



Connections

*Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us;
therefore let us keep the feast.* *BAS - Easter Day*

**Volume 3
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2021**



Springtime and Easter; sunshine and hope

As the last of the snow melts and we discard boots and heavy coats, we see pale lacy green leaves begin to appear on trees and look for the first crocuses in our gardens. We knew they would come - God is faithful - but we have never needed their reassurance as much as we do this year.

It has been a hard winter, with tragedy, uncertainty about the future and turmoil all over the world. But with the coming of vaccines to stem the disease which has made our world a fearful place, we can now look ahead to a new and better time.

Perhaps we have learned something about how to live as a result of the past sad year. About looking after our older neighbours. About the sacrifices health care providers are willing to make for us. About living restricted to home, sometimes alone, and the new-found blessing of solitude in God's presence. About nurturing our children when they cannot go to school.

For many Christians, the most difficult part of this period has been losing the warm fellowship of other worshippers in services and activities at our parish churches. At Christ Church we have compensated with vibrant online worship; we have made regular telephone calls to one another; we have shared news and funny sayings by email; we have Zoomed business meetings and youth events for all ages; we have done Bible Studies at home; our Pastor has tended her flock lovingly throughout the separation with calls, visits and many, many prayers; our Deacon and her faithful assistants have upheld the food bank so our commitment to the needy is maintained.

And now - Easter! The crown of the Christian year, when Jesus took upon himself our sins and shortcomings, died in agony and humiliation, and rose on the third day in a magnificent gift of pure love for us.

Alleluia! The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed.

Audrey



Remembering friends

One of the casualties of the pandemic has been the opportunity to take the worship services of Christ Church to the residents of Cedarbrook Lodge and Trilogy LTC Residence. To celebrate Easter, we will send bouquets of flowers for each of the lobbies in these homes, with messages of support for the staff and greetings to the residents, assuring them that we look forward to the day when we can resume our ministries with them.

Serving the community

By now your big box of food from the Lenten Food Calendar must be brimming with your generous contributions. Deacon Jacquie and her team will be happy to receive it on Wednesday or Thursday mornings.

If you cannot get it to the church, please email jacquie.boutheon@sympatico.ca or call her at 416-264-4726 and she will help you.



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR PAM

HOLY WEEK - A TIME TO SEE THE MEANING OF JESUS' SUFFERING AND DEATH

Do you remember how you marked the time leading up to Easter last year? Have you considered how you will plan to mark Holy Week this year? Please don't let the opportunity to enter into this important part of the Christian story pass you by. It is an invitation to grasp the significance of Jesus' passion, his suffering and death...and ponder the meaning for you and for me. Part of why I do so is, in remembering what Jesus did, I am often moved by God's great love. In the Greek and Roman liturgical books, Holy Week is called the Great Week because great deeds were done by God during this week.

And God is still doing great things. As we mark Holy Week, however you choose to do so, let us have eyes to see the great work of God in the past and be open to God being at work in our lives, right now.

The words of a hymn by Fanny Crosby, 1820-1915, come to mind. The inspiration for this hymn was the result of a visit to a prison by Fanny during the spring of 1868. After she had spoken and some of her hymns had been sung, she heard one of the prisoners cry out in a pleading voice, 'Good Lord, do not pass me by'; she wrote a hymn that evening incorporating the line, "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour."

Pass me not, O gentle Savior
Hear my humble cry
While on others Thou art calling
Do not pass me by

*Saviour, Saviour
Hear my humble cry
While on others Thou art calling
Do not pass me by*

Let me at Thy throne of mercy
Find a sweet relief
Kneeling there in deep contrition
Help my unbelief

Trusting only in Thy merit
Would I seek Thy face
Heal my wounded, broken spirit
Save me by Thy grace

Thou the spring of all my comfort
More than life to me
Whom have I on earth beside Thee?
Whom in Heav'n but Thee?

While on others Thou art calling
Do not pass me by

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

Access online services through the Christ Church website

Palm Sunday Morning Prayer

Holy Week Monday and Tuesday Stations of the Cross (self-guided)

If the weather is fine, the Stations of the Cross, with pictures and readings, will be on the walls outside the church.

Holy Week Wednesday 1 pm Stations of the Cross (guided)

In case of rain, the Stations will be in the church hall.

Maundy Thursday Commemoration of Jesus' Last Supper with his friends

Good Friday The Crucifixion of Our Lord retold in words and music

Easter Sunday Spiritual celebration of the Eucharist

(See the prayer on page 3 of this issue for details on how you can participate in the act of Holy Communion.)



A PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

On Easter Day we plan to have an online Christ Church Eucharist service in which you can participate. Although you will not be receiving the consecrated bread and wine, our hope is that you will be able to know the presence of God with you. This is the prayer that we will have you join in saying during the communion:

I worship and adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, present in the Holy Sacrament and in your people, who are gathered in spirit.

In this moment I join with them to receive you in my heart, and in our community.

May you, enthroned on the altar, be now enthroned in my heart; may you, present in bread and wine, feed and renew my soul; may you, who give yourself to us again, fill us with grace and heavenly blessing.

Even as I am fed, may my hunger for you and for your reign of justice and peace increase, that I may, with your Spirit, work for that day when your reign shall come on earth as it is in heaven.

A m e n

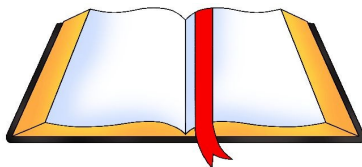


Spring Bible Study

Yes, it's your very last chance to be a participant in our Spring Bible Study – a brand new program on the Gospel of Mark. Eight simple units to stretch your imagination and enrich

your understanding.

Email revroyshep@gmail.com or phone 416-269-1506.



Please pray for these members of our community and their families

Alan S	Deborah T
Anita & Dave F	Ebun D B
Anna Mary K	Edna S
Anne S	James Y
Annet K	Jenille L
Carol & Ernie O	John J
Chris P	Lennox & Leonora Y
Christina & Joshua	Linda & Robert E
Corinne P	Madhuri M
David D	Margaret C
Deb A	Moureen N
	Sherri-Ann & Ron

and for all those affected by COVID-19, racial discrimination or any injustice

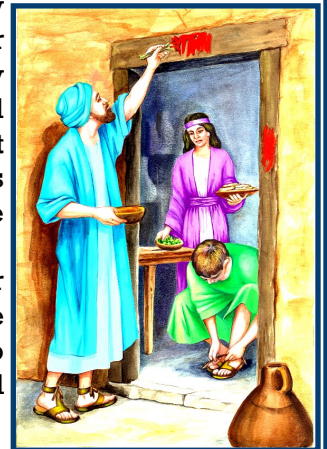
Passover - A Celebration of Freedom

The Passover Feast, an eight-day period beginning this year on March 27 and ending on April 5, commemorates the Exodus story of Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. In fear of God's wrath against the Egyptians, the blood of a lamb was spread on the doorposts of Jewish houses, so God would "pass over" them when he killed all the first-born males in the country.

The history of the Passover is told every year at a special meal called a Seder, so that Jews will never forget what God has done for them.

The Gospel of Luke, chapter 22, tells us that Jesus Christ shared the Passover Seder with his disciples on the night before his crucifixion, saying, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God".

Jesus is called our "paschal lamb", because his blood was shed to atone for our sins and make us free in him.



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JOIN US ON OUR WEBSITE FOR WORSHIP

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

As we trace Jesus' terrible journey, we should walk from room to room in our home or backyard. The steps we take are not taken alone. Two thousand years ago Jesus walked the path of betrayal, mocking and death upon a cross. He was tested and not found wanting. Nothing we can experience can exceed what he experienced. He walks with us and he asks us to walk with him.

1. JESUS IS JUDGED AND CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Scripture reading *Matthew 27: 1 and 2 and 15 to 26*

Reflection King Herod and the temple rulers agreed that Jesus should die. Caught in the middle was Pilate. His past record had serious errors. He didn't need this local squabble. The truth was, Jesus was innocent. But the crowd demanded a murderer instead of Jesus. Protect your power and influence. So Pilate played it safe.

Playing it safe sometimes works, but when we choose expediency we suffer shame and guilt. The blessing is that God is always there, to love and to forgive us.

Prayer *We pray for all political leaders, diplomats and government officials, that they may work for the common good and pursue peace and justice for all. For every occasion when people hurt others. For those in prison and those on trial in the courts. And we pray for ourselves, when we judge and condemn others. When we are judged and condemned. Help us to know the humility of Jesus. Lord, hear our prayer.*

2. JESUS IS MOCKED AND GIVEN THE CROSS

Scripture reading *Matthew 27: 27 to 31*

Reflection What a pathetic sight! Bruises all over his body, blood on his face from his crown of thorns. "Hail, King of the Jews" the soldiers yelled. Don't blame them. They were just doing their jobs. Today, this event would be revolting. But, like the soldiers, because of our ignorance or selfishness, we too mock his kingdom. Like the soldiers, we scourge him. Every time we hurt someone, every time we fail to help someone, we put a crown of thorns on his head. God is hurt.

Prayer *We pray for all who serve and protect; police, firefighters, paramedics, our armed forces. For all who hate and for all who are hated. For all who mock others and for all who are mocked. For all victims of violence and for those who are violent to others. For those who live under oppression of any kind. And we pray for ourselves, when we insult or hurt others; when we are hurt or humiliated; that we may not be indifferent to the hurt of others. Lord, hear our prayer.*

3. JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Narration *Not only did the soldiers mock Jesus, they painfully scourged his body. Then they thrust the weight of a rough wooden cross on his sagging shoulders. Step after step, he begins the tortuous journey along the cobbled streets of the holy city. Without warning, his knees buckle and he falls.*

Reflection Bloodied and exhausted, he lies there under the weight of a cross and the despair of what has happened. He was chastised so we might have peace. He was mocked so we might have hope. He was betrayed so we might be forgiven. On his back was laid all the fear, shame, guilt and sin of every one of us. He fell because its weight was overwhelming.

Prayer *We pray for those suffering from chronic pain. For those living with cancer, aids, Covid-19 and other diseases. For those who are physically or mentally exhausted. For those who are hungry, especially children in Canada. For those facing any kind of failure in their lives. For those who care for the sick, the weak and the frail elderly. For doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers. For caregivers of any kind, especially family and friends. And for ourselves, when we face sickness or disease, weakness, fatigue, chronic pain, social isolation; when we experience failure of any kind. Lord, hear our prayer.*

4. SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS CARRY THE CROSS

Scripture reading *Mark 15: 21 and 22*

Reflection Simon was not a volunteer. He was called out of the crowd by a soldier - the only one to share the burden of the cross with Jesus. How often do we bear someone else's cross? Do we always wait to be asked? Or do we reach out the hand of love? Whenever we respond to a need with kindness, we make a difference to God. It is better to volunteer, but if we are drafted by God, we take up the cross of Jesus and carry it by doing his work in the world.

Prayer *We pray for the people of Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Afghanistan and others in conflict. For the people in every land who seek freedom, security and justice. For the millions of refugees in camps. For international understanding that fosters mutual respect. For all who are disadvantaged by colour, race, gender or religious beliefs. For the removal of all barriers of bias between people. And for ourselves, that we may be free from prejudice of any kind; that self-love may not hinder us from caring for and serving others. Lord, hear our prayer.*

5. VERONICA WIPES THE BROW OF JESUS

Narration *The men who were his friends ran away in fear for their lives, but the women who believed in Jesus stayed with him. Loyalty and compassion triumphed over despair. Tradition says that the woman whom Jesus healed of a blood disease was named Veronica. Despite the danger to herself, she gently wipes the blood from his sweating face. No-one else seems to care. But she does.*

Reflection Exposure to cruelty tends to reveal the true measure of a person. The crowd revealed mostly cowardice, apathy or a 'let's party' attitude. But it can also bring out compassion and courage. Out of the crowd came one woman - Veronica. Never mind the soldiers. Never mind the crowd. Take a risk. Do something - for the Lord. Every day we have to make choices. Turn our backs on evil, or take the risk and respond in love. Choose.

Prayer *We pray with thanks for those who see with God's eyes and see beauty and love where others see only ugliness and squalor. For those who feel unattractive to themselves and others. For all those who make others feel disliked or rejected. For those who reach out to others with acceptance and affection. And we pray for ourselves, that we may see beauty where God sees beauty, that our hearts may be open to compassion, our minds to console, our voices to comfort, our hands to serve and heal. Lord, hear our prayer.*

6. JESUS FALLS FOR A SECOND TIME

Narration *Each step makes the heavy beam fall like a sledgehammer on his aching back. His ears are bombarded by the laughter and insults of the crowd who, like angry bees, push and jostle him. He goes down again, this time face forward, cracking his elbows and knees on the stone walkway. He has fallen for the second time.*

Reflection They hailed him as a king. Now he is despised and rejected, a pitiful excuse for a human being. A common criminal, carrying his cross. The paradox is striking. The Centurion's power and the utter degradation of one powerless man. Our hearts know the truth. It is our weakness he carries, our sins he bears, our burdens, yours and mine. His aching muscles are ours. His battered bones are ours.

Prayer *We pray that mercy will always temper justice. For those imprisoned seeking release or pardon. For parole boards and those responsible for official mercy. For those who suffer from stress and mental and spiritual illness. For those who suffer with Alzheimer's and their families and friends. And we pray for ourselves, that we may openly and honestly seek forgiveness from those whom we have hurt and sincerely forgive those who have hurt us. That we see the pain in others and reach out to them in love. Lord, hear our prayer.*

7. JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Scripture reading *Luke 23: 27 to 31*

Reflection Two groups of women followed Jesus on this day; first, the faithful followers. He didn't talk to them. He just looked at them with love. But others, excited by what was happening, meant well, but they were merely spectators who hadn't taken his teachings to heart. Jesus tells them not to weep for him but for themselves and their children. How often are we like the women of Jerusalem? Lacking true caring for those who are wounded in body, mind or spirit?

Prayer *We pray for women everywhere, that they may be treated as equals. For those who watch their loved ones go to war. For those who grieve their loved ones killed or wounded as a result of violence, that peace may replace conflict. In penitence and sorrow for each time right is overcome by might; when the powerful are given respect while the disadvantaged remain powerless; when the poor are ignored or oppressed. For the liberation of all persons. And we pray for ourselves, that the Holy Spirit will give us the mind of Jesus so that we will actively care for all those in need and respect the dignity of every human being. Lord, hear our prayer.*

8. JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

Narration *With Simon helping, the grim parade reaches the old quarry where the Romans hold crucifixions. Each breath is a struggle ... each step a stumble ... each muscle shrieks pain ... his foot catches a cobblestone ... his wobbling knees explode ... he collapses in a heap. Jesus falls a third time.*

Reflection He lies on the cold ground, not guilty of anything but love. When you love someone, you give of yourself, so there should be less of yourself than there was at the start. Yet you feel more. You feel you really are the person you were meant to be. In the prostrate form of Jesus, we see the greatest love the world has ever known. Love for you, love for me, love for all of us together by name. He lies there, battered and bleeding ... for us.

Prayer *We pray for those who experience moral weakness. For those whose faith is filled with doubts. For those who have given up hope. For those who have reached the limit of their physical, mental and spiritual strength. For those who counsel the despairing or suicidal. For those who offer comfort to the dying or bereaved. For chaplains who minister to those in hospitals or prisons. And we pray for ourselves, when we experience spiritual failure; when everything seems hopeless; that we may have the patience and resolve that Jesus had on his long, painful march to death. Lord, hear our prayer.*

9. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Scripture readings *John 19: 17 and 18 and Mark 15: 23 and 24*

Reflection The soldiers did not waste anything, so they threw dice to divide his clothes. Finally Jesus had absolutely nothing. Yet his loss gave us new life. By his death, he conquered death. By his love, he defeated hate. By forgiving his executioners, he destroyed guilt and shame. To live for yourself alone is hardly worth living. But if you live with Jesus, you are fully and freely alive, as you were meant to be.

Prayer *We pray for all who are exposed to ridicule, shame or humiliation. For battered women and children. For women who are raped and children who are victims of violence and sexual abuse. For those who degrade and humiliate others by their words or actions. For those who exploit others racially, mentally, intellectually, socially. And we pray for ourselves, when we feel ashamed, guilty or abused by race, gender, colour, social or mental status, that we may live with healing and freedom. Lord, hear our prayer.*

10. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Scripture reading *Mark 15: 25 to 32*

Reflection “Father, forgive them.” These words promise us the grace for which this tragic scheme is the price tag. The soldiers hammering in the nails. “Father, forgive them.” The crowd that yelled “Crucify him!” - his reply - “Father, forgive them.” Crucifixion is not pretty, yet in this act of love and obedience we see the beauty of what God is like and what we could be like. Every time we turn away from God we are there at the cross, and Jesus says “Father, forgive them.”

Prayer *In awe and gratitude, we stand before the cross. God loved the world so much that he gave up his son to suffering and death. So we pray for those who destroy that which is good, true and sacred. For those who suppress the Good News of Jesus crucified. For those who are persecuted for their faith and for their persecutors. And we pray for ourselves, when we are called to stand up for our faith; that we follow the way of the cross in our lives so that sin and suffering can be broken on the rock of love Lord, hear our prayer.*

11. JESUS GREETES HIS MOTHER

Scripture reading *John 19: 25 to 27*

Reflection There were three Marys at the foot of the cross ... Mary his friend ... Mary his aunt ... and Mary his mother. Shock and sorrow were tearing them apart. For Mary his mother, there he was, nailed on the cross, his suffering wracking her body with sobs. In compassion, he asks one of his disciples to take care of her. So we must all care for our brothers and sisters, from the starving children in Africa to the homeless man sleeping on a grate in Toronto. All have real needs of body, mind and spirit.

Prayer *We give thanks for the love of Mary, the mother of Jesus. We pray for our own mothers, fathers and grandparents, and we name them now in our minds and hearts. For the love and joy they have given us, and in sorrow for the ways we hurt them. For those still living and those who have died and are at rest. For the children for whom we are parents, that they may grow in wisdom and stature and in favour with God, themselves and others. And we pray for ourselves, that we may experience the love of Jesus and Mary in all our relationships. Lord, hear our prayer.*

12. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Scripture reading *Matthew 27: 45 to 51*

Reflection All of them say “It is finished.” The soldiers, the chief priests, Pilate, the crowd. The disciples. But they were all wrong. These words of Jesus on the cross mean “It is accomplished.” Everything needed for our salvation is in place. So Jesus cried, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. IT IS FINISHED.”

Prayer *We pray for the dying, particularly those dying from COVID-19, in their last hours, in gratitude because through Jesus no-one need ever die alone or without hope. For those who care for the dying, families, friends, doctors, nurses and other caregivers. For hospices and those who minister in them. For those who have never met Jesus and need our prayers and witness. And we pray for ourselves, that we may truly know Jesus and share his love, his risen and eternal life. Lord, hear our prayer.*

13. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Scripture reading *John 19: 31 to 34*

Reflection Jesus hangs lifeless on the cross. Two men, Joseph and Nicodemus, whose love wins out over fear, take his body down from the cross, anoint it and wrap it in a cloth. But even in death, Jesus stands for justice and the homeland of love. And surely we believe that the cry for justice will not be stilled. That Jesus is Lord. That justice must prevail. And that we must work to make it happen.

Prayer *We pray for the dead, especially those we have known and loved. We remember them in our hearts and minds. We give thanks for all who have helped to make us better persons. We pray for those who mourn, especially those whose grief has disrupted their lives or left them lonely, and for all those who care for the bereaved. And we pray for ourselves, that we will not forget that Jesus gave his life for us; that by his Spirit we may be strengthened to give ourselves in caring for others. Lord, hear our prayer.*

14. JESUS IS BURIED IN THE TOMB

Scripture reading *Mark 15: 42b to 47*

Reflection They laid to rest The Light of the World. But his light was not extinguished. There was still God's promise, and on the third day he rose from the dead. The Light is the resurrected Jesus, a light which the darkness does not like, can never understand and is never able to put out. If we believe only in a buried Jesus, there is no light for us, just the darkness of our own selfish spirits. If we believe in a resurrected Jesus, the light shines even when we reject him, because he still forgives and loves us.

Prayer *Lord, by your death you have reconciled us to you. When we pity ourselves and think we make great sacrifices for others; when our patience wears thin and we are ready to give up; when we get angry and wish to retaliate against our enemies; when we suffer pain of body, anguish of the mind and despair of the spirit; when we are afraid to stand for that which is honourable and true; strengthen us with the courage you showed on the way to your cross. Lord, hear our prayer.*

