

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY:

8AM Blessing of the Palms & Holy Eucharist
10AM Liturgy for Palm Sunday & Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK:

7:00PM Service of Tenebrae

MAUNDY THURSDAY:

7:00PM Agape Meal & Holy Eucharist
Stripping of the Altar and Vigil

GOOD FRIDAY:

12:00 Noon: Seven Last Words from the Cross
as told through Prose, Poetry, and Music
including Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

HOLY SATURDAY:

9:00AM Liturgy for Holy Saturday
followed by preparing the Church for Easter
and baptism instruction

EASTER SUNDAY:

6:00AM Sunrise Vigil
Followed by a casual breakfast
10AM Family Service with Flowering of the Cross
Holy Baptism, and Holy Eucharist
followed by the Easter Egg Hunt

Journey into Holy Week

A Guide to Understanding an Ancient Tradition

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As is our tradition, the Collections during Holy Week are designated for the Church in Jerusalem. Checks should be made out to the "Domestic & Foreign Missionary Society", with "Holy Week Offering" on the Memo line of the check.



"The Lord is risen from the tomb, alleluia, alleluia.

Who for our sake hung upon the Tree;

Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,

and to the Holy Spirit.

The Lord is risen from the tomb, alleluia, alleluia."

Dear friends,

Holy Week is unique in the experience of the Church. From Palm Sunday to the Day of Resurrection (Easter) those who determine to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and his first disciples will find themselves slowly entering a realm unlike any they have known before. Each day – and consequently each Rite – takes on its own unique form and character in the drama of the story of our Lord's passion, death, and resurrection. It is indeed a journey. Like the pilgrims of ancient days, it is my hope that as you journey with us at Christ Church, you will deepen and enrich your own spirituality.

Holy Week is not just for adults! I have found that the liveliness and diversity of the week especially speaks to children and helps them to see, hear, smell, and touch something of who Jesus was, who he is, and who he longs to be in their own lives. I invite you to enter into the drama the Church has come to call Holy Week. Day by day, step by step, join us as we walk the path that Jesus walked. In doing so, may God strengthen your faith, kindle your hope, and renew your love.

Peace,

Mother Lisa+

Reverend Lisa Sauber Mitchell, Rector
Christ Church, Shrewsbury

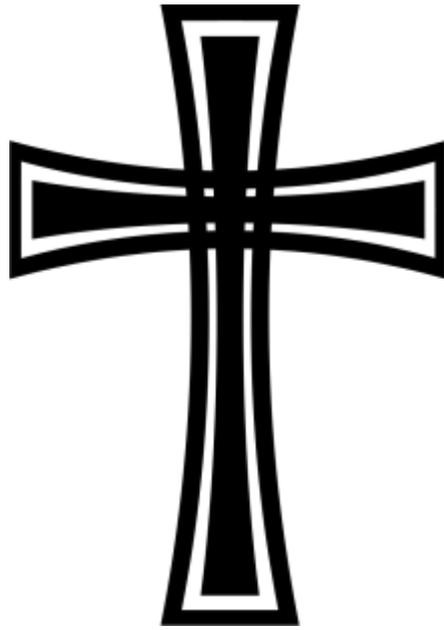
Please note....

The following sources were used in the preparation of this booklet:

The Book of Occasional Services, Church Hymnal Corporation

Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded, by Byron D. Stuhlman

Commentary on the American Prayer Book, by Marion J. Hatchett



The Sunday of the Passion:

Palm Sunday

*Sunday Morning, 10:00 a.m.**

Blessing of the Palms, the Passion Drama, and the Holy Eucharist are all celebrated.

The Sunday of the Passion marks the entrance into the drama of Holy Week. This liturgy is one of the oldest recorded in church history, dating back to a description of the procession of palms related by the pilgrim Egeria circa 381-384 A.D. An old Armenian lectionary also records such a liturgy, based on services being held at various holy sites in Jerusalem.

The Liturgy purposely focuses on two very different aspects of the last days of Jesus. The first, the Blessing of the Palms and the Procession to the Church, commemorates the Final Entry of Jesus into the holy city of Jerusalem. On that day, Jesus entered the city on the back of a young donkey to the cheers of a jubilant crowd who threw palm branches before him

and demonstrated the hope and joy they pinned on this Nazarene. What modern Christians do not often know is that this kind of "parade" of palms was traditionally reserved for victorious Roman commanders returning home from war. The people deliberately hail Jesus as "King"; such is their delight to have a rival to Rome. Jesus will prove to be a very different kind of King: one who rides in humility on a colt, ready to battle - but to battle the final enemy, Death.

The clergy and people of all ages (lower church school included) gather in the Parish Hall (or other designated place). There the deacon (or in the deacon's absence, the priest) reads the gospel account of the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. The priest blesses the palms, and they are distributed to all who are present. The procession forms, and as the Trumpeter calls the congregation to sing *All Glory, Laud and Honor*, the people process around the church yard to the front doors of the church. Atop the steps at the closed door of the Church, the Priest offers the Collect of the Day, whereupon the doors are opened wide, and the congregation makes the final procession into the Nave. The younger children and their teachers process through the Nave of the church and continue back over to the Parish House where they begin their lessons (they rejoin the congregation at the Eucharist).

The second focus of the day, what has become known as the "Passion" of our Lord, now begins. The Lessons are read, followed by a dramatic reading of the entire Passion Story of Jesus, ending in his death. The various parts are taken up by members of the congregation, and the congregation itself takes the part of the fickle crowd on that fateful day. After the homily, the liturgy moves into the Holy Eucharist. Unlike the joyful celebration usually experienced in Sunday worship, this Eucharist uniquely captures a more somber tone, for the recent experience of the Passion truly brings home the simple words, "this is my body...this is my blood...Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us....".

The liturgy rightly ends without the customary processional hymn. The clergy and people simply leave the church in the silence so appropriate to the occasion. Some have described this Liturgy as an explosion of emotions, almost a "schizophrenic" experience. We are taken from the height of joy and expectation to the complete dashing and death of a much hoped for dream. If you come away feeling like you have just gotten off a roller coaster, then you have come somewhat near to experiencing what Jesus and his disciples experienced in that fateful week.

**The 8:00am service contains most of the elements of the 10:00am. The Procession is omitted, but the Blessing of the Palms, the Passion Drama, and Holy Eucharist are all celebrated.*

Tenebrae

Wednesday Evening, 7:00pm

Tenebrae is a worship experience unparalleled in the Church; you simply will not find anything else like it in all the liturgical year. There is no communion; there is no homily; there is no music. The altar is bare. No candles are lit except the ones on the side altar, and the lights in the Nave are dimmed. The Officiant is dressed in a cassock and surplice; the acolyte dresses in cassock alone.

The service is driven by a series of lessons and responses led by eight lectors. These readings and responses take the entire congregation through a Biblical journey of the suffering, death, and the resurrection of our Lord as understood by the ancient prophecies of our Hebrew heritage and their interpretation by the early Church fathers. It is difficult to describe just how the rhythm of these lessons place one in the very presence of the Passion of Christ; you must experience it for yourself.

The name *Tenebrae* (the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows") has for centuries been applied to the ancient monastic night and early morning services (Matins and Lauds) of the last three days of Holy Week, which in medieval times came to be celebrated on the preceding evenings.

Apart from the chant of the Lamentations (in which each verse is introduced by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet), the most conspicuous feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights in the church until only a single candle, considered a symbol of our Lord, remains. Toward the end of the service this candle is hidden, typifying the apparent victory of the forces of evil. At the very end, a loud noise is made, symbolizing the earthquake at the time of the resurrection (Matthew 28.2). The hidden candle is then restored to its place, and by its light all depart in silence. It is a wonderfully dramatic experience.

The Church recommends that this service take place on Wednesday of Holy Week, and that is the custom of Christ Church. Taking part in Tenebrae will most certainly prepare you for the "great three days" that lead up to Easter Morning.

Maundy Thursday Thursday Evening, 7:00 pm

Maundy Thursday commemorates the last night that our Lord Jesus Christ spent with his friends before he went to the cross and to his death. It is also commonly known as "The Last Supper". The liturgical name used in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* is derived from the Latin word, "Mandatum" which is translated "command", for it was on this occasion that Jesus gave his great command to his disciples to love each other as he loved them.

It would seem quite natural that this service would contain the celebration of the Eucharist, a remembrance of that "first Eucharist" celebrated by our Lord himself. It might come as a surprise to learn that the Church originally held no such celebration any time during the solemn period of Holy Week, including Maundy Thursday.

The first record of such a Eucharistic rite was again given to us by Egeria, the pilgrim who visited the Holy Land circa 381-384 A.D. According to Egeria, the Eucharist was celebrated at 2:00pm in the Martyrium, a large basilica built by Helen, the mother of the emperor Constantine, over the site of the discovery of the "true cross". After the dismissal at 4:00pm, the congregation moved to the courtyard behind the church, where a cross was erected at the supposed site of the crucifixion, for a second celebration. Prayers at the tomb followed, a meal at home, and then several other services and vigils took place at various sites throughout the night into Good Friday.

We begin the night gathering in the quiet and darkened nave of the church. The main altar is bare, except for two lighted candles. Because it is often thought that the feast Jesus and his disciples kept was the Jewish Passover, you will find the altar adorned in festive white, with white flowers on the retable behind the altar. Just as Palm Sunday moves us from the joy of the Procession into Jerusalem to the sorrow and terror of the Passion, so Maundy Thursday moves us from the festive meal with friends and the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist to the more somber setting of the Garden of Gethsemane and the vigil of Jesus and his disciples.

The offerings of Mediterranean fare: bread, wines and sparkling waters, olives, cheeses, etc., brought by parishioners are presented to members of the altar party who place them on the main altar.

On the two front sides of the church (the pews below the pulpit and the lectern) are placed two covered boards for serving food.

When all are in place, the Altar Party and the St. Gregory's Choir process around the nave as the choir and congregation sing. The priest greets the people, offers the opening collect, and then follows the Ministry of the Word. Following some words spoken about the nature of this gathering and of this night, the Prayers of the Faithful are led by the Deacon.

A hymn, anthem or appropriate music is played as the altar is readied for the Eucharist and Agape Meal. A collection is also taken at this time; the monies, dedicated to the Church in Jerusalem, are added to the altar offerings.

The priest blesses all the food offered by the people, using the form found in the BOS pgs. 93-94. Members of the congregation, assisted by the Altar Party, take the blessed food to the serving tables.

The Eucharistic Bread and Wine, set apart for Consecration, are then taken from the Credence Table and placed on a corporal on the altar. A simple Eucharistic Prayer over the bread and wine is offered. Enough is blessed for Good Friday. The people are invited to receive communion, standing at the gates.

The entire congregation is then invited to the Agape Feast. This is an informal meal in which we greet one another and enjoy our simple supper with one another.

When we have concluded the meal, the Altar Party returns to the sanctuary. A post communion prayer is given.

It is now that the Stripping of the Altar begins. As the choir sings the haunting Taize Chant, "Stay With Me", all books, vestments, candles, and adornments are removed from the sanctuary. The leftover food from the side tables is removed to the narthex of the Church, where parishioners may gather it afterwards to take home.

The priest washes the naked altar, a symbol of how the body of Jesus was washed by the women following his death in preparation for his burial. The tabernacle, which rests on the retable behind the altar, is unlocked, the blessed bread and wine that are usually on reserve there are placed on the altar, and the tabernacle is left open and bare. The priest censures the Eucharistic elements, and then proceeds with them, accompanied by the altar party, to the side altar which has been previously placed on the south side of the church in front of the lectern. After a period of silent prayer, the altar party leaves the nave in silence.

The Deacon (or other person so appointed) remains in the Nave and reads from Matthew's gospel (26.30-46); the account of the Garden of Gethsemane. Then the Deacon leaves in silence. Members of the congregation take turns at the "Watch" or "Vigil"; following our

Lord's bidding to "stay awake and watch" with him. The church remains open all night for any who wish to come and pray. A sign-up sheet may be found on the Parish Hall bulletin board during the weeks of Lent. To assist parishioners in their prayers, devotional materials are provided, including a compilation of thoughts and prayers from previous "keepers of the vigil" from years past. Parishioners have the opportunity to write down their own thoughts and reflections on their experience at the vigil. The vigil is kept until noon on Friday.

Good Friday Friday 12:00 noon

Of all the days of Holy Week, the most solemn is this Friday which has been named "Good". Many have asked, "How can such a dark day that bore witness to the suffering and death of the Son of God be called 'good'?" The goodness comes in the great love of God demonstrated to us in that ultimate act of self-giving of our Lord Jesus on the Cross of Calvary. It is good because there is no other single act that tells us how profoundly God has longed for the redemption of humankind, and assures us that we have genuine worth; for God himself has told us so in no uncertain terms.

As with Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday, the first written description of a Good Friday service was given by the pilgrim Egeria on her pilgrimage around 381-384 A.D. From 8am until noon the faithful came to venerate a cross erected on the site believed to be place where Jesus was executed.

Traditionally churches have observed the Good Friday liturgy from 12:00 noon until 3:00pm, keeping in mind the time of day on which our Lord hung on the cross. Today we keep Good Friday from 12 noon until 1pm.

The people gather in the Nave of the church in silence. The liturgy begins as the clergy enter the sanctuary in silence. After a bidding prayer, the congregation listens to the Seven Last Words of the Cross as interpreted in Prose, Poetry, and Music.

Following the Seven Last Words, a minister enters the nave with a large, wooden cross. The minister stops in each of three places and declares "Behold the hard wood of the Cross", to which the congregation replies, "On which hung the world's salvation". When the cross reaches the chancel steps, it rests there, and while the Choir sings an anthem, first the ministers and then individuals from the congregation come forward to venerate the cross with a solemn bow, genuflection, or by kissing the cross. This profoundly personal action reminds us of the personal cost Jesus made in his crucifixion, and how his love extends to each of us to this very day and hour.

The ministers then prepare the altar for Communion from the Reserve Sacrament, bringing the consecrated bread and wine, with the remaining candle, from the Altar of Repose to the High Altar. Following a confession of sin and the Lord's Prayer, the people are invited to receive Communion. All of the consecrated elements are consumed at this service, and the tabernacle is left open. After the final hymn is sung, the clock tower bells are rung thirty-three times, as the congregation leaves in silence.

Holy Saturday

*9:00am Saturday Morning,
just prior to dressing the Church for Easter*

Holy Saturday marks an "in-between" time for the Church; for during this period we commemorate the

time between the crucifixion and resurrection when Jesus lay buried in the tomb. A solemn service of remembrance, of feeling not only the weight of the grief and loss of his friends but of the whole world, is the tone for this rite. The altar remains stripped. The wooden cross from the Good Friday Liturgy is on the altar, without candles. The celebrant is dressed in a cassock with a stole of Passiontide red.

The service begins with the congregation and clergy kneeling for a time of silent prayer, followed by lessons appointed for the day and a short meditation. In place of the Prayers of the People, the funeral anthem "in the midst of life" is said, and the service concludes with the Lord's Prayer and the Grace. The people leave in silence.

Following this service, members of the altar Guild prepare the Church for the Great Vigil of Easter. If there are candidates for Holy Baptism, instruction with the families begins at this time.

The Sunrise Vigil of Easter

Sunday Morning, 6:00am

(Participants are asked to bring small bells to be rung at the Eucharist)

The Great Vigil of Easter is one of the most ancient of our Christian traditions. It is believed to date back to apostolic times of the very first followers of Jesus; it is clearly documented in the early Liturgy of Hippolytus, a work that dates from Rome in 215 A.D.

Holy Week culminates in the Great Vigil of Easter. This is the principal Feast not only of Easter, but of the entire Church Year. It is during the Vigil that the New Fire is kindled, the Biblical story of our redemption is recounted, the faithful renew their baptismal vows, and the first bells of the season are rung. Given its central importance to the Faith, the entire parish is encouraged to be present at this magnificent event. The service is held any time between sunset and sunrise. At Christ Church, we begin just before the sun begins to rise.

The backdrop for the Vigil is the Jewish Passover; that festival that commemorates the slaying of the first born among the Egyptians, the great exodus out of the land of slavery in Egypt, and the entrance into the Promised Land. From the earliest days, Christians have understood Jesus to be the fulfillment of Passover. Like the Paschal lamb, whose blood was placed on the doorposts of the homes of the Israelites to keep away the angel of death, so it is by Christ's blood shed on the cross that the angel of death now "passes over" each believer. The Vigil is the vivid enactment of those words so dear to us in the Eucharistic Prayer: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us". The Vigil also includes our hearing that story again, and making our joyous response, "Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia!"

Kindling the New Fire

The Liturgy fittingly begins in the graveyard, the clergy and people gather in silence. A stand holds a bowl filled with alcohol and salt. The Celebrant chants a greeting to the congregation, calling them to remember this most holy night that is the Passover of the Lord. Prayer is given for the New Light as the bowl is set aflame. In the flames, we kindle the fire of our own hearts, and invite the Holy Spirit to enter into our breasts once again.

The Procession:

The Paschal Candle is then lit for the first time from the New Fire. The clergy and congregation process into the church, with the acclamation "The Light of Christ"

chanted three times in ascending octaves, and the people respond each time with the corresponding chant, "Thanks be to God".

The Exsultet

The Paschal Candle is set in its stand in front of the pulpit. As the new dawn begins to rise out over the graveyard, the Exsultet is chanted. While it is chanted, each parishioner's hand-held candle is lighted from the Paschal Candle.

The Exsultet is an ancient song that first calls upon the whole company of heaven, followed by the creatures of the earth, to rejoice in the mighty victory that belongs to Christ, our King. Then the congregation is invited to join in prayer, as the ancient story of God's saving the Hebrews from Egypt is recounted. The congregation is reminded that as the Hebrews were saved, so we too, are saved - "This is the night", for the work of the Christ transcends all time and space and brings his redeeming power into the night of vigil.

When the Exsultet is finished, a procession is made through the graveyard, up the front steps to the church and into the nave. A Deacon, bearing the Paschal Candle, leads the way. The Paschal Candle is placed in its stand next to the pulpit, where it will remain throughout the Easter Season.

The Liturgy of the Word

The lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea (the Exodus), is always read, as it is a type of the deliverance won for us at Easter. This is followed by a canticle and a lesson from the Christian Scriptures.

Following the Epistle lesson, a burst of music and the ringing of bells by members of the congregation marks a sudden change in the mood of the service. The candles at the altar (and any other candles in the church) are lit, all lights in the church are turned on, the hand-held votive candles are extinguished, and the bells of Easter are rung as the celebrant gives the first Alleluias of the Season, "Alleluia! Christ is Risen!" to which the congregation joyfully responds, "The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!" The first Homily of Easter then follows.

The Paschal Drama

In place of the traditional reading of the Gospel and the Homily, the account of that first Easter is told in drama in the Sanctuary (altar area) of the Church.

Baptisms

If there are candidates for baptism, they are presented at this time. The baptismal liturgy is that of any baptism, with the exception of the blessing of water, which is sung. This is done in remembrance of the ancient custom of the exorcism of water. At the words, "Now sanctify this water, we pray you" the Paschal Candle is plunged three times into the newly filled baptismal font, with the celebrant singing each time an octave higher, culminating in the end of the blessing over the water.

The First Eucharist of Easter

The traditionally sung Eucharist follows, accompanied by special music and the blessing of Easter.

The Celebration Continues!

Following the vigil, everyone is invited to the Parish House for an informal breakfast. Please bring your favorite dish!

Solemn High Mass
With the Flowering of the Cross,
Holy Baptism & Holy Eucharist
Sunday, 10:00am
Children: please bring flowers and blooms
from your home garden!

This last liturgy of Holy Week and Easter may be the simplest of all. It is graced with a plethora of beautiful music, the lovely voices of the Saint Gregory's Adult Choir, and an inspiring homily.

The Liturgy of the Word and Flowering of the Cross

This service is truly "child friendly" with a liturgy especially meant to include tiny ears and tiny hands. The Psalm is led by a member of the clergy; to each declaration the congregation joyfully responds, "God's mercy endures forever!" During the sequence hymn (the hymn before the gospel) children are invited to come to the altar rail with cut flowers (either brought from home, or provided by the altar guild) to help flower the cross. The Gospel and Homily follow, and the children rejoin their families in the pews.

Holy Baptism

The candidates, their families, and their godparents process first to the altar rail. There they present the candidate to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. The faith is affirmed,

prayers are made, and the "baptismal party", led by the Paschal Candle, process to the font. Younger children from the congregation are invited to come to the font as well, as witnesses to this joyous occasion. After the baptism, the newly baptized are introduced to the congregation, and their family members present the bread and wine at the altar.

Holy Eucharist

Holy Eucharist then ensues; all baptized children, regardless of age, are invited to come to rail for communion. Those who do not yet receive are invited to come for a special blessing. The service traditionally ends with the Handel's Halleluiah Chorus, sung by the Choir but with the congregation's participation.

Egg Hunt and Reception

The Christ Church Easter Egg Hunt immediately follows the Children's Service. Children are divided

into two groups: second grade and younger in the south side of the cemetery; third grade and older on the north side. Eggs have been hidden all over the graveyard by our youth. Members of the congregation are asked to provide candy-filled eggs for the event. Among those eggs are hidden two "Alleluia Eggs". These are specially crafted eggs that hold a wonderful surprise, for whoever finds them will receive one of two "Lamb Cakes" to take home with them to share at their Easter meal.

A simple reception is held in the parish house for weary parents of egg-hunters and for those of us still young at heart!

