

Forerunner



Newsletter of the Episcopal Parish of St. John the Baptist April 2019

Where Tradition Welcomes Diversity

Dear Friends,
Easter is almost upon us, and there are so many opportunities for deep and soul-searching worship in the days ahead. Liturgically, this is absolutely my favorite time of year. It speaks to the depths of my conscience, my emotions, my mind, my soul. I always encourage folks to make Holy Week your own in-town retreat, as much as is possible.

Every liturgy has a bold and riveting proclamation: from the waving of Palms and then the silencing of the organ on Palm Sunday to the washing of feet and commemoration of the Lord's Last Supper on Maundy Thursday; from the all-night Watch after the Maundy Thursday liturgy to the Stations of the Cross at noon on Good Friday, and the Solemn Liturgy that night, with the beautiful singing of the Passion, the Veneration of the Cross, and communion from the Reserved Sacrament.

The pinnacle of this Holy Week and the three sacred days (triduum) at its end, of course is the GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER. This is the Queen of all Christian feasts; it is the service that gives meaning and power to all other services throughout the entire year. It is the night we pass over from darkness to light; from doubt to faith, from death to life. I hope you will be able to attend all or most of the Holy Week liturgies, but if you were only able to be at one, I pray that it would be the Easter Vigil.

The Vigil begins in the darkness of the tomb. A fire is lighted in the baptismal font near the entry to the Church. The Bishop blesses the fire, and everyone gathered is invited to light a hand-held candle from it. As the Altar Party makes its way into the church, the procession pauses three times for the Deacon carrying the Pascal (Easter) candle to proclaim, "The Light of Christ," and for the people to respond, "Thanks be to God." The

candle is placed in a prominent stand by the pulpit, and the ancient and most beautiful chant, "Exultet", is sung by a solo voice.

The "vigil" part of the service is an extended Liturgy of the Word, wherein we hear four scripture stories instead of just two.

(See RECTOR on page 4)



Letter from the Rector

JOIN US FOR

Holy Week

APRIL 14 — PALM SUNDAY — 8:00 & 10:00 am

The congregation gathers around the Bell Tower (10:00 am only) for the Blessing of the Palms and Procession. The Eucharist features a dramatic reading of the Passion Gospel according to Luke.

APRIL 18 — MAUNDY THURSDAY — 7:00 pm

On the night recalling the Last Supper, the feet of parishioners are washed to symbolize loving service to one another. After the Eucharist, the altar is stripped and the sanctuary laid bare in anticipation of the stark events of Good Friday. A Watch at the Altar is kept throughout the night.

APRIL 19 — GOOD FRIDAY

12 Noon — Stations of the Cross.

7:00 pm — The sung Passion according to St. John, the Solemn Collects, and the veneration of the cross focus our attention on the sacrifice of our Lord. The abrupt conclusion of the service leaves us waiting for the dawn of a new day.

APRIL 20 — THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER — 8:00 pm

The Queen of Feasts! We enter a darkened church. A new flame is kindled at the baptismal font, and the Bishop lights the Paschal Candle, bringing "the light of Christ" back into the world on this most holy night when we celebrate Holy Baptism, Confirmation, and Reception, as well as the first Eucharist of Easter

APRIL 21 — EASTER SUNDAY

8:00 am — Said Holy Eucharist with Hymns.

10:00 am — Rite 3 Eucharist. At our Easter day celebration with full choir, organ and Parish Family Musicians, we give thanks and praise for the Resurrection of our Lord, with music, new and old.

Followed by an EASTER EGG HUNT

Sharing the Good News of God

Easter Egg Hunt at St. John's

Immediately follows the 10:00am Easter Mass. On the side lawn of the church, by the Memorial Garden, we'll greet you with refreshments and Easter baskets. All ages are welcome to hunt for eggs.



(RECTOR, continued from page 1)

These stories provide a glimpse into the seminal events of Salvation History from the time of the Creation until the present era. This year, in a nod to our upcoming auction this summer, whose theme is the movies, instead of hearing these stories read to us, we will see them on the big screen. Hollywood has long been captivated by the epic stories of salvation, just as we are! After each movie clip, the choir will sing a musical response composed by our Director of Music, Scot Crandal.

At the end of our scripture stories, the Bishop proclaims the Easter Acclamation, "Alleluia. Christ is risen", to which we all respond "The Lord is risen, indeed. Alleluia." Then everyone participates in the Great Noise, by ringing a bell they have brought from home. The organ is sounded for the first time since the Passion Gospel on Palm Sunday, the lights come on, and the First Mass of Easter commences.

This year we are so excited to have a number of sacramental celebrations in that mass. Three adults, Kevin Hardcastle, Barbara Hochgesang, and Reid Vanderburgh will be baptized, as well as Justin and Sabra Leitenberger's children, Lucas and Augie. In addition, Greg Brown will be confirmed, and Kristin Brown, Don & Mary Carlson, John Lenox, Mara Alvarez and Kathy Washington will be received into the Episcopal Church. What a celebration of parish life!

From these sacraments of new birth, we will come to the Eucharistic Table and have Easter Communion.

The Lenten fast will be ended, and we will have a festive reception. No one should miss this amazing night! This year we will be offering a sign-up sheet to help match those who would like a ride to church for this with those who would be happy to bring someone along. I encourage you to make every effort to be at this mountaintop worship experience, and bring a friend!

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Robert

Sharing the Good News of God

Easter Day Special Rite 3 Mass

This year Easter Day falls on the third Sunday of the month, which means it will be a “Rite 3” service, wherein we gear our worship toward the kids, and incorporate popular music into the liturgy. Since it is Easter, we will have a hybrid mass, meaning that we’ll have full choir, who will sing Randall Thompson’s “Alleluia” (one of the most beautiful Easter anthems ever written) during communion, but we’ll also have an amazing contemporary song sung at the Offertory. Our prized Baritone Zach Lenox will sing “Defying Gravity” from the Broadway musical “Wicked.”

Most of us think of this show-stopping song as sung by Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West; however it is amazing to think of the lyrics as sung by the Risen Christ:

*Something has changed within me
Something is not the same
I'm through with playing by the rules of someone else's game
Too late for second-guessing
Too late to go back to sleep
It's time to trust my instincts
Close my eyes and leap*

*It's time to try defying gravity
I think I'll try defying gravity
And you can't pull me down*

Easter morning at St. John's will have something for everyone, and truly show how we live into our tag line: “Where tradition welcomes diversity.” Our Rite 1 8:00 am mass will have the full plate of traditional worship and hymns, and the 10:00 mass will move from the wow factor of Broadway's best to the awe factor of sacred music's best. Be a part of the joy!

Fr. Robert

