

# Holy Week

## JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

### HOLY WEEK 2020 DEVOTIONAL

Palm Passion Sunday

Holy Monday

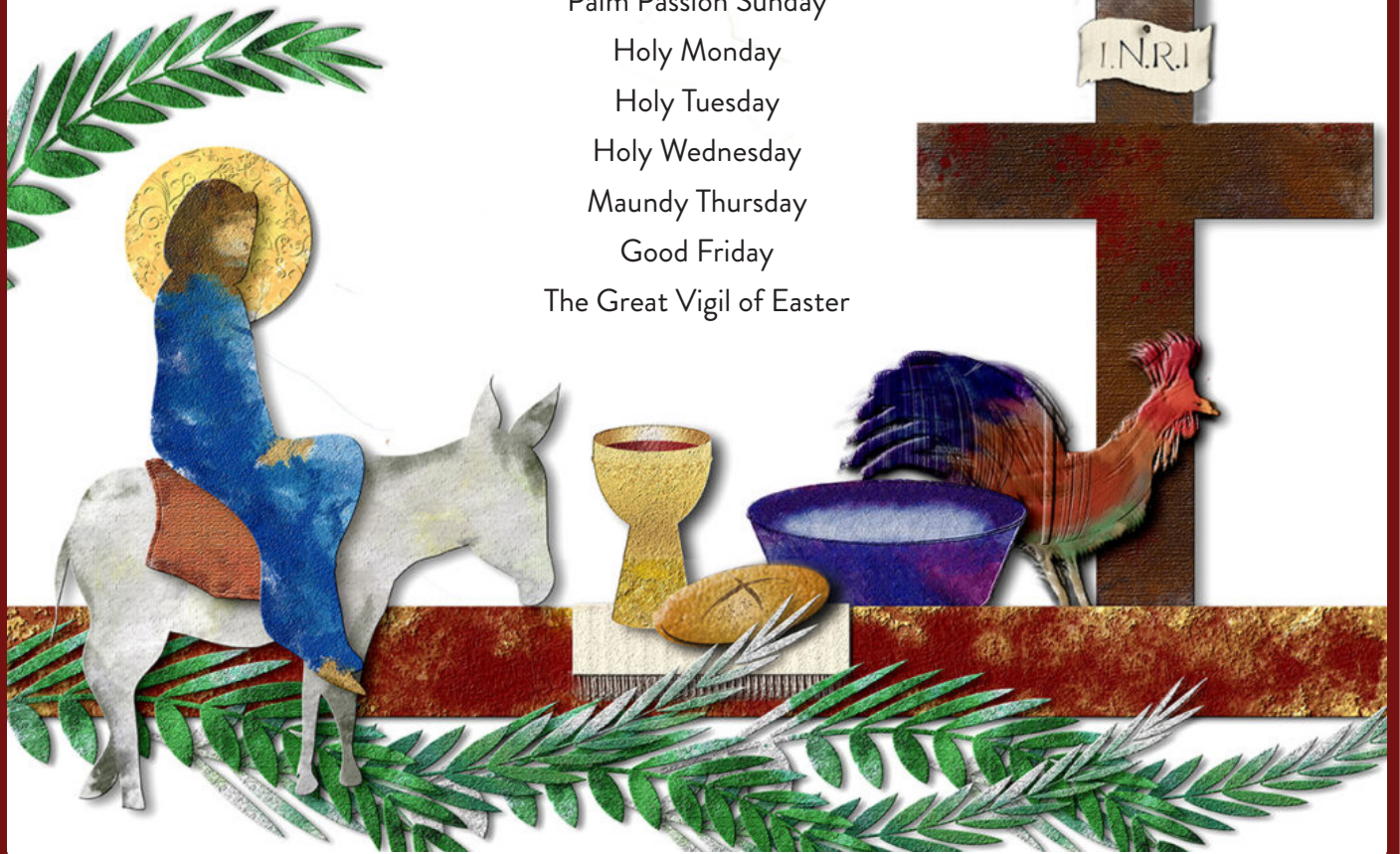
Holy Tuesday

Holy Wednesday

Maundy Thursday

Good Friday

The Great Vigil of Easter



WHITE MEMORIAL  
— PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

# Holy Week

## JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

There is something so very practical about a journey. It begins with leaving the home. It can be simple like visiting relatives across town. Or a journey might be an around the globe adventure. Some are short. Some are long. Some are for the sake of joy, and some we make out of a sense of duty. Regardless of length, the most important step is the first one. Regardless of the purpose, the point of the journey is to see something, experience something, or learn something that we could not have seen, experienced or learned had we remained at home.

We invite you this Holy Week to journey to the cross. Take each day of Holy Week and let your heart be linked to the heart of Jesus, for his journey to the cross is one of the most solemn, and yet hopeful, journeys ever undertaken.

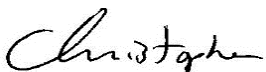
There is a hymn by Isaac Watts, a great writer of hymnody in the English language. He wrote it in the 1700s. *Alas! And did My Savior Bleed* is a hymn about the cross and death of Jesus. Watts wrote:

*Well might the sun in darkness hide  
and shut its glories in,  
when Christ, the great Redeemer, died  
for human creatures' sin.  
But drops of grief can ne'er repay  
the debt of love I owe;  
here, Lord, I give myself away;  
'tis all that I can do.*

These words are stunning and beautiful. They call us to follow Jesus to the cross and to offer to him our hearts. These words are about all the people Jesus takes with him on the journey, and they are about the roles that we, as individuals, might take along the journey with Jesus. The cross is about God's love for everyone, and it is about God's love for anyone. It is about every sin, and it is about a single sin. It is transcendent, and it is personal.

The sun may go dark. Hopelessness may try to steal away hope. Sin might try to drive away love. No matter what difficulty might come, Jesus is faithful to the end and keeps taking step after step to the cross. Holy Week allows us to give witness to those steps, to watch as his journey nears its end.

To be on this journey with Jesus is among the most important gifts we Christians are ever offered. We hope you will join him. We hope you will join us. It is not too difficult. It begins with a single step.



Christopher Edmonston  
Pastor

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover: Holy Week: The Passion of Jesus Christ

Hosanna in the Highest,  
by Hanna-Cheriyen Varghese, © 2007 (page 3)

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree  
Walters Art Museum, Illuminated and illustrated  
Arabic manuscript of the Gospels copied in Egypt  
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Bargain of Judas, fresco by Lippo Memmi,  
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Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane  
1420-30 Medieval Book of Hours Leaf  
Garden of Gethsemane, public domain (page 15)

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He is Not Here, He has Risen,  
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# Palm Passion Sunday



When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

“Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

- *Matthew 21:1-11*

# PALM PASSION SUNDAY DEVOTIONAL

by Christopher Edmonston, *Pastor*

Holy Week begins with ancient Jerusalem on full display. The people who long ago packed the city for Passover pour out into the streets of the city to shout their support for the incoming savior. Jesus arrives, and they wave their palms. They shout “save us” (hosanna) as he passes by. They give him the appellation “son of David.” They make him a hero. They call him king:

*Thou art the King of Israel,  
thou David's royal Son,  
who in the Lord's name comest,  
the King and blessed One.  
The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before thee went;  
our praise and prayers and anthems  
before thee we present.*

There is power and joy in this festival of the Palms that is unrivaled in the life of Jesus and the witness of the Christian Year. For a few moments, Jesus must have felt the hopes they placed in him and the joy of possibility that accompanied their palms. But Jesus knows so very much more than the average person on the street. He has been telling the disciples that the ride to Jerusalem is not a ride to a throne but to a cross, not to receive a crown of gold, but a crown of thorns. The palms give way to the passion in but a matter of hours. How quickly the cheers of praise turn into the shouts of derision.

*To thee, before thy passion,  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to thee now high exalted,  
our melody we raise.*

Maybe this is why we remember the internal conflict of our Lord on Palm Sunday because had we been in the crowd it is likely we would have been no different. We also declare what we believe to be true: that Jesus is worthy of the heroic mantle of being the Savior precisely because he journeys to the cross even with the knowledge that palms become passion and praise becomes scorn. Is there anyone else so worthy of our trust or our praise?

*Thou didst accept their praises;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
who in all good delightest,  
thou good and gracious King!  
All glory, laud, and honor  
to thee Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring!\**

## PRAYER FOR PALM PASSION SUNDAY

Loving God, may our palms and praises be worthy of your Son. As we approach Holy Week, keep us mindful of the courage of Jesus as he faced the cross. Give us your grace that as we follow Jesus to the cross we might discover even more reasons to praise his name. Amen.

\* Glory to God Hymn 196, *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*



# Holy Monday



On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, “Is it not written,

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’?  
But you have made it a den of robbers.”

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

- Mark 11:12-19

# HOLY MONDAY DEVOTIONAL

by Cate Chuch Norman, *Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care*

Our theme for Lent has been *Journey to Jerusalem*, and we've made our way along with Jesus through a strange, wilderness terrain. During this time of coronavirus, we've come to expect the unexpected. Each day brings new challenges. Each day can bring a new sadness or a new source of frustration. It's like we're trying to follow the map spread out before us, while the map is moving. Jesus knew something about encountering frustration, sadness and isolation—his own and that of others.

On Palm Sunday the disciples procured a colt for Jesus to ride on, and crowds spread their coats and waved their palms to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. It was a parade of sorts, announcing a new kind of king coming their way or perhaps a grand offering—the lamb of God who would give his life for the sins of the world. It was a majestic, other worldly, divine display.

On Monday, we find Jesus again. This time his humanity is on display. He's hungry, and wants a fig, but the tree doesn't have figs on it. This is not what Jesus expected. He was riding high yesterday, and now things appear to have changed; he can't even find a fig to eat. It doesn't even matter that it's not the season for figs. Jesus wanted there to be abundance, and it appears there is only barrenness. So, he curses the fig tree.

When Jesus goes to the temple to worship God, he finds the temple is not as it should be. It has become a place of commerce not a place of prayer, and the religious leadership is in on it. Jesus is disappointed, even angry. The priests should be leading people in prayer. The people should be praying. The temple is about trusting and loving God. It's a place of worship and learning the faith. The temple is an outpost of the kingdom of God where people are sent out to love and serve their neighbor. It's not supposed to be like the rest of the world.

So, Jesus turns over the tables and drives the vendors out. "Let's make it a house of prayer," he says, "not a den of robbers." This will be one of the moments of the week that seals Jesus' fate. He goes up against the powerful, and they want to hold onto their power.

The order of things didn't meet the expectations of Jesus or what he knew to be true about God and God's beloved community, so he turned things upside down. What is frustrating you today? What in our world or in the church needs to be turned upside down? How can we be part of the beloved community of Christ, loving and serving the world and not part of the problem? How can we use our frustrations with the way things are to make way for the kingdom of God to shine through?

## PRAYER FOR HOLY MONDAY

Loving God, life is particularly hard right now. People are isolated, lonely and sick. Some lack the basic supplies and resources they need to be safe and healthy. We often feel helpless and frustrated. Inspire us by your Holy Spirit to keep working to build your kingdom even when we're hungry, tired or afraid and even when the map keeps moving on us. Keep us close to you, close to Jesus and close to one another. Amen.

# Holy Tuesday

Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him and said, “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?” Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me.” They argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘Of human origin?’—they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

*Mark 11:27-33*



Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?” But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.” And they brought one. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s.” Jesus said to them, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were utterly amazed at him.

*Mark 12:13-17*

## HOLY TUESDAY

Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; and the second married the widow and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; none of the seven left children. Last of all the woman herself died. In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her.”

Jesus said to them, “Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.”

*Mark 12:18-27*

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself;—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

*Mark 12:28-34*



# HOLY TUESDAY DEVOTIONAL

by Gloria Johnson, *Associate Pastor for Outreach*

Tuesday of Holy Week is full, and in Mark's gospel, the day, and its events, are told in three chapters and 115 verses. Much is packed into the longest day in Jesus' final week on this earth. Clearly two-thirds of Holy Tuesday is full of conflicts with religious leaders and those in authority. The rest of the account for the day tells of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the Son of Man coming in the near future.

It is a significant day where we hear about many familiar Holy Week stories. In a single day Jesus would condemn the religious authorities while confirming his deity. On the previous day Jesus had cleansed the temple and caused the Pharisees to question his right to do these things. They had not granted him any such authority, so they wanted some answers. The religious leaders attempted to force Jesus to state where his power had come from. They knew if he stated his authority was divine they could charge him with blasphemy and have him arrested.

Jesus knew what their motives were and readily agreed to answer their questions, if they in turn, would answer his question. He inquired of them if John the Baptist's work was human or divine. If they answered John's preaching was divine then that affirmed the divinity of Jesus. If human, then those that followed John would riot. Surely, it was the religious leaders' responsibility to know the difference between true and false prophets, yet they had to admit they did not know. Needless to say, Jesus did not answer their question. The challenge to Jesus' deity was not the trap they had hoped it would be.

Israel's religious leaders had one goal: to get rid of Jesus of Nazareth, and so the conspiracies to trap him escalated. They were even willing to cooperate with the Romans if need be to end Jesus' intrusion into the Jewish way of life. In these two familiar encounters we see that Jesus would no longer remain silent:

- The question of tribute to Caesar: Jesus knew of their hypocrisy, and reminded them that a sphere of authority belongs to God. As Jesus showed two sides of the coin he said, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God."
- Marriage at the Resurrection: The leaders presented Jesus with a fictitious story of the widow of seven brothers and asked whose wife would she be at the resurrection. Jesus was quick to point out their ignorance of God's power to overcome death and give life in ways they could not imagine. His answers to their questions did not make their claims against his authority as valid as they had hoped.

When a Mosaic Law expert was sent to question Jesus about the greatest commandment, Jesus quickly summarized the entire Ten Commandments into two: love for God and love for others who are made in God's image.

It was a painful day for Jesus because his own people had failed to recognize his deity and the mourning of the nation of Israel would be great. Even before the crucifixion, Jesus' heart would be pierced by Israel's lack of faith. Soon the temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem with it. As Jesus left the temple, his disciples asked two critical questions: When will the temple be destroyed and what will be the sign of the coming age? He encouraged them to be faithful, watchful and prepared. These lessons are still relevant to believers today.

## PRAYER FOR HOLY TUESDAY

Caring God, help us to resist the temptation to put Jesus, and our faith through him, to the test. Bless us with ample faith and grace that we might receive Jesus as he is and follow him with courage to the cross. Amen.

# Holy Wednesday



When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”

Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, “Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.” But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.” >

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written,

'I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

- *Matthew 26:1-46*

# HOLY WEDNESDAY DEVOTIONAL

by Christopher Edmonston, *Pastor*; Karl Zinsmeister, *Director of Music* and Kirsten Homdrom, *Associate Director of Music*

It is impossible to measure the impact of music on the life and faith of the Christian Church. Music is among our most important tools in connecting to our beliefs, in teaching our beliefs, and in sharing our beliefs. Some of the most important, beautiful, and poignant music in the Christian Church is music for Holy Week. An outline for personal reflection for Holy Wednesday with links to hear the music is provided below. The outline focuses on the proclamation of the Passion of Jesus as expressed through the lenses and sounds of sacred music. Our trust is that this outline will allow us to connect to Jesus' journey to the cross in more complete, and even more personal ways.

Bach's Passions are among the finest music ever written, and in their entirety tell the Passion narratives found in the gospels of Matthew and John. In addition to telling the story, Bach includes interjections in the form of arias and chorales that reflect on what is happening in the story. There are six arias, three from St. Matthew and three from St. John, suggested for your listening in our journey to the cross. Two of these arias use the chorus to further reflect on the narrative. In the tenor aria *Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen*, the soloist sings "I will watch with my Jesus" and then the chorus responds with "Then all our sins will fall asleep," while the music represents the two ideas of "determined waking" and "falling asleep." In the bass aria *Mein teurer Heiland*, the chorus represents the communal response to the question "am I now freed from death?" through a chorale or hymn. The soloist concludes, "Yes." And yet, some bystanders doubted. It is only at the tomb that we discover what has happened.

## PRAYER FOR HOLY WEDNESDAY

God of Praise, open our hearts and ears to the stories of those who have praised Jesus name. May we lend our voices, like them, to witness to God's mercy all our days. Amen.



## Reflections on the Journey to the Cross: Arias from the Bach Passions

Read Matthew 26:17-19; 36-38 (From meal to garden)

Listen to the aria here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRzP6qjTkZk>

*Choral text in italics*

### Tenor Aria and Chorus

Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen,  
- *So schlafen unsre Sünden ein.* -  
Meinen Tod Büßet seine Seelennot;  
Sein Trauren machet mich voll Freuden.  
- *Drum muß uns  
sein verdienstlich Leiden  
recht bitter und doch süße sein.* -

I will watch with my Jesus,  
- *Then all our sins will fall asleep.* -  
His soul's distress atones my death;  
his sorrow brings me gladness.  
- *Thus must  
his meritorious suffering for us  
be bitter and yet sweet.* -

St. Matthew Passion, 20

### Tenor Aria and Chorus

Read John 18: 3-9 (Jesus makes a willing sacrifice)

Listen to the aria here - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ni3\\_a8o8vks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ni3_a8o8vks)

### Alto Aria

Von den Strikken meiner Sünden  
mich zu entbinden,  
wird mein Heil gebunden.  
Mich von allen Lasterbeulen  
völlig zu heilen,  
läßt er sich verwunden.

### Alto Aria

From the bands of my sins,  
to unbind me,  
is my Salvation bound.  
From all my iniquitous boils  
fully to heal me,  
he lets himself be wounded.

St. John Passion, 7

Read Matthew 26:69-75 (Disciples desert despite their promises)

Listen to the aria here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzzriTYcxlg>

### Soprano Aria

Ich folge dir gleichfalls  
mit freudigen Schritten  
und lasse dich nicht,  
mein Leben, mein Licht.  
Befördre den Lauf,  
Und höre nicht auf,  
Selbst an mir zu ziehen,  
zu schieben, zu bitten.

### Soprano Aria

I follow You likewise  
with joyful footsteps,  
and will not leave you,  
my life, my light.  
Assist my course,  
and do not cease  
to draw me,  
to spur me, to call me.

St. John Passion, 9

Read Matthew 27:3-10 (Judas repents)

Listen to the aria here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXWPXJ5kcjk>

### Bass Aria

Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder!  
Seht das Geld,  
den Mörderlohn,  
Wirft euch der verlorne Sohn  
zu den Füßen nieder!  
Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder!

### Bass Aria

Give me back my Jesus!  
Look, the money,  
the murderer's payment,  
that lost son flings  
at your feet!  
Give me back my Jesus!

St. Matthew Passion, 42

Read Matthew 27:11-23 (The Lamb goes uncomplaining forth)

Listen to the aria here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-88ZpkYssf0>

**Soprano Aria**

Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben,  
Von einer Sünde weiß er nichts,  
daß das ewige Verderben  
und die Strafe des Gerichts  
nicht auf meiner Seele bliebe.

**Soprano Aria**

Out of love my Lord is dying,  
of sin he knows nothing,  
so that eternal perdition  
and the punishment of judgment  
should not remain upon my soul.

St. Matthew Passion, 49

Read John 19: 16-30 (“...not my will but yours be done.”)

Listen to the aria here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO0AIP5ojw8>

*Choral text in italics*

**Bass Aria and Chorus**

Mein teurer Heiland, laß dich fragen,  
- *Jesu, der du warest tot, -*  
da du nunmehr ans Kreuz geschlagen  
und selbst gesaget: es ist vollbracht,  
- *lebest nun ohn Ende, -*  
bin ich vom Sterben frei gemacht?  
- *in der letzten Todesnot*  
- *nirgend mich hinwende -*  
Kann ich durch deine Pein und Sterben  
das Himmelreich ererben?  
Ist aller Welt Erlösung da?  
- *als zu dir,*  
- *der mich versühnt,*  
- *o du lieber Herre! -*  
Du kannst vor Schmerzen  
zwar nichts sagen;  
- *Gib mir nur,*  
- *was du verdient, -*  
doch neigest du das Haupt  
- *mehr ich nicht begehre! -*  
und sprichst stillschweigend: ja.

**Bass Aria and Chorus**

My dear Savior, give me answer,  
- *Jesus, you who once were dead, -*  
since you were nailed upon the cross,  
and said yourself, “It is finished,”  
- *now you live forever. -*  
am I now freed from death?  
- *In the final pangs of death*  
- *may I never turn elsewhere -*  
Can I, through your pain and dying,  
inherit the heavenly kingdom?  
Is this the redemption of all the world?  
- *than to you,*  
- *who have atoned for me,*  
- *O beloved Savior! -*  
Indeed you cannot answer  
for pain;  
- *Grant me but*  
- *what you have earned, -*  
yet you bow your head  
- *more I do not desire! -*  
to say, in silence, “Yes.”

St. John Passion, 32

Read Luke 23: 47-49 (Bystanders)

In light of the arias of Bach, and of the songs that we might sing as we journey to the cross, we think this Holy Wednesday about the sacrifice of Jesus and about the songs which might teach us to follow in his way. The hymn, My Song is Love Unknown\*, which dates to the 17th century ends with this stanza which links our songs and our faith in a profound way (praying):

*Here might I stay and sing, no story so divine:  
never was love, dear King, never was grief like thine.  
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise  
I all my days could gladly spend.*

\*Stanza 5 of Glory to God Hymn 209; text by, Samuel Crossman, 1664, alt.

# Maundy Thursday



Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants, are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, “Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.” The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival”; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward.” Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.

- John 13



# MAUNDY THURSDAY DEVOTIONAL

by Christopher Edmonston, *Pastor*

Maundy Thursday is among the most intimate and personal of all worship services during the Christian year. It is the night of Holy Week where Jesus literally touched the disciples as he washed their feet. That Thursday long ago was the last time when Jesus would eat with his friends, be able to pray with them, talk with them, be near them. Yes, they would see Jesus dying on the cross. But on Maundy Thursday they would eat with their friend.

*An upper room did our Lord prepare  
for those he loved until the end  
and his disciples still gather there  
to celebrate their risen friend.*

Maundy Thursday sets the pattern for every service of communion because this moment of Holy Week was the beginning, the very first one of millions to follow, of the Lord's Supper. Maundy Thursday is also about the commandment of Jesus in John 13. Jesus says, "I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

*A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:  
to share his bread, his loving cup.  
Whatever burdens may bow us down,  
he by his cross shall lift us up.  
And after supper he washed their feet,  
for service, too, is sacrament.  
In Christ our joy shall be made complete:  
sent out to serve, as he was sent.*

Maundy Thursday derives its name from the Latin *mandatus*, which means "command." We derive, in part, our word "mandate" from it. Jesus loves us through his service to us. His command to love is a command to serve. Just as we serve each other the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper, we serve our communities in need. We are called to service which transcends race and class and world view and tongue, service transcends time, as this last supper becomes a foretaste of the welcome and grace of the heavenly banquet that calls all disciples to itself.

*No end there is! We depart in peace.  
He loves beyond our uttermost:  
in every room in our Father's house  
Christ will be there, as Lord and Host.\**

## PRAYER FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

God of our hearts, long ago Jesus washed his disciples feet and commanded them to love one another. Help us to heed his call, that as we serve and love one another, we might catch glimpses of the church you are calling us to become. By the gifts of your sacraments and your word proclaimed show us how to be the disciples you have called us to be. Amen.

\* Glory to God Hymn 202, *An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare*

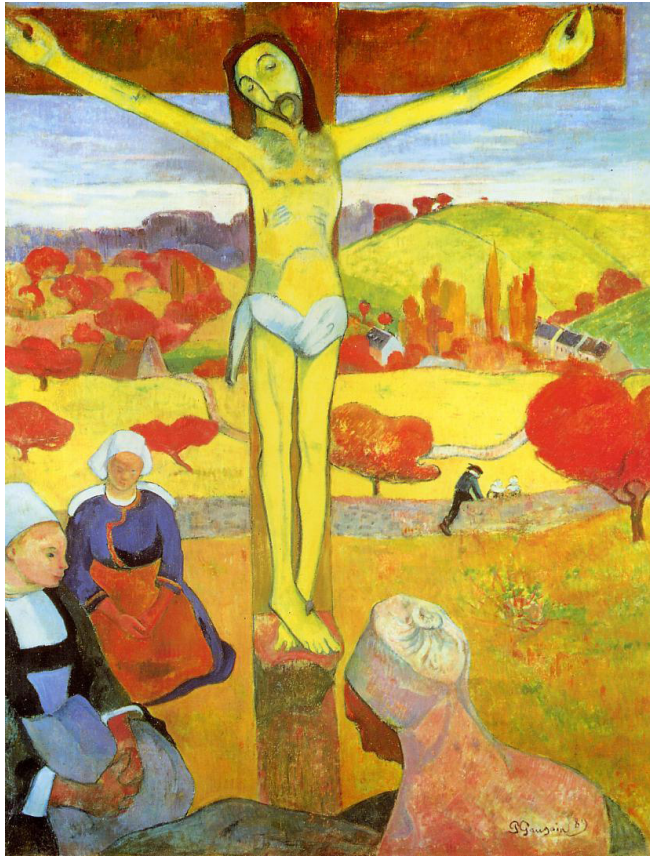
# Good Friday

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

- Matthew 27:32-54



# GOOD FRIDAY DEVOTIONAL

by Christopher Edmonston, *Pastor*

*When I survey the wondrous cross on  
which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count as loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

The journey to the cross has moved through Holy Week towards its predetermined end. Jesus himself, that first Holy Week, knew where the journey would end. The first steps of Palm Sunday into Jerusalem end on a rock called Golgotha, the place of the skull. The Romans crucified people all the time. It was their form of terror and control. Only this crucifixion, the death of Jesus, would be the one by which all the others would forever be evaluated. Because of this one cross, the symbol of the cross would be forever transformed from one of death into one that points to life.

*Forbid it Lord, that I should boast,  
save in the death of Christ my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.  
See, from his heads, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

The good of Good Friday is ultimately derived from the goodness of Jesus. While his death brings somber sadness, it also brings with it the mighty power of the mercy of God. The goodness of Jesus brings the full focus of the cross into view: the grace of forgiveness and the opening act of the promise of salvation. Just as there is not a journey to Jerusalem without a trip through the wilderness (there is no way to discover the fullness of our humanity without confessing our brokenness and our deep needs), there is no way to the empty tomb of Easter without a journey to the cross. The way many preachers and theologians have always said it, there is no Sunday without first, a Friday. There is no resurrection without the crucifixion. The weight of history bears down upon Good Friday. Such weight is transformed into lightness by the love of a Savior who carries us in his heart and gives his life for the world.

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were a present far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.\**

## PRAYER FOR GOOD FRIDAY

God of the cross, today we pray you would capture our attention and focus it upon Calvary, upon Golgotha. May we witness the death of our Savior with an appropriate awe. May we be dedicated to your love in ways that reflect the wonder and depth of the love Jesus offered to the world. Amen.

\* Glory to God Hymn 223, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*



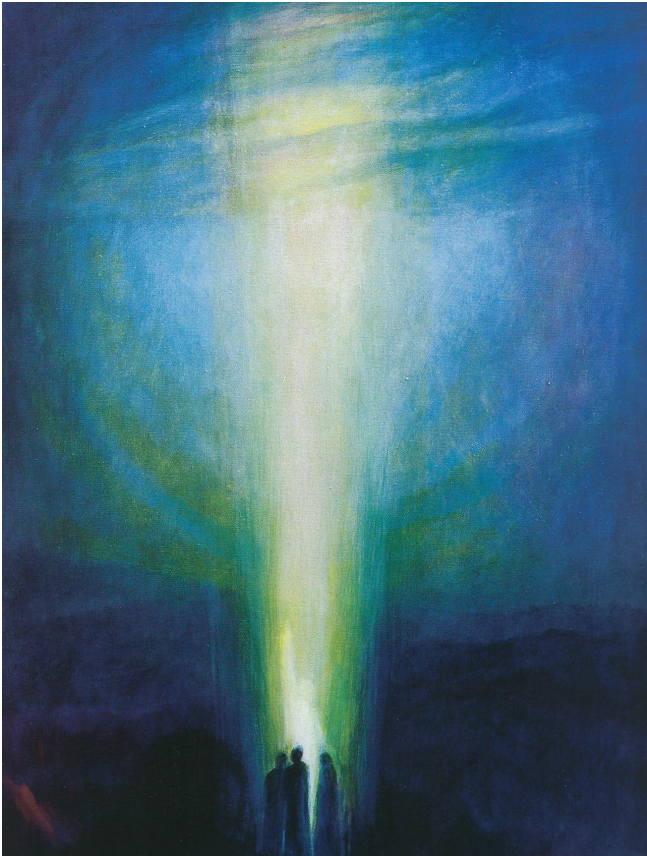
# Easter Vigil

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, [the Son of God.]" Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man  
seated at the right hand of Power  
and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, "Prophesy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?" >





Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

- *Matthew 26:47-75*

## EASTER VIGIL DEVOTIONAL

by Christopher Edmonston, *Pastor*

We are no longer very adept at vigil. Our ancestors were excellent at it. They kept watch for all sorts of things: signs of the dawn during long nights unaided by street lights, signs of storms blowing in quickly and signs of spring at the end of winter. They kept vigil while waiting on a letter from a child fighting a war. Then, too, they kept vigil while waiting on a note from a secret or declared love. They were good at vigil, good at waiting, and good at watching.

Although vigil is actually more than what we have described above, implied in every vigil is the form of some sort of companionship, some sort of duty to community. Jesus asks the disciples to keep vigil with him the night of his arrest. They fall asleep and in Matthew 26:40, Jesus wonders why they couldn't stay up with him for just a short time during the night.

Easter vigil is the night when the church keeps watch, together, with other Christians and the Holy Spirit for the dawn of Easter morning. It is the night watch as prelude to the resurrection. It is one of the most holy and important nights of the year. A relatively modern hymn captures the spirit well enough:

*Christ has risen while earth slumbers; Christ has risen where hope died,  
as he said and as he promised, as we doubted and denied.*

*Let the moon embrace the blessing; let the sun sustain the cheer;  
let the world confirm the rumor: Christ is risen, God is here!\**

In our witness to the empty tomb of Jesus, the opening salvo is reserved for Easter Vigil. It is the Saturday between the death of Friday and the life of Sunday. It is day two wedged in between days one and three. It is the moment of watching and waiting, with the church of the past and the future, for the power of God to be fully revealed and made known by the resurrected savior.

Even though we are not so good at vigils and waiting anymore, it would be hard to argue that Easter was not worth the time or the wait.

The watch is almost over. The time for joy is near. By the Holy Spirit let us to traverse the night of vigil. Let us keep our watchful eyes set upon Easter.

## PRAYER FOR EASTER VIGIL

God of time and space, help us keep our faith during our "in-between" moments. Let us keep faith through the vigil, that believing in you we may be ever ready to witness to the resurrection of your Son. In Jesus name, let our Easter faith color how we see the world and how we live our lives. Amen.

\* Glory to God Hymn 231, *Christ Has Risen While Earth Slumbers*

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