

NARRATIVE STORY OF THE FIRST DAYS IN HOLY WEEK

	Narrated by Westside – Bill Free and Andrea Bildy
Narrator 1	As Jesus entered the city, riding on a donkey, the people responded with joy – they spread their cloaks on the road – they cut branches from the palm trees and spread them on the road also. The people were shouting - what did they shout? What did we just shout?? “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”
Narrator 2	But not all were filled with joy. There was tension in the air. Roman soldiers were watching – they’d take word to Pilate - a disturbance was under way. The soldiers of the High Priest would have scurried back to the temple – announcing Jesus, the troublemaker, had arrived. Let’s look at how the tension built. John’s gospel is helpful. First we need to go back a few days in time to the death of Lazarus and Jesus raising him from the dead
Narrator 1	<i>(from John ch 11)</i> After comforting Martha and Mary, Jesus asked where they had laid Lazarus, so they took him to the tomb. Jesus said ‘take away the stone!’ Martha objected “there’s already a stench – he’s been dead 4 days!” But they did as he asked. Then Jesus cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come out!
Narrator 2	The dead man came out. His hands and feet were still bound with strips of cloth, and his face was wrapped in a cloth.
Narrator 1	Raising Lazarus set things in motion. Listen to how the gospel of John continues: Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what he had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said: What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.
Narrator 2	But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them: You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed. So from that day on, they planned to put him to death
	Hymn “Praise the One who breaks the darkness” verse 1
	Narrated by St. David – Louisa Jensen and Sonja Patterson
Narrator 1	It was a real worry – what the Romans might do. Since 40 BC, when Judea became a Roman province, there had been sporadic outbreaks of violence. About 40 years after Jesus’ death, in 70AD, war would break out. Before it was over, many 1000s of Jews would die and the temple would be totally destroyed. The High Priest was right to worry.
Narrator 2	But Jesus had an agenda to follow. The gospels of both Matthew and Mark tell us that after entering the city, Jesus went straight to the temple. Let’s turn now to Matthew’s gospel, in the 21 st chapter: Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them: It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a den of robbers.
Narrator 1	Things went flying! The people were shocked. Who was this man who claimed such authority? No wonder the authorities became angrier and more antagonistic. In these last days, tensions would rise and rise.
Narrator 2	Matthew’s gospel continues: The blind and the lame came to Jesus in the temple, and he cured them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became angry and said to him,
Narrator 1	Do you hear what these children are saying? Jesus replied: Yes, I do. Have you never read, ‘out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself’?

Narrator 2	Jesus was referring to Psalm #8. Let's read together
All	O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.
	Hymn "Praise the One who breaks the darkness" verse 2
	Narrated by St. Mark's – Gayle Thompson and Louise Young
Narrator 1	Matthew's gospel tells us that Jesus continued to openly heal and teach on the steps of the temple. The authorities would challenge him, but they were afraid to arrest him – for the people loved Jesus, and considered him a prophet (Matt 21:45-46) Jesus loudly criticized the elders in front of the crowds and his disciples, with words like this: (Matt 23)
Narrator 2	Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness (Matt 23 :27-28)
Narrator 1	You might wonder – why was Jesus so hard on the scribes and Pharisees? Think of it this way: he was using words as a sword to cut through their self-certainty and arrogance. He was trying to convince them – they too needed to repent and turn back to God. In time, some like Nicodemus, would openly become followers.
Narrator 2	Jesus began to speak of what was to come – how the temple would be destroyed, and how terrible the suffering would happen at that time. All that would come true in 70 AD, about 40 years later. He also gave prophecies of the end of time, when the Son of Man would come again – for that we still wait.
	Hymn "Praise the One who breaks the darkness" verse 2
	Narrated by Westside – Kristine Riedel-Fiddick, Elias Fiddick and Pat Ash
Narrator 1	During the three days following Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, tension continued to mount; the danger around Jesus thickened, moment by moment, and day by day. The chief priests and elders resolved to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said: "not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people." A riot had to be avoided: that would bring the full power of Rome down upon all their heads. Then came an unexpected development: Judas, one of Jesus' inner circle, went to the authorities and agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
Narrator 2	Despite the mounting tension, Jesus was calm, purposeful, secure in his loving relationship with the Father. These words from Psalm 27 reflect that: let's read it together by whole verse:
Narrator 1 & 2 for all	Psalm 27: 1-3 ¹ The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ² When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall. ³ Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.
Narrator 2	The story of Jesus' last days will continue this Thursday in our Maundy Thursday service.