

The Messenger



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On the web at ascensionocala.com

APRIL
2023



HOLY WEEK SERVICES 2023

Holy Week is the most sacred week of the Christian Church year. We are asked to remember and experience again the week that changed the world and has the power to change us. In much of our society it will simply be another week. As Christians, who know Christ's passion was for the world's salvation, it is a powerful week where strong emotions may be present, especially the feeling that we are deeply loved by God.



The following services are being planned to help us experience the events of that first Holy Week and the love that Jesus had for the world. May God bless our worship and throughout this Holy Week and may we be drawn closer to God.

PALM SUNDAY - APRIL 2 AT 10:30 AM

Jesus enters Jerusalem. "Hosanna" (save now!) is our cry as we listen to the Gospel writers tell us of the events of that First Palm Sunday.

Our preparation begins in the Parish Hall and our joyful procession will proceed to the sanctuary.

THE THREE DAYS - (THE TRIDUUM)

The Augsburg Fortress Press publication *Sundays and Seasons* describes "The Three Days" so well when the authors write: "The Three Days or Triduum, slows down time as we move through the climax of the story of faith, Jesus' betrayal, death, and resurrection

Worship throughout the rest of the year skims the surface in some ways, whisking us through the story of Jesus' life. But in these three days we linger. There is so much centered here. We have to take our time to be able to

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receive it.

Maundy Thursday, APRIL 6 at 7:00 PM

It was on this night that Jesus celebrated a Passover Meal with his disciples and gave to us the new covenant meal we call The Lord's Supper. On this holy night we remember Jesus in this meal where he meets us and we receive His Body and Blood, given and shed for us and our salvation.

We listen as Jesus talks to his disciples, as he prays in the Garden, as he is arrested as if he were a criminal. The Altar is stripped of Paraments as Psalm 22 is read, symbolic of Jesus being stripped of his freedom



Holy Communion is not celebrated this evening.)

On the most solemn evening of the year, we remember the death of Jesus. Through Scripture, video, and prayers, we ponder Jesus' trial, torture, crucifixion and burial. The final words our Savior spoke from the cross are heard as the Sanctuary lights are dimmed. We leave the church in silence this night in awe of the depth of Jesus' love.

Good Friday April 7 at 7:00 PM



The tomb was empty! The angel tells the women disciples of Jesus why: "He is risen!" It is the highest day of celebration in the Church year. Death does not have the final word. Now all final words belong to Jesus!

As flowers decorate the Sanctuary and alleluias return to our worship, we joyfully proclaim that Jesus has risen!



*THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD
EASTER SUNDAY - APRIL 9, 10:30 AM*

CAN A WEEK THAT CHANGED THE WORLD ACTUALLY CHANGE US?

I don't think that anyone, Christian or non-Christian, would argue that the week when Jesus was crucified changed the world. His death and resurrection changed his follower's lives completely. They went into the world to proclaim Jesus, who also rose from the dead on the third day, as the Savior of the world. Almost 2000 years later, it is estimated that in our world today there are 2.2 billion Christians, the largest faith group in the world.

I feel like I need to say that, unfortunately, Christians have not always acted like Jesus. Sometimes folks in our world today are open to Jesus, but not so sure about his followers. We spoke a bit about that in the sermon on March 19. There is much to say here, but it is not really where I'd like to go in this writing.

Rather, I'd like to pose the question of whether what happened in Jerusalem that first "holy week", has the power to change us today? **Is the week we will enter on April 2, just one more "Holy Week", or do the events we remember actually still have the power to change us as individuals, as a community, as people who have received dramatic, unnerving, and yet good news?**

Scripture says yes. Some examples:

"And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him, who died for them and was raised again." (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Jesus said, *"Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also."* (John 14:19)

Jesus said, *"Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."* *"He said this to show by what death he was to die."* (John 12:31-32)

There is passage after passage in Scripture that speaks to God sending God's only Son into the world to save, rescue and give new life. What happened that first "Holy Week" is the fulfillment of God's plan to save people, not just after they die, but right here and right now.

Our world does not understand this. We need only look at an evening's worth of ads on our televisions or our computer screens to see how owning stuff, taking the right medication, driving the right pick-up truck, having the right insurance, and finally, finding a cure for eczema can bring meaning and wholeness in life. If that doesn't work, there is always the Florida casinos. Now, I do not disparage the right medication, nor a cure for eczema, which indeed can be gifts from God. (I personally doubt whether the casinos have much to offer.) However, if all of the above is all anyone is

looking for , I guess skipping Holy Week and Easter is fine.

Yet, I hope you and I might go deeper. Or to put it another way, might we be open to letting God get uncomfortably close to us this coming Holy Week.

Uncomfortably close, because having someone die in your place, so that you may live, is not comfortable. Uncomfortable, because hearing of Jesus' rejection, torture, and death is absolutely not comfortable. Uncomfortable because thinking about our own death, or worse, the death of people we dearly love, is not comfortable. And yet, it is the best path to travel to get to a cemetery on Easter morning to hear 3 incredible words, "He is risen". Those words change everything!

I wish you a blessed Holy Week and Easter. If you are not in town, why not find a congregation wherever you are, and by all means take family and friends with you. The first Holy Week changed the world. May this coming Holy Week change each of us!

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor Chuck

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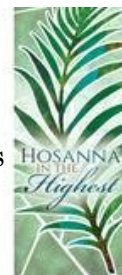




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Celebrations for April

Daily Scripture Readings for April



4/5 Hailey Brown
 4/17 Tom Newton
 4/24 Becky Villeda

*Please contact the office if your birthday is in April and not listed above.



<u>Anniversaries</u>



*Please contact the office if your anniversary is in April and not listed above.

1	Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 70; Hebrews 12:1-3; John 13:21-32
2	Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
3	Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Psalm 2; Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1—19:42
4	Romans 6:3-11; John 20:1-18
5	Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8
6	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Genesis 1:1-19; Corinthians 15:35-49; 47
7	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Genesis 1:20—2:4a; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58
8	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Song of Solomon 3:1-11; Mark 16:1-8
9	Psalm 133; Daniel 1:1-21; Acts 2:42-47
10	Psalm 133; Daniel 2:1-23; Acts 4:23-31
11	Psalm 133; Daniel 2:24-49; John 12:44-50
12	Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1—2:2; John 20:19-31
13	Psalm 135; Daniel 3:1-30; 1 John 2:3-11
14	Psalm 135; Daniel 6:1-28; 1 John 2:12-17
15	Psalm 135; Isaiah 26:1-15; Mark 12:18-27
16	Psalm 4; Daniel 9:1-19; 1 John 2:18-25
17	Psalm 4; Daniel 10:2-19; 1 John 2:26-28
18	Psalm 4; Acts 3:1-10; Luke 22:24-30
19	Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48
20	Psalm 150; Jeremiah 30:1-11a; 1 John 3:10-16
21	Psalm 150; Hosea 5:15—6:6; 2 John 1-6
22	Psalm 150 Proverbs 9:1-6 Mark 16:9-18
23	Psalm 23; Genesis 30:25-43; Acts 3:17-26
24	Psalm 23; Genesis 46:28—47:6; Acts 4:1-4
25	Psalm 23; Genesis 48:8-19; Mark 6:30-34
26	Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18
27	Psalm 95; 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 1 Peter 5:1-5
28	Psalm 95; 1 Chronicles 11:1-9; Revelation 7:13-17
29	Psalm 95; Micah 7:8-20; Mark 14:26-31
30	Psalm 22:25-31; Amos 8:1-7; Acts 8:1b-8



APRIL 2023

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Palm Sunday 10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion	3 5:30pm—AA	4	5	6 <i>MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP AT 7:00 PM</i>	7 <i>GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP AT 7:00 PM</i>	8
9 Easter Sunday 9:15am-Breakfast in the Parish Hall 10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion	10 5:30pm—AA	11	12	13 9:00 am—Quilting	14	15 Memorial for Arlene
16 10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion Church Council meets after service	17 5:30pm—AA	18	19	20 9:00 am—Quilting	21	22
Birthday celebration after service on the 23rd. 10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion 23	24 5:30pm—AA	25	26	27 9:00 am—Quilting	28	29
30						

CELEBRATE EASTER

PALM SUNDAY · APRIL 2ND @ 10:30 AM

GOOD FRIDAY · APRIL 7TH @ 7 PM

EASTER SUNDAY · APRIL 9TH AT 10:30 AM

AT ASCENSION
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OR
Share with a neighbor!**

