect Group, that they may grow in fellowship, discipleship, and generosity. We pray for all leaders, wardens, church staff, deacons, and Zoltan, our minister. Give them wisdom, humility, and joy in serving You. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father, we lift up Hong Kong, especially Wang Fuk Court where the very serious fire happened last year, into Your hands. Where there are disasters and unrest caused by failures in oversight, have mercy, Lord. Bring healing to those who are affected and comfort to every wounded heart. Shine Your light upon all government departments, grant them integrity, responsibility, and wisdom, so that systems may be restored, justice upheld and Hong Kong people may once again live in safety and hope. **Amen.**

Our Mighty Healer, we pray for the United Kingdom. Amid the impact and concern caused by meningitis, please watch over every patient and their families. Grant wisdom and strength to healthcare workers so that treatment may be effective and timely. Protect communities from fear and anxiety and fill hearts with peace and trust in You. May Your healing hand rest upon this nation. **Amen.**

Almighty God, we pray for this troubled world, especially in the conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, where so many lives are suffering and being lost. Lord, bring an end to hatred and violence, and let Your peace reign in place of conflict. Comfort those who are grieving and in pain and move the leaders' hearts toward reconciliation and peace. May Your justice and mercy be revealed across the earth. **Amen.**

Holy Spirit, Guide us as one body to reflect Christ in all we do. **In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.**

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name, I've been born again in Jesus' name,  
and in Jesus' name I come to you to share his love as he told me to.

He said: 'Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.  
Go in my name and because you believe,  
others will know that I live.'

All power is given in Jesus' name, in earth and heaven in Jesus' name,  
and in Jesus' name I come to you to share his power as he told me to.

### **BLESSING**

**Go in the love and grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST who gave everything for you. Pour out that grace and love into others lives this week knowing that as you give, you will be filled again and again from the never ending storehouse of heaven Amen**

### **THE GRACE**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore, Amen.

### **Events to highlight Broad Street**

### **Today after the service Newcomers lunch and 12 noon service in**

Wednesday 1st April      10.30 Renew Café    12.00 Bible study

Maundy Thursday 2nd      10.30 Toddlers  
7pm Combined Baptist service at Abbey

Good Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Church at      9.40am Good Friday walk of witness starting at Our lady of Peace  
Three Tuns Wokingham Rd, and finishing at Wycliffe Church

Easter Sunday 5th      8am Easter service in Forbury gardens  
10.30 Worship service followed by Church lunch

Easter Monday 6<sup>th</sup>      Between 12.00 noon and 6pm housewarming party at Zoltan and  
Marta's  
Let him know if you would like to come as they are barbecuing food

Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup> - 2pm Icaf restarts with a 6 week course called **GOD loves you**  
Pick up a flyer to ask a friend

Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>    12 noon **First Steps Sunday class** restarts with Lesson 1 Great time to  
join and find out more about being a Christian - let Angel or Stephen know you would like to join