Today we walk with Jesus into Jerusalem; metaphorically of course. As Jesus rides into the city there is a celebratory feel as the people line his path with branches of palms and shouts of Hosanna! He sits atop not a regal beast fit for a king, but a colt. Jesus makes his final journey on a colt that the disciples had only moments before negotiated for using the instructions Jesus had given. It is a humble beast fit for a most humble king. Jesus’ journey unlike most of ours is one that he had some knowledge about. He understood that his life would likely end at the hands of humanity. As a man/human he knew the pain of suffering, not just physical but also the emotional grief of losing someone you love. Today we start out our worship by welcoming this God/man who walks past us on a colt with loud Hosannas, and Glory Laud and honor. It’s kind of ironic if you think about it. Jesus is born a Jew and is in fact a practicing Jewish man. He practiced his faith and taught thousands of people how to follow God, how to love one another and how to care for creation. In the last two thousand plus years millions of people have come to know Jesus and accept him as their lord and savior. Jesus who was born at a time well before internet, phones and any kind of technology in the middle of a desert. How is it possible that God sends Godself through a man named Jesus born into what seems like total innocuity who is capable and willing to bring us salvation from our sins and shows us the way to follow God? God does indeed work in mysterious ways.

History has shown that it is not unusual for vast numbers of peoples to be without voice in this world, to be without power, or wealth in this world. I think today of the journey of people who have overcome various disabilities and injuries, and seemingly impossible circumstances who have somehow found their voices in this world. I’m remembering Stephen Hawking who spent most of his life in a wheelchair. His physical body was immobile, but his brain was brilliant. He was director of research at the center for theoretical Cosmology at Cambridge, in England. Stephen was a man who was struck by a debilitating disease while he was a student at the age of 21. He spent over 50 years living with ASL and working as a theoretical Physicists. He wrote many books and articles that made this very complex science accessible to lay people like myself. His voice and example have made a difference in the world and his story is an inspiration for us all. I’m thinking of the many people who have mental illness and struggle daily to cope with this disability who have to take medications to survive. There is often a connection between mental illness, great creativity and intellectual gifts. We can see this in Artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, who was so incredibly gifted and recognized after he had already left this world. I’m thinking of people like my good friend’s sister Deb who suffers from Schizophrenia and is also an artist and a master gardener, people like my child with autism who does not fit into the norm as far as social etiquette or behavior. These are two people with incredible gifts intellectual and creative who walk into most spaces innocuously and are rarely accepted or heard. They too will make an indelible mark on this creation. How can we raise up all people and make their voices heard and their gifts known, their stories told? When we don’t create spaces in this world where people can live their fullest lives and tell their stories we are stifling parts of God’s creation. This world is full of people that have suffered persecution, who have lost their homes and people that have waited years upon years in detention centers, refugee camps, and all manner of oppressive circumstances. Jesus ministered in the midst of a culture that didn’t acknowledge women, yet he acknowledged them; a world where it was dangerous to practice religion and where God’s presence was often hard to detect, just like it is in today’s world. His ministry only lasted three years. Yet somehow despite all rational understanding we still know and worship God and believe in the power of Jesus Christ 2000 years later. While it is true none of us is without sin, none of us is God-like, and none of us has the courage and strength of Jesus, we too walk a journey of trying to follow God in a world that has different values than the ones we see exemplified through Jesus. We too, encounter people who don’t believe the same things as we do even as Christians and we too must find ways to love one another. There are many tables left to turn over in a world full of false idols who make accusations of whose sins or behaviors deserve punishment. Jesus breaks all these false beliefs down by accepting a death he didn’t deserve and offering salvation to everyone. All are deserving and all have value. We like Peter often spend our time denying that we even know Jesus. We worship the Gods of money, technology, and power, privilege. But as our journey takes us deeper and deeper into knowing this man who rides into Jerusalem today we will understand that our God values things that aren’t quite so tangible. Things we can’t quite physically grasp or order from Amazon. I think most of you really get it. You spend your time and money serving this community. The pandemic has not slowed down your efforts to make Gods presence known to the suffering in this community. It has been a long journey for us this past year. There has been suffering, loss and grief. But I have never felt that we were abandoned, neglected or forgotten by God. God has been here in the midst of it all. I have felt his presence in the new opportunities it has brought for relationships with our friends and neighbors in Brown County, I have felt it in the opportunity it has brought for me to spend time knowing my children and seeing one of them living their life much more fully. I have felt it seeing that our children at St. David’s are growing and learning and bringing us joy even over zoom. We are people of hope even in the midst of grief and suffering. We are people who have not forgotten this Jesus who rides humbly yet triumphantly to his death. A death humanity chose for him over a murderer named Barabbas. Despite our denials, our poor choices and misplaced values this Jesus keeps showing up in the darkest of places to raise us up and work through us to bring new light into this world. Thanks be to God.