

The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew



OUR LITURGY UNFOLDED: PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK, and EASTER

March 24-31, 2024

Holy Week is a very intense week in which we journey through the final days in the life and ministry of Jesus. This is especially true on **Palm Sunday** when the service begins with our singing, "All Glory, laud and honor," but quickly moves to "Crucify him" during the Passion. This year, the passion reading is from Mark.

In Richard Giles', *Times and Seasons* we learn that the early Christian communities moved from a weekly memorial of the death and resurrection of the Christ, to an annual observance called *Pascha*, derived from *pesach*, the Hebrew word for Passover.

Sometime during the 4th century, the simple *Pascha*, which was a night-long vigil, evolved into a "re-enactment" of all the dramatic events of the Lord's final days. "This pattern of ritual observances was regularized and shaped into the package of liturgical events we now know as Holy Week." (Page 89). During this week, we move from his triumphant entrance, to his confrontation with the religious authorities, final meal with his disciples, betrayal, arrest, execution and resurrection.

Holy Week provides a time for quiet preparation with our Lord. Between Palm Sunday and Easter, we "enter into the mystery of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection and make it 'our' own" as we become re-energized in our discipleship.

Stations of the Cross - Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. This devotion dates back to the earliest centuries of the Church when pilgrims to Jerusalem would walk the land where Jesus lived and trace his path, with prayer, meditation and devotion at each stop (station).

The name "**Triduum Sacrum**" is the name given to the three sacred days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. During this time, we experience the final meal, betrayal, trial, execution and burial of Jesus. **Maundy Thursday** includes the traditional Washing of the Feet, Mass of the Last Supper, the procession to the Mary Chapel where the Reserved Sacrament is placed to serve as a focus of prayer, and the stripping of the altar (a powerful expression of the abandonment of Christ by his followers).

Good Friday, the most solemn day of the year begins with the 12:00 noon **Good Friday service** which includes the singing of the Passion of Christ, solemn prayers (collects) and the veneration of the Cross.

Holy Saturday, which commemorates the day that Jesus Christ's body was laid in the tomb, is a day of preparation for Easter. A brief Holy Saturday liturgy is held at 9:30 a.m. followed by Confession and reconciliation with Fr. Patrick. Appointments are available from 10:00 a.m. - Noon.

Easter Pasch, the Christian Passover, was "originally a unified commemoration of both cross and resurrection, but by the end of the fourth century the commemoration of the death of Christ had been hived off into a day in its own right (Good Friday), leaving the *Pasch* associated with the theme of resurrection alone. The Paschal Candle is a large candle that symbolizes the risen Christ and is burned at all services from Easter to Pentecost.