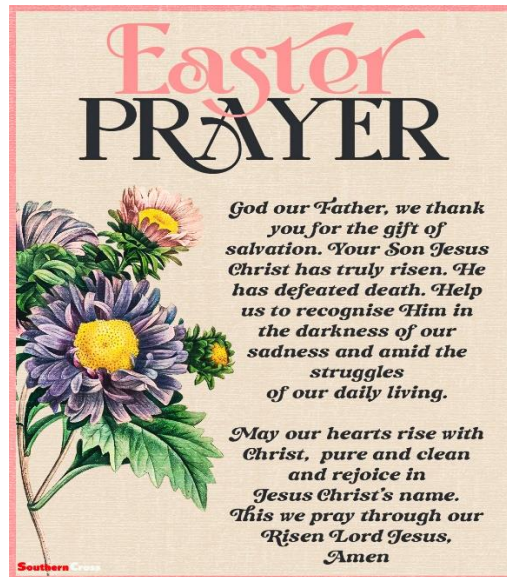


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We are a community of faith striving to love God fully and our neighbors as ourselves.

Dear members and friends of Christ Church,

The end of this month is the holiest week of the Christian calendar when we as the Church follow Jesus through his arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection. At Christ Church, we spend more time worshiping during Holy Week than in any other week of the Church year, meaning there are ample opportunities for you to join us in commemorating God’s love for us. The summary schedule is below in this newsletter, but here I want to offer some comments on the services of Holy Week for those who might not be familiar with them.

Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus’ procession into Jerusalem on a donkey while the crowd cheered and strew palms along his way. In worship, we wear and/or wave around palms, reminding us that we hail Christ, and no earthly ruler, as our King. The ecumenical service in the park (or at Holy Trinity Lutheran in the event of inclement weather) focuses solely on this event, while the Sunday morning Episcopal service transitions from the Liturgy of the Palms to the reading of the Passion (this year, from Mark); with multiple voices reading different parts, we hear the story of Jesus’ arrest, trials, and crucifixion before partaking in his sacrifice through Holy Communion.

Evensong is the (mostly) chanted version of Evening Prayer, offering a reflective opportunity to pray twice by singing (to paraphrase the quote attributed to St. Augustine). **Stations of the Cross** is a pilgrimage of the imagination, in which we prayerfully proceed through Jesus’ crucifixion in fourteen stops from condemnation to burial in a service first attributed to St. Francis. **Tenebrae** (a Latin word meaning ‘darkness’ or ‘shadows’) is a symbolic prelude to the Triduum (the three nights that follow) in which candles are gradually extinguished while we hear Psalms and readings of lament that prepare us to go with Jesus into death; this year, Tenebrae will start early (at 6:15) in the hope that volunteers (and perhaps some diners) at Loaves & Fishes will stick around for worship and worshipers will come early and join us for that community meal.

On **Maundy Thursday**, we celebrate the institution of Holy Communion in Jesus’ last supper with his disciples, and additionally, wash one another’s feet (in obedience to Jesus’ command about loving one another as he loved the disciples) before stripping the altar at the end of communion in preparation for the next day. For those interested, there may also be the opportunity to stay awake one hour with Jesus by praying in the chapel.

The evening service on **Good Friday** is one of solemn readings and prayers. In addition to hearing John’s version of the Passion of Jesus, we pray for the world for which Jesus died. This gives way to the

Easter Vigil after sunset on Saturday (according to the Jewish calendar, the start of the third day because Jesus died before sunset on Friday). Beginning in darkness (an echo of the conclusions of Tenebrae and Maundy Thursday), we light the first flame of Easter before praying the Exultet (the Church's great prayer of Jesus' triumph over death, chanted like Evensong) and hearing the history of salvation by candlelight. After bringing up the lights and shouting the first Alleluias of Easter, we renew our Baptismal Covenant and celebrate the first communion of Easter.

This year on **Easter Sunday**, The Rt. Rev. Mark Bourlakas, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, will preach and celebrate Holy Communion, as well as confirm a new member of Christ Church. A light reception will follow in the Undercroft. I hope to see each of you many times during Holy Week.

- Fr. John

Lent Program

Our Lent Program this year is about Prayer and meets in the Undercroft after the 10:30 service. Over the next three Sundays (March 3, 10, and 17), we will discuss and practice how we might pray at home with words, with our bodies, and in silence, which may be of particular interest to those hoping begin a new prayer habit or looking to diversify and change their prayer routine. A light lunch of soup and bread precedes the program.



Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, March 24, 9 am – Community Palm Sunday Service @ J. Frank Wilson Park

Palm Sunday, March 24, 10:30 am – Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist

Monday, March 25, 7 pm – Evensong

Tuesday, March 26, 7 pm – Stations of the Cross

Wednesday, March 27, 6:15 pm – Tenebrae

Maundy Thursday, March 28, 7 pm– Holy Eucharist with Footwashing and Stripping of the Altar

Friday, March 29, Noon – Stations of the Cross

Friday, March 29, 7 pm – Good Friday Liturgy

Saturday, March 30, 8 pm – The Great Vigil of Easter

Easter Sunday, March 31, 10:30 am – Holy Eucharist with Confirmation and Reception in the Undercroft

Maundy Thursday Vigil

In obedience to Jesus, who wondered that his disciples were unable to keep watch with him for one hour in Gethsemane, some find it deeply meaningful to stay awake and pray for a portion of the night on Maundy Thursday. Kyle Trent is undertaking to organize a vigil in the Chapel for at least part of the night between the end of the Maundy Thursday liturgy and Friday morning; if you are interested in doing so, please contact him at kyletrent@kyletrent.com.

Bible Studies and Wednesday Eucharist

Holy Week and Easter will disrupt our regular Bible studies and Wednesday Eucharist. Our Sunday morning study (9:30 in the Parish House) is taking Palm Sunday and Easter (March 24 and 31) off. Our Monday night study (7:00 in the Parish House) will not meet March 25 and April 1. There will not be Wednesday services at noon in the Chapel on March 20 and 27 (the former for Diocesan clergy day).

Kings Grant Eucharist

Fr. John celebrates the Eucharist in the chapel at Kings Grant at 1:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month. The next services will be on March 7 and April 4. He will also be preaching at the Sunday prayer service in the chapel at 4:15 on March 17.

Public Theology

Public Theology meets on Wednesday, March 13, at Mountain Valley Brewing (4220 Mountain Valley Rd, Axton). Food will be available (either from a vendor or otherwise provided) beginning at 6:00, and the discussion goes from 7:00 to 8:00.

Easter Flowering Cross

As is tradition, on Easter morning (March 31), parishioners young and old are invited to bring a few flowers (with stems wrapped in foil or otherwise held together) to place in the wire-covered cross in the narthex, thereby adding even more colorful joy to our celebration of Jesus' resurrection.



Rector's Discretionary Fund

A Rector's Discretionary Fund (RDF) is a benevolent fund available to the Rector of an Episcopal Church for use at his/her discretion in meeting the needs of those who seek help from the church. At Christ Church, the recent custom is to use the RDF to help pay for rent and utilities of Martinsville and Henry County residents who go to (and are vetted by) Grace Network. Because our capacity is limited, we pay no more than \$100 of any one person's bill, and we help only on a one-time basis. Our RDF is funded by the loose offering (cash) on the first Sunday of the month, checks designated for the RDF, and the occasional honorarium Fr. John receives for a funeral. In 2023, we helped 55 people by paying \$4,885.83 toward their rent and utility bills. If you as a parishioner find yourself in financial straits with which we might help (whether with bills or otherwise), please approach Fr. John directly.

Grace Network - Our Grace Network Assignments for March: Dish detergent. For March: dish detergent, deodorant, laundry detergent, and hygiene items. As a Church family, we have committed to helping Grace Network with stocking their food pantry for those in need. Please remember to pick up our assigned item the next time you visit the grocery store. You can bring your items to the Church office OR put them in the little red wagon in the Narthex.

Prayer List

Let Deborah or Fr. John know if anyone needs to be added or removed from the list.

Sue (Rosser)
Julia (Hall)
Betty (Budde) - continuing treatment for multiple myeloma
Nathan (Jane Thomasson's nephew)
Tom (Howland)
Linda (Isley)
Leandra (Burke – recovering from breast cancer)

Betsy (Smith)
Tom (Webster) – recovering from surgery
Steve (requested by David Cole)
Mary Ruth (Reynolds)
Morgan and Barbara (Holland)
Thomas (son of Lynn and Phil Gardner)
Tammy (a friend of Deborah Searce) – in Hospice
Dorothy (mother of Deborah Searce) – recovering from a broken hip
Amelia (5-month-old granddaughter of Jay and Jill Dickens)
Vivian (a friend of Pete Scouras)

Server Schedule for March

Altar Guild Team #3 - Page Beeler, Karen Jones, Nancy Spilman, Ellen Maxwell, Ben Beeler, Kaye Woodz
(Susan Critz – flower substitute)

Special Flower Committee - Becky Farrar, Frankie Smith, Karen Jones, Debbie Lewis, Susan Smith,
Page Beeler, Rita Hodges, Beth Cahill, Stuart Webster, Natalie Coleman, Pat Russell, Dawn Stone, David Cole

March 3 – Ann Gardner, reader; Beverly Lyle, Natalie Coleman, chalicers; Gus Barber, John Swezey, Ben Lewis, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Jay Dickens, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

March 10 – Kelly Cain, reader; Hank Long, Dawn Stone, chalicers; Kyle Trent, Bruce Mazurek, Jay Dickens, ushers; Tyler Johnson, acolyte; Andy Williams, camera operator; Jay Dickens, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

March 17 – Susan Critz, reader; Natalie Coleman, John Swezey, chalicers; Bob Weatherall, Hank Long, Dan Cahill, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Jay Dickens, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

March 24 – Palm Sunday – Ann Gardner, reader; Beverly Lyle, Tom Webster, chalicers; Trippi Penn, Andy Quirk, Rebin Titus, ushers; Tyler Johnson, acolyte; Andy Williams, camera operator; Jay Dickens, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

Passion Readers – Kelly Cain, Hank Long, Dawn Stone

March 25 – Monday in Holy Week – Evening Prayer – 7:00 pm – Bob Bushnell, Reader

March 26 – Tuesday in Holy Week – Stations of the Cross – 7:00 pm

March 27 – Wednesday in Holy Week – Tenebrae – 6:15 pm – Kelly Cain, reader

March 28 – Maundy Thursday – 7:00 pm – Susan Critz, reader; Nancy Spilman, John Swezey, chalicers

March 29 – Good Friday – Stations of the Cross – 12 Noon

March 29 – Good Friday – 7:00 pm – Will Zimmer, reader

March 30 – Holy Saturday – Easter Vigil – 8:00 pm – Bob Bushnell, Hank Long, readers and chalicers

March 31 – Easter Sunday – Will Zimmer, reader; Dawn Stone, John Swezey, chalicers; Pete Scouras, Michael Hodges, Rives Coleman, ushers; Elizabeth Maxwell, acolyte; Andy Williams, camera operator; Jay Dickens, counter; Emily Williams, nursery.