

## **Why Holy Week?**

*Because we are called to follow... and to follow the resurrected Jesus Christ of Easter Sunday, we must first journey with him through his final days in Jerusalem.*

Dear Ones,

I invite you to join me in the beautiful, poignant and sometimes heartbreaking liturgies of Holy Week this year...



We begin on **Palm Sunday**, where we process with our blessed palms into the sanctuary and reenact the joy and excitement of that long ago procession into Jerusalem – welcoming Jesus like a King. In the same service, we read together the Passion narrative as told by the author of the gospel of Luke... reminding those who cannot attend the Holy Week services that before the Resurrection next Sunday, comes the trial and crucifixion of our Lord.

On **Monday and Tuesday**, we will gather at noon to read the prayers and begin settling into the rhythm of Holy week with brief meditations that help us situate ourselves for the coming days.

A Service of Shadows: **Tenebrae** is a service that comes to us from the ancient monastic services of matins and lauds and offers us all an opportunity for sustained reflection on the Lord's Suffering and death through the symbolism of light/darkness, canticles and lessons from Lamentations and Jeremiah set to plainsong and a collection of spoken psalms. Throughout the service we gradually extinguish the 15 candles offering us light until a single candle is left lighting our way.

We will be doing **Maundy Thursday** a little differently this year. We will gather for what we call an "Agape Meal" at 6:30 pm – you might think of it as a "Holy Week Happy Hour." The love (**agape**) feast is a meal of Christian fellowship that mirrors the meals Jesus shared with his disciples and others throughout his ministry and, as we begin our Maundy Thursday celebration recalling the Last Supper, we will begin with food, drink and fellowship. From there we will move into the first of the three conjoined services (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter) with a celebration of the two directives left by Jesus that fateful night – Communion and the washing of one another's feet. We finish this beautiful service with the stripping of the altar, symbolizing the handing over of Jesus after his agape feast and Passover meal with his friends to the authorities who stripped him bare and divided his garment among them.

After leaving in silence on Thursday night, we enter in silence on **Good Friday**, continuing from where we left off the night before with the Liturgy of the Passion and the Veneration of the Cross that is processed to the altar for all to contemplate and see. For those who wish to sit vigil in the church or chapel, we will be open with printed meditations available immediately following the 12 noon service through 3 pm when the veil was torn in two, the earth shook and our Lord was crucified.

We will offer the brief but quiet prayers appointed for **Holy Saturday** while we wait for the Alleluias of our **Easter Services** Sunday morning. After walking through the joys, love, betrayals and

violence of the week... those Alleluias, trumpets, lilies and chocolates all sound, look and taste that more wonderful!

I hope you will join us!

With Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristen". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and elegant.

Kristen