



Drawing by Sophie Fong

Holy Week

Trinity Anglican Church

Holy week and Easter are the oldest part of the Christian Year. Each day in Holy Week we meet to receive the Bread of Life in Holy Scriptures, Holy Sacraments, and Holy Fellowship. The purpose of Holy Week is to bring us into the presence of the living Christ, that we may be drawn deeper into His life, which is the very life of the God who IS Love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

From the very early years of the Christian Church Christians gathered day by day the week before Easter to follow the events of the last week before Jesus' death and resurrection. The reason is not hard to find. Easter is our Christian Passover. At Passover faithful Jews recall how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt and brought them into the Promised Land. They take care to remember and mark these things publicly because it is through these events that God called them and made them a people. Our Christian Passover looks back to the events through which God has called us and made us a people – 'a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation' (1 Peter 2:9). We have been called out of slavery to sin and dark powers that are blind and care nothing for us through the waters of Baptism, just as the people of Israel were brought through the Red Sea. For the children of Israel, the desert was the place where God transformed them from a rag-tag collection of disgruntled slaves to a free and responsible nation of citizens united by law under God. For Christ, the desert was the place in which he faced and overcame the temptations to doubt his relationship to the Father as a true Son and turn aside from the way of loving obedience leading to the Cross. There he claimed that relationship and that destiny, in hope, 'for the joy that was set before him,' that he might be seated at the right hand of the Father in the resurrection (Hebrews 12:2). For Christians, the desert of Lent is the journey we pass through to join Christ in that joy. It culminates in the most epic journey of all, Holy Week.



The Crucifixion, Giotto di Bodone

Throughout: Frescoes from the Life of Christ by Giotto di Bodone (1266-1337) the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. Italy, completed c. 1305

We invite you to join us

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The Last Supper, Giotto di Bondone

Palm Sunday

We begin our worship by hearing the account of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when palm branches (representing victory) were laid before his path. Branches of palm are blessed and distributed. At the Gospel Lesson, the mood shifts dramatically as we hear the account of Jesus' sudden rejection by the same people who had earlier hailed him as king. The Holy Communion takes on the solemnity and severity of the Passion (suffering of our Lord). Our Holy Week has begun!

Holy Monday

Monday of Holy Week presents us with the opportunity, and challenge, of integrating the momentous events unfolding this week into our daily lives. It is perhaps a good time to meditate on why we gather together as a faith community, a Parish. The word 'parish' comes from two Greek words meaning 'beside the road'. The idea is that a parish is a kind of wayside inn of pilgrims on a long journey – a journey through the wilderness or desert. There they are given a chance to rest, to be nourished and refreshed, and to enjoy companionship with those who are making the same journey and who also know themselves to be citizens of another country, 'whose



Entry into Jerusalem, Giotto di Bondone



The Lamentation of the Angels, Giotto di Bondone

maker and building is God' (Hebrews 11:14). In short, there pilgrims find the renewal of memory and the love of the desert that they share with their fellow pilgrims. The desert is the way home.

Holy Wednesday

Wednesday of Holy Week is when we pause to consider more intently the 'darkness' that is marked by Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus.

The Paschal Triduum:

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter

The three great days, together called the Paschal Triduum, begin at sunset on Maundy Thursday, which is really the beginning of Good Friday. It continues through Easter Eve, with its prolongation of joy through our Sunday worship celebrations.



The kiss of Judas, Giotto di Bodone

Maundy Thursday

We meet to commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper Jesus held with his chosen disciples. 'Maundy' is an old English form of the Latin word 'mandatum', which means 'commandment'. The name 'Maundy Thursday' recollects the words of Jesus just after he had washed the feet of his apostles: 'A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another.' Christian charity must first manifest itself within the community of the Church which is the Body of Christ, and as if that were not difficult enough, it must overflow in service to a world which 'God so loved'. It is the day before Good Friday, and the night on which our Lord instituted His Supper. It is also the day we commemorate the institution of the great feast of divine charity, at which He is both the Host and the spiritual Food: the Holy Communion. As a lovely Easter hymn from the sixth century puts it:

*At the Lamb's high feast we sing,
Praise to our victorious King,
Who hath washed us in the tide
Flowing from his piercèd side;
Praise we Him, whose love diving
Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast,
Christ the Victim, Christ the Priest*

Jesus washes his disciples' feet, Giotto di Bodone



In the midst of the purple of Lent and Holy Week, the altar and pulpit are decked in festival white, as at Christmas or a wedding. At the end of the service not only are these white hangings removed, but the altar is stripped and laid bare of every decoration and the sanctuary is emptied by priest and people together. At the same time Psalm 22 is read or sung, which begins with the terrible words Jesus will quote the next day from the Cross, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ Consecrated Bread and Wine for the Good Friday and Holy Saturday services may be taken to a smaller altar, removed from the front of the Church to an Altar of Repose. A Prayer Vigil is kept into the night, remembering Jesus’ request of Peter, James and John in the Garden of Gethsemane to ‘watch with me one hour’. He prayed to prepare himself for suffering and death, and we pray in order to open the eyes of our imagination and understanding so that we may see more of what is there to be seen as we look upon His Cross the next day.



Christ before Caiaphas,
Giotto di Bondone

Good Friday

This is the day when Christians gather at the foot of the Cross, and join the Virgin Mary and the Disciples in their grief. The old spiritual asks, ‘Were you there when the crucified my Lord?’ We should be able to say ‘yes’. Christ died around 3 pm on Good Friday afternoon, and this is why we gather at noon and remain with Him through his agony and death. There is opportunity for silent prayers, and meditations are offered to help us focus our minds and hearts on the Seven Last Words from the Cross. Sanctified bread from last evening’s worship has been on the Altar of Repose throughout the night vigil. This is the consecrated bread which will be consumed at the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified (there will be no consecration today).

Holy Saturday

On this morning another liturgy of the pre-sanctified is celebrated. The first sentence of the Prayer Book provides for a Eucharist for each day in Holy Week. This is the real Sabbath, or “Day of Rest,” as Jesus lies in the tomb. The Gospel for the day simply tells us of how Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus, and the steps that were taken by the religious and civil authorities to make sure that no one would disturb his body. The Epistle for the day is the famous passage from 1 Peter 3 which describes how Christ descended to the dead and ‘preached to the spirits in prison’. This is what we talk about when we say in the Apostles’ Creed ‘He descended into hell’. After His death and before his resurrection, Christ went to the waiting dead to bring the news that God’s long-promised salvation had come.



Christ taken down from the Cross, Giotto di Bondone

The Easter Vigil & First Eucharist of Easter

The Easter Vigil is a very ancient and moving celebration of the Christian Church. We begin in darkness and move into light, just as the long night of sin and death is brought to an end by the Resurrection – the rising of the True Sun, Jesus Christ. The service begins with the lighting and blessing of the ‘New Fire’: ‘Sanctify this new fire, and inflame us with a new hope; in this paschal feast may we so burn with heavenly desires that we may attain to the feast of eternal light.’ The priest then takes the great Paschal Candle, traces the cross in its wax, adorns it with Alpha and Omega, adds the current year, and five grains of incense for the five wounds suffered by Our Lord. The Paschal Candle is lit from the New Fire and becomes the focal point of our praise – an eloquent symbol of the risen Saviour. In procession, the Deacon carries the great candle up the aisle through the darkened church. Our hand candles are lit. The light spreads. At the front of the church, the Exsultet, an ancient and beautiful chant, is sung. Its theme is the overcoming of the darkness of this world by the light of Christ. It summons all creation to rejoice.

Next, four readings from the Old Testament help us to recall God’s mighty acts in ancient times and these prophecies foster our own sense of hope and anticipation of the coming Messiah. We listen to the Creation



story, and the story of the People of Israel escaping from Egypt through the Red Sea on their way to the Promised Land. Following the Old Testament readings, we renew our Baptismal vows, thinking of St. Paul’s words describing Baptism as “a burial with Christ and a rising with him to new life.”

Finally, the church and the Altar are dressed gloriously for this Queen of Seasons, and the First Eucharist of Easter is celebrated in the early hours of the morning with great joy.

Christ resurrected, Giotto di Bodone

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

May Christ renew us with the hope that we may share this new life this Easter and always. To each and every one I say, ‘Christ is risen!’ May you know and rejoice that ‘He is risen indeed!’