

## Holy Week 2022 at St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church

It's difficult to think of any Christian holiday filled with more pageantry than Christmas, with gloriously decorated churches and homes, living nativity scenes with run-away lambs, and the singing of traditional music familiar to believers and non-believers alike.

But the events of the few days leading up to the crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, events which condensed into a few days, intensely and vividly, Jesus's teachings, are far more dramatic. So dramatic, in fact, that passion plays (plays depicting Jesus's life and teachings from the Last Supper through his crucifixion and death) emerged in Medieval Europe and continue to this day in the form of the epic Oberammergau Passion Play mounted every 10 years in Germany; processions that physically re-enact Jesus's journey to Golgotha; and passion readings in churches throughout Christendom.

This is not to say that the purpose of the services of Holy Week is to provide good theater. The purpose of each service is to commemorate the events this week, to cause us as Christians to pause and to try to experience the range of emotions felt by Jesus and his followers – fear, anguish, confusion, and ultimately faith and love. Having said that, however, actively participating in the ritual of these services is truly to experience the last days of Jesus's life on earth and his glorious resurrection at a profoundly emotional level.

So what are these days and church services?

### Palm Sunday (April 10, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.)

Also known as the Sunday of the Passion, Palm Sunday starts Holy Week. It recalls Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (*Mt 21:1-11, Mk 11:1-11a, Lk 19:29-40*) and *Jesus' Passion on the cross (Mt 26:36-27:66, Mk 14:32-15:47, Lk 22:39-23:56)*. At St. Bart's, we start the service in the Parish Hall with the reading of the Liturgy of the Palms. At the appropriate moment, the Altar Guild will distribute blessed palms to everyone, and together, we process behind the Crucifer who leads us into the nave as we sing the traditional hymn, "All Glory, Laud, and Honor."

As the service progresses, we hear the story of the Passion of Christ, with parts read by members of the congregation. This year's Passion story is based on the Gospel of Luke. As the story progresses, we begin to feel our own complicity in Christ's death as we shout for his crucifixion.

### The Easter or Paschal Triduum

The Easter, or Paschal, Triduum is the proper name for the three-day season that concludes Lent and introduces Easter. A triduum refers simply to any three-day period of prayer. *Triduum* comes from Latin meaning "three days." The Easter Triduum includes the evening feast of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. The Easter Triduum memorializes the suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### Maundy Thursday (April 14, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.)

*Maundy* is derived from the Latin 'mandatum' which means "commandment." Maundy Thursday services commemorate the Last Supper, where Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you." (*John 13:34*). This is the night of that New Commandment.

Maundy Thursday services traditionally include a focus on the institution of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Eucharist. In many places, a foot washing service is included, symbolizing our duty to serve others as we learn to love one another. The service ends with the Stripping of the Altar of all ornamentation, leaving us the stark, heavy reminder of the trial of Jesus that is to follow.

### Altar of Repose (night of April 14, 2022 – noon April 15, 2022)

Any consecrated bread left at the end of the Maundy Thursday Eucharist is delivered by the celebrant to an Altar of Repose where it is placed for use at the Good Friday liturgy the next day. At St. Bart's, the Altar

of Repose is set up in the library outside the nave. Our Altar Guild places flowers around the altar to symbolize the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed, waiting for the consequences of Judas's betrayal while the disciples slept.

From the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service until noon the next day, parishioners are invited to sit for an hour in prayer and contemplation. Altar Guild supplies candles that are kept burning through the vigil as well as copies of the Holy Bible and other religious books and tracts. People are reminded that they are sitting with Jesus as he waits for his arrest and consequent trial and execution. He had pled with his disciples to do just that, but they failed him. (He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?" *Mark 14:37*).

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the kitchen where you can commit to sitting for an hour in the library at the Altar of Repose. If you have specific questions about doing this, particularly any questions about accessing the building or safety during the night, please contact Fr. Bob or, in his absence, Dorothea, at [saintbartohio@gmail.com](mailto:saintbartohio@gmail.com).

### **Good Friday (April 15, 2022 noon and 7:00 p.m.)**

This is the day that marks the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. St. Bart's offers two services that day: One, at noon, is Stations of the Cross. Stations of the Cross refers to a series of images depicting Jesus on the day of his crucifixion and accompanying prayers. The Stations grew out of imitations of the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, which is a traditional processional route symbolizing the actual path Jesus walked to Mount Calvary. The objective of the Stations is to help the Christian faithful to make a spiritual pilgrimage through contemplation of the Passion of Christ. At St. Bart's the Stations of the Cross is accompanied by a hymn meditating on the sorrow of Mary at the foot of the Cross.

A second service, at 7:00 p.m., is the Good Friday Liturgy. It consists of prayers and administration of the reserved host which had been delivered to the Altar of Repose the day before at the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service. The nave is stark as all ornamentation was removed the night before. The lights are low as the sun is setting or has already set. There is little to no music; the mood is quiet and somber as we, like the disciples, face an uncertain future. As we enter the nave in silence, so do we leave it at the conclusion of the service.

### **Great Vigil of Easter (April 16, 2022 8:00 p.m.)**

Recalling Christianity's roots in Judaism, a holiday begins at sundown. So the true celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord occurs at sundown Saturday. The Great Vigil of Easter begins with the lighting of the Paschal Candle outside the church building and a procession into the darkened nave, with all attendees carrying a lighted taper. Old Testament readings and prayers follow; there is no organ music although there is chanted plainsong during the first part of the service.

And then....

The nave lights come up to the ringing of bells and cries of *Alleluia!* as the glory of the Resurrection is revealed in an overflowing display of lilies and daffodils surrounding the altar and the festival paraments! The organ, largely silent during the previous days, invites us to sing Easter hymns as we enter the Easter season.

### **Easter Sunday (April 17, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.)**

The Festival of Easter is then celebrated the next day with Holy Eucharist, festival settings of familiar hymns and anthems, and a church filled with the perfume of lilies. *Alleluia! Christ is Risen! The Lord Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!*

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### **Resource:**

Richert, Scott P. "What Is the Easter Triduum?" Learn Religions, Aug. 25, 2020, [learnreligions.com/what-is-the-easter-triduum-541518](https://www.learnreligions.com/what-is-the-easter-triduum-541518).