

Dear Friends in Jesus,

At the end of this month, we again have the opportunity to observe the Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday, as well as the “Three Days” or “Triduum” – the ancient title for the period that begins on Maundy Thursday evening and ends on Easter Sunday evening.

On the **Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday, March 24**, our worship will include the celebration with palms (again making use of beautiful “fair trade” palm fronds that provide just compensation for small growers), as well as a dramatic reading by Vincent Lamenza of The Passion of Jesus According to St. Luke.

The Three Days begin four days later, on March 28, as we Christians focus on the very core of our faith – the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. From ancient times, the Three Days have been understood as one continuous period of worship. This means, for one thing, that our worship on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings ends without the usual Benediction – we’re really not ending our worship, after all, merely taking a pause. This also means, much more importantly, that *our being in worship on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, is just as important as our being in worship on Easter Sunday morning*. Our schedule of worship and related activities for the Three Days will be as follows:

Maundy Thursday, March 28

At 7:00 P.M., we will gather for a Liturgy of Holy Communion, sharing in the mystery and the meaning of that Upper Room – the body and the blood given for us – the betrayal and desertion of our Lord. Reflecting that betrayal and desertion, our worship will end with the solemn stripping of the altar by members of altar guild as the senior choir intones the haunting words of Psalm 22.

Good Friday, March 29

At 7:00 P.M., we will gather for the Liturgy of Good Friday – a dark and solemn time featuring a dramatic reading of The Passion of Jesus According to St. John. Please note that Youth Group members will again read the principal parts of The Passion, getting together for a short “rehearsal” at 6:15 P.M. Please support them with your presence!

Holy Saturday, March 30

At 9:00 A.M., members of Youth Group will gather to set up for our annual Easter Egg Hunt, with the hunt getting underway at 10:00 A.M. for children in four age groups: preschool, grades K-1, grades 2-3, and grades 4-5.

At 7:00 P.M., we will continue our worship downstairs with a Liturgy of Readings and Prayer. This liturgy, a part of the Liturgy of Easter Vigil, features a series of lengthy readings from the Old Testament, telling of the creative and saving actions of God, beginning with Genesis 1, that point the way to the ultimate creative and saving action of Easter. There will be no music and no offering – only my reading by the light of a single candle, silence for meditation, and prayer.

The Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day, March 31

Following Easter Sunday tradition at St. John, a very brief Sunrise Worship will take place outdoors (weather permitting) from 6:30 – 6:45 A.M. From 6:45 – 7:00, all interested men of the church will prepare and set up for Easter breakfast, which will be served from 7:00 – 8:00.

Following some clean-up time, and a Men’s Choir rehearsal at 8:15, the annual Sunday School Easter Party, for all ages, will follow at 9:00. Our morning will conclude with a Liturgy of Holy Communion, featuring the great hymns of Easter, at 10:15 A.M. A special musical prelude, featuring our choirs, will precede this worship, so please plan to come approximately 15 minutes early.

Please don't miss your opportunity to fully take part in this holiest of Christian holy times!

Pastor Tom