



Invitation to Holy Week

By Jarrett Kerbel (03/27/26)

We are entering the holiest week of worship for followers of Jesus. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday we walk with Jesus through his passion, death, and resurrection and receive the Good News that Jesus is victorious over all the death-dealing forces that oppose God. Set free by his victory over death, we can now follow Jesus boldly and courageously in his way, his truth, and his life. Death is defeated, eternal life in Jesus is here! Display his way without fear!

In my enthusiasm for the resurrection, I am ahead of myself. Let's review Holy Week worship in order.

Palm Sunday is the Frankenstein's Monster of all liturgies. Because it was assumed that most people would not attend Good Friday worship, the Passion Narrative (the betrayal, trial, torture and crucifixion of Jesus) was inserted into the Sunday before. To avoid cheating the Triumphal Entry, I have rearranged the Palm Liturgy; the Palm Gospel is now proclaimed when and where the Gospel is always proclaimed. The Passion Gospel is moved to the end of the service after the Prayer of Thanksgiving after Communion. In this arrangement the service follows the chronology of Holy Week: Triumphal Entry, Maundy Thursday (Eucharist), and Good Friday (Passion Gospel). We exit in silence because Holy Week has now begun.

Palm Sunday, Part 2: Come hear the whole Gospel of Mark recited from memory by the Rev. Dr. Alison Boden. In the earliest church, scripture was received aurally. Here is that experience for you!

Holy Wednesday will include a Eucharist at 5:30 pm in the Church followed by Stations of the Cross in the Chapel. The Stations of the Cross are a form of devotional prayer that allows us to follow Jesus from his sentencing to his death and burial. Years ago, I developed a version that combines the traditional prayers with Taize chant and a slide deck of images for each station. By using slides we can gather around incredible renderings of the Stations to aid our contemplation. The

congregation remains seated for this version. If you would like to walk the Stations, there is a pamphlet in the church that you can use.

Maundy Thursday is when we follow Jesus' command to remember him the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the wine. Maundy comes from "Maundatum" which is Latin for 'command.' We also wash feet (or hands) and strip the altar in preparation for the desolation of Good Friday. At the end of the service, we form a solemn procession to the chapel where the reserved sacrament is placed on the Altar of Repose. We keep watch in the chapel all night to relive Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane where he asked his disciples to pray with him. Please sign up for this powerful opportunity to pray with Jesus.

Good Friday is the most sacred day of the Christian year and noon - when Jesus hung on the cross and died - is the most sacred hour. At noon we will offer the traditional Prayer Book service with the passion from John, Solemn Collects, Veneration of the Cross, and Communion from the reserved sacrament.

Good Friday, Part 2 will be the 7 Last Words of Jesus Christ from the Cross featuring the Dirigo Quartet. Joseph Haydn's string quartet will be performed with seven reflections on the final words of Jesus in between the movements. Members of St. John's will offer the reflections.

EASTER! With great joy, wonder, and gratitude we will gather to celebrate our new life in the risen Christ with all of the usual fanfare and celebration! I am told that a Bunny Rabbit will make an appearance and an Easter Egg Hunt will follow the 10 am service. We will also have an 8 am service which will be a said service except for a final hymn.

I invite you to make a serious investment in your relationship with God through Jesus by putting aside other concerns, commitments and scheduled events so to walk with Jesus through his passion, death and resurrection. Children are welcome at all services and high school students are especially encouraged to attend all Holy Week services.