

The Services of Holy Week – notes from Pastor Jo Page

Beginning with the reading of the Passion story on Palm Sunday and moving through the services of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil, we have a wonderful opportunity to enrich our personal spirituality as we gather together in community to remember and reflect upon God's salvific deeds in Christ.



Though the **Palm Sunday service (on March 29th at 9:30 AM)** begins festively with palms waving to commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the mood grows somber as, the reading of the Passion story is interspersed with hymns that reflect the growing danger that faces Jesus.

The word "Maundy" is an early English form of the Latin word for commandment or *mandate*. And so, on **Maundy Thursday (April 2 at both 12:15 and 7:00 PM at the Chapel)**, we celebrate in the Word and in the Meal, the new commandment Jesus gives to all his friends and followers: to "love one another as I have loved you." But the joy of that commandment gives way to the betrayal of Jesus by one who claimed to love him. And so the service of Maundy Thursday moves solemnly to the stripping of the altar.



You will notice the Maundy Thursday service does not include a benediction, closing hymn or postlude. That's because we regard the **Good Friday Service of Tenebrae (on April 3rd at 12:15 and 7:00 PM at the Chapel)**—"Tenebrae" means "darkness" or "shadows"--as a continuation of the same worship service. In the tenebrae service somber readings and reflective hymns help us to remember how far God was willing to go with us—and still goes with us, throughout our lives.

The Easter Vigil (on Saturday, April 4th at 5:00 PM at the Chapel), traditionally held right before and after midnight, is a symbol-laden service that celebrates the movement from darkness to light, from bondage to freedom, from death to life. During it we gather around a pillar of fire, hear the ancient stories of our faith, celebrate baptism and share the bread and cup of life.

Please make the commitment to attend the services of Holy Week. They are liturgies pregnant with meaning and richness which will deeply enhance your own faith journey.

And of course, the **Resurrection of Our Lord Easter Day service takes place on Sunday, April 5th at 9:30 AM at the Church.**

