

## **Palm Sunday in Grenada**

Some years back when we were in Calgary, Kathryn and I did a mission trip with our church to Grenada to paint a school and participate in the local church. Just so happens that during our time there we celebrated Palm Sunday. The tradition was for all the people from all the churches to come together and march through the streets and wave their palm branches.

It was a very hot day – every day we were there was hot! I mean the showers had hoses running along the ground. The water was warmed by the sun so no hot water heater needed! Kathryn and some of the other youth were not overly enthusiastic about having to track through the city sweating! But being good guests and wanting to experience everything, they joined the throng.

As we left the church, we would stop along the way to welcome others from other churches who joined the procession. We sang and waved our branches enthusiastically. A few times the bishop took pity on us and came along the line sprinkling us with water from his plastic water bottle with holes poked in the lid. Kathryn and I chuckled – not what we expected from the higher ups of the church! But we also were impressed. It was so natural and fun. After reaching the top of the city we returned to our church and had a service.

What we remember of that day is how it felt so overwhelming with all the people and the heat while at the same time so joyous and important. I think that would have been something of what the people in Jerusalem felt that first Palm Sunday. They were tired from travel and hot and elbow to elbow with the crowd. They probably wanted to find a cool place to lay down and rest. Yet they heard that Jesus was coming and riding on a donkey. They wanted to see him. Many had heard he was the Messiah so they wanted to welcome him as King with honour and celebration. So they joined the crowd cutting palm branches and laying them on the path or waving them as Jesus rode by. Little did they know what lay ahead. Little did they know many would think very differently about Jesus in the coming days. Little did they know how important this man really was for the whole world. At that moment all that mattered was this man was special and they were caught up with the crowd singing and waving and announcing Him as God's chosen.

For Kathryn and me it was so exciting and joyous to be part of the crowd. We wanted to wave our palms and shout Alleluia because we know Jesus **IS** the King. We know that because of His ride into Jerusalem and death and resurrection, we can face whatever comes knowing we are not alone and that we are loved no matter what. How blessed we are to have shared with the people of Grenada this special day celebrating the one who came to set us all free.

Helen Wheeler