



# HOLY WEEK

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The heart of the Christian faith is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the events we commemorate during Holy Week are the central pieces of our faith.

This booklet gives an overview to the particular way we tell the story of Holy Week at St. John's Episcopal Church.



## **THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY**

The day's full name indicates its dual focus. The reading of the Passion Narrative (the story of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion) is preceded by the commemoration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Liturgy of the Palms is the entrance rite but the Passion Gospel is the central focus. The euphoria and triumph of Jesus' entry is short-lived and the tone of the day changes dramatically. We, who moments earlier shouted "Hosanna," now cry "Crucify him! Crucify him!" The stage is set for the rest of the week.

At St. John's, the service begins outside at the Annex building. (weather permitting) Palms are blessed and distributed and we all process into the church singing the traditional Palm Sunday hymn "All Glory, Laud and Honor." As the Gospel is announced, the customary responses are omitted. We read the Passion according to St. Mark, St. Matthew or St. Luke (the readings are on a three year cycle, with St. John always read on Good Friday).

The rest of the liturgy follows as usual with the Great Thanksgiving and Holy Communion. It is still a Sunday and even though we have read the story of Christ's death, we proclaim his resurrection through the Eucharist and recognize the living presence that still sustains the Church.



## **THE TRIDUUM: THE THREE GREAT DAYS**

The evening of Maundy Thursday begins the central moments of the Christian Year. The services of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Great Vigil of Easter are known as the Triduum (pronounced TRIH-doo-uhm), or the three great days, to underscore the unity of all that happens between the evening of Maundy Thursday and the first Eucharist of Easter at the Great Vigil. There is no formal dismissal after the Maundy Thursday or Good Friday services, indicating that each is part of a larger three part service. To participate in the entire span of worship is to enter into the heart of the story. It is also the most rewarding way to experience the death and resurrection of Jesus. Please take part in as much of these three days as you can.



## MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy Thursday begins the remembrance of the night that began Jesus Christ's ordeal. The remembrance focuses on four events: the institution of the Last Supper, Jesus washing the disciples' feet, the commandment to love one another, and the betrayal that led to his arrest.

All four events are marked by movements in the liturgy. We celebrate the Eucharist, in which we remember Jesus commanding his followers to "do this for the remembrance of me." The Gospel reading includes the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and his commandment to "love one another as I have loved you." These two parts are intertwined and symbolize how we may choose to love one another as Jesus loved his disciples.

At the end of the service, we mark his betrayal and arrest by silently removing all the ornamentation of the altar and cover the stationary crosses with black veils. An area of the church is decorated with live plants, symbolizing a garden, and has a place for kneeling. Some people may spend time there for a vigil of prayer, symbolizing how the disciples waited in the garden of Gethsemane while Jesus prayed.#



## GOOD FRIDAY

This day is a day of both mourning and triumph. It is a day of mourning because it is our sin that has crucified Christ; simultaneously it is a day of triumph because our Lord transforms the cross into the instrument of our salvation.

### **Stations of the Cross**

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross, or Stations of the Cross, is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. The number of stations, which at first varied widely, finally became fixed at fourteen. Of these, eight are based directly on events recorded in the Gospels. The remaining six numbers (3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 13) are based on inferences from the Gospel account or from pious legend.

### **The Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday**

The opening rite is primitive in its starkness. The church, stripped of its furnishings and adornments on Maundy Thursday, reflects the somber mood of a people whose Savior has been crucified. The clergy enter and all kneel for silent prayer before the opening acclamation and collect. By ancient tradition, The Passion according to St. John is read on Good Friday.

The Solemn Collects, an extended form of intercession, take the place of the Prayers of the People. A large wooden cross is brought before the people and draped in black. People may choose to say a special devotion or prayer at the cross before they leave the sanctuary after the service. The church is left in silence, bleak and bare as the tomb.

## **Holy Saturday**

This is a day of both silence and intense activity. This holy day is observed with a simple liturgy to commemorate the burial of Jesus. This is an empty day as the Church prepares for the Great Vigil of Easter. At St. John's, the preparations to transform the sanctuary into a place of beauty and splendor are briefly interrupted to remember Christ's burial in the tomb. Then after sundown, all is ready for the central liturgy of the year: The Great Vigil of Easter.



*The Lord is Risen!*

**THE FEAST OF THE  
RESURRECTION OF OUR  
LORD JESUS CHRIST**



**THE GREAT VIGIL  
OF EASTER**

This service is the most ancient of the Church's liturgies. It is by far the most dramatic and moving service of the year as the movement from death and darkness to resurrection and light is powerfully told in word and action.

The Great Vigil consists of four parts:

- The Service of Light.
- The Service of Lessons.
- The Renewal of Baptismal Vows.
- The Holy Eucharist.

We begin outside a darkened church as a fire is kindled and blessed. The Paschal Candle, a symbol of the light of Christ through his resurrection, is lit. The Paschal Candle leads everyone into the church and individual candles are lit. The Exsultet, the great hymn that calls on all of creation to rejoice, is sung and readings from the Old Testament follow. These include the Creation story, and the liberation of Israel through the Red Sea.

Then the central moment of the church year occurs: the announcement of the resurrection by the Celebrant with the words "**Alleluia, Christ is Risen.**" The people respond "**The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia**" and the veil of darkness is lifted as the lights are turned on, the people ring bells, the Gloria is sung, and the service continues for the first Eucharist of Easter. The crosses that had been draped in black are now radiant in white. Before that Eucharist, however, we renew our Baptismal Vows to remember that we have died to sin and have been raised to new life in Jesus Christ; that we have "passed over" from darkness to light. The Easter Vigil is an especially appropriate time for baptisms, and we try to schedule a baptism for the service whenever possible.

If you have not attended the Great Vigil, you will experience Easter as never before, as you see the New Light come into being and we shout "**Alleluia. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia**" and sing the Gloria in Excelsis for the first time since Ash Wednesday!



## **EASTER DAY**

After the walk through Holy Week and its complicated rites, the Easter Eucharist is straightforward; distinctive only in the intensity of joy and hope in the readings, music, and the flowering of the cross.

## **HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SCHEDULE AT ST. JOHN'S**

**April 10 Palm Sunday / Domingo de Ramos**

9:00 AM — Service in English

10:30 AM — Service in English

1:00 PM — Misa en Español

Palms will be blessed and distributed  
at all services.

**April 14 Maundy Thursday**

7:00 PM — Maundy Thursday Service  
in English.

8:30 PM — “Keeping Watch”  
Prayer Garden in Narthex

**April 15 Good Friday / Viernes Santo**

NOON — Good Friday Service in English

7:00 PM — Via Crucis y Viernes Santo Misa  
en Español

**April 16 Easter Vigil**

8:00 PM — Great Vigil service in English

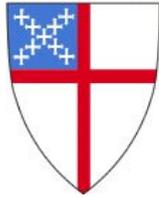
**April 17 Easter Day / Día de Pascua**

9:00 AM — Easter Service in English

10:30 AM — Easter Service in English

1:00 PM — Misa del Pascua en Español





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## St. John's Episcopal Church

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The Reverend Minerva Camarena Skeith, *Rector*  
The Reverend Victoria Mason, *Deacon*  
Ms. Fay Jones, *Director of Communications*  
Mr. Philip Riley, *Choirmaster and Organist*  
Mr. Alfonso Hernandez, *Spanish Music Leader*

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Sunday Services:        9:00 & 10:30 AM in English  
   1:00 PM en Español

This booklet is modeled after and inspired by a similar booklet from  
the **Episcopal Parish of St. John the Evangelist** in Highnam, MA.  
<http://www.stjohns-hingham.org/>