

The Elizabethan



The Newsletter of St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church Burien, Washington

March 2018

From Fr. John:

The Three Great Days (Triduum) of Holy Week

“O sacred head, sore wounded, defiled and put to scorn;
O kingly head surrounded with mocking crown of thorn:
What sorrow mars the grandeur? Can death thy bloom deflower?
O countenance whose splendor the host of heaven adore!”

Hymnal 1982 ~ Hymn 168

“Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the dark earth many years has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like wheat that springs up green.”

Hymnal 1982 ~ Hymn 204

We are part of the Christian church that moves mindfully, not just through the days and seasons of the year, but through the cycles of life and death. Our trust in God allows us to contemplate death with both mourning and equanimity in the same way that it allows us to anticipate the coming of new life. And this year, Holy Week will begin the week after the turning of the spring equinox and will end at the Great Vigil of Easter as the full moon rises on March 31st. The annual interplay between the astronomical hours of light and darkness dance with our liturgical turning to the Three Great Days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, which breaks into the dawn of Easter at the Vigil and continues into Easter Sunday.

Our grandmothers and grandfathers in the faith used the word Pascha to name these three days. It is a Latin word derived from the Greek *paskha*, and that word comes from the Aramaic *paskha* or the Hebrew *pesakh*. All these words refer to Passover. The English word used to translate Pascha, Easter, is thought to be a translation of the name of the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess, "Eostre." The change is probably fine, given that the early Christian Church transformed the Jewish

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Passover feast that commemorates the freeing of the Hebrew people from Egyptian bondage into a feast commemorating the death and resurrection of Christ that freed humanity from the bondage of death, sin and evil. During Holy Week, we gather at the Holy Table and wash feet, we mourn and celebrate with gratitude at the gift given at the Holy Cross, we keep watch at the tomb, sing of our passing from death to life with Christ, reaffirming our baptisms and welcoming Christians into the waters of the Holy Font.

The Triduum is one paschal liturgy celebrated at three essential moments: Christ's supper with us, his death on the cross and his resurrection into our lives for the life of creation. These days, for Anglicans, are the center of the entire year. Consequently, we set aside concerns, entertainment and distractions to prepare to enter the Triduum with mindful, focused intention. With the millions of people in the communion of saints, we celebrate the rituals that draw us ever deeper and more broadly into the mystery of the Risen Christ who is our food and drink, our tree of life, our light in the darkness and our water of life.

Maundy Thursday: As the sun sets, we begin the first day in the way that our Jewish forebears did - marking the days from sunset to sunset. The season of Lent comes to an end and the Triduum begins. We gather for a light meal, called an agape meal, before the liturgy.

After the meal, we gather in the nave, we begin the Mass with a familiar pattern. But on this night, we follow the example of Jesus in the Gospel of John, who washed the feet of his friends on the night before he died. This was the role of a servant in the ancient Mediterranean. And so, with this gesture, we remember that we are servants to a world in need of kindness and selflessness.

We strip the altar and the chancel, carrying the blessed bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ, to the altar in the Columbarium where we pray in silence among loved ones whom we see no longer. We leave in silence without a dismissal because the liturgy for the Triduum has only just begun.

Good Friday: We reconvene in the nave at noon, the time of day that all three synoptic Gospels say that Jesus died. We gather again in silence in a continuation of the one Triduum liturgy. The name, Good Friday, comes from an antiquated meaning for "good" as "holy." In Italy, this day is known as Venerdi Santo and the Orthodox keep Great Friday or Passion Friday.

We hear the Passion according to John and pray the Solemn Collects — some of the most ancient prayers of our tradition — for the world and for all people who yearn for true peace, for justice and mercy, and for reconciliation. At the chancel steps, a cross made of juniper wood, native to the Holy Land, stands with a crown of thorns. At the priest's bidding, we come to the kneel or stand before a reproduction of the instrument by which the love of God was made fully manifest. We also acknowledge the wooden remembrance of the Tree of Life in the Garden

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Bp. Rickel's Lenten Reading Suggestion:

Bishop Greg has suggested "The Book of Common Prayer" for the people of the Diocese to read together for Lent. If you take his advice to pick one up and start turning pages, at least touching every one, you may discover some pearls. Here are just a few:

- Our 1979 version still carries much of the poetic language crafted by Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury chosen by King Henry VIII, whom Pope Leo X named "Fidei Defensor" (Defender of the Faith).
- The 1979 BCP returned special liturgies for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and calls for "special acts of discipline and self-denial" on these days as well as all other Fridays, except those in the Christmas and Easter seasons.
- The "suffrages" in Morning and Evening Prayer are intercessory petitions. Originally, in the Middle Ages, these referred to intercessions on behalf of the dead. The word comes from the Latin *suffragium*, meaning aid or assistance.
- The Baptismal Covenant was new to the 1979 BCP and has become a central theme in the Episcopal Church. Through it, we recommit ourselves to living out our faith in the ways that we interact with others. The five questions we revisit are an expansion of the single question posed in the 1662 Baptismal Service for Adults: "Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?"
- The beloved Prayer of Humble Access is found only in Rite I of the Holy Eucharist.

The Elizabethan

The Elizabethan is published monthly by St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church. The deadline for articles is the fourth Friday of each month.

Articles, calendar items and ideas may be mailed or emailed to the addresses below or left in *The Elizabethan* box in the Parish Office.

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of Eden, the wood of Noah's ark and the staff of Moses. With all the communion of saints we stand or kneel before the cross reminding us of God's sovereignty over even death.

The Great Pascha (Easter) Vigil and the Second Mass of Pascha (Easter): After sunset on Saturday evening, we come together again in the darkness of the tomb, filled with anticipation. Once we are settled in the stillness and silence, we kindle and bless the new fire of Easter. The Paschal candle carries the flame into the nave where it is passed to the congregation. The priest carries the Paschal candle to its place by the baptismal font and chants the Exultet, the ancient Easter hymn of praise that was once called the Paschal Proclamation.

We listen in the candlelit nave to scriptural stories of salvation that expand our contemplation of our own baptisms into the death, resurrection and eternal life of Christ. Bathed in the light of the newly lit Paschal candle, we wash new Christians with the blessed waters of the font. If there are no baptisms to perform, we reaffirm our own vows and are sprinkled with holy water to reinvigorate our baptismal covenant.

In exuberant celebration, we sing the Easter Acclamation with "alleluias," the first time we have used the word in liturgy since the end of Epiphany. The lights in the nave all come on and the candles are lit for a Pascha feast. We come to the table, remembering that we were reborn in the waters of the Spirit's womb-font, and there at the Eucharistic table, our brother, the Risen Christ feeds us with his Body and Blood in the bread and wine.

The Second Mass of Easter: Because we have already celebrated the resurrection at the vigil, the 10:00 Mass on the following Sunday morning is the Second Mass of Easter. On that morning, we enter into the Fifty Days of Easter with feasting and joy, keeping newly mindful of those who have no food or water, no shelter or kindness. We take the joy that Christ has poured into us and spill it out for those who need the light of Christ that has been rekindled in us for their benefit.



Holy Week Schedule:

Passion/Palm Sunday is March 25th at 10:00 a.m. We will cancel Evening Prayer on Wednesday. On **Maundy Thursday**, the 29th, we will gather for a light potluck agape dinner at 5:30 p.m., followed by the Mass, foot-washing and the stripping of the altar at 6:30. **Good Friday**, with Eucharist from the reserve and veneration of the cross, is at noon on the 30th and then our primary Easter service Saturday evening, March 31st, at 7:00 p.m. for the **Great Easter Vigil**. The **Second Mass of Easter** takes place Sunday, April 1st, at 10:00 a.m.

Mailing address and email distribution

A few reminders: If you have mail to send, please use the P.O. Box 66579. If you send mail to the street address, the Post Office will return it to you.

Also, if you would prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please send us your email address. Alternatively, you can download it from the website: <https://stelizabethburien.org/> Or you can pick up a copy in the narthex when you come to church. Thanks so much!

Coffee and conversation

Fellowship opportunities continue to sprout at St. Elizabeth! On the first Friday of each month, from 10am to 12noon, you are invited to come for coffee and conversation in the St John room. And then, , a couple of people will volunteer to make the coffee and bring treats. Janey Montgomery has put up a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the library.

We hope this can be a forum for parishioners to get more acquainted with each other outside worship. This gathering will serve as an alternative or an addition to our "Dinner for Six" gatherings and will allow us another chance to meet and greet newcomers to St. Elizabeth.

Future dates are March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1 July 6.

"Dinner for Six" gatherings are already underway, but if you are not currently in a group and would like to participate, please let Janey Montgomery know at janeymontgomery68@gmail.com. New groups are hosting dinners in February through May and each dinner concludes with Compline prayers. Plan now to attend and get to know more people at St. Elizabeth!

Watch this newsletter and the Sunday Mass bulletin for announcements of other small group gatherings in the future.

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[The] things that crucified Jesus on Friday in Passover week [in the year] 29 C.E. They were not wild viciousness or sadistic brutality or naked hate, but the civilized voices of cowardice, bigotry, impatience, timidity, falsehood, indifference — vices all of us share, the very vices which crucify human beings today.

This destructiveness within us can seldom be transformed until we squarely face it in ourselves. This confrontation often leads us into the pit. The empty cross is planted there to remind us that suffering is real but not the end, that victory is still possible if we strive on.

~ Fr. Morton Kelsey

Lent Schedule:

Adult Formation classes are on hiatus during Lent. Instead, beginning on February 25th, we will gather in the nave at 9:00 to pray the Stations of the Cross using the meditations based on scripture that Pope John Paul II introduced in 1991.

Every Tuesday during Lent, starting February 20th, Rev. Canon John Fergusson will lead a class on “Holy Week.” Each class focuses on one day of Holy Week, and will be held twice a day, once at 3pm and again at 7pm.