

# The Elizabethan



The Newsletter of St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church    Burien, Washington

April 2019

## From Fr. John: Celebrating the Triduum

Holy Week begins on April 14<sup>th</sup> with Palm/Passion Sunday. For the 40 days of Lent, we have been moving in spirit toward the holy city of Jerusalem. We will walk into the nave carrying palm branches that, for the ancient Palestinians, was a visible sign that life is stronger than death because the palm is highly resistant to the heat in the Holy Land. They planted palm trees in the cemeteries where their beloved dead lay in rest and placed palm branches on their graves.

Just so, we will carry green palm fronds that wave with our faith in Christ's victory over death while we sing a Medieval French hymn. The altar and priest vestments are scarlet. The mood is triumphant as we "enter Jerusalem." As we read the Passion Gospel, the atmosphere shifts abruptly. So we'll leave down an aisle strewn with palms that will be gathered, dried and burned for next year's Ash Wednesday. Lent is over as the sun sets on the following Thursday, the first day of the Triduum.

*What does "Triduum" mean?*

The Latin "Triduum," (pronounced **trij**-oo-uhm) refers to a three-day period: *tri*-means three and *-duum* relates to *dies* meaning day. For us, the Paschal Triduum is a three-day long liturgical preparation for Pascha (Easter). It is a continuous celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our sharing in that mystery through our baptism. It begins with the Mass on Maundy Thursday and concludes with the Easter Vigil, early the next Sunday morning (at sundown on Saturday).

*What is its history?*

Sometime during the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. C.E., most Christian communities celebrated a Sunday feast that focused on Christ's passion as the sacrificed Paschal lamb. The original form involved keeping a fast on the preceding Saturday. As the fast extended into the night, the community kept vigil of readings and prayers that culminated in a Eucharistic celebration at "cockcrow," a reference to one of the four night watches announced by two blasts of a horn at 3:00 a.m.

Later, Christians took in the regular weekly Friday fast, extending the fast before the Sunday Eucharistic celebration to two days. By the end of the second century, Christians had already begun to reinterpret the feast to emphasize the passion less and to see the three days as a passage from death to life. In time, we came to

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## **Coffee hour ministry**

Coffee time after Sunday Eucharist may seem unremarkable, and yet it is an essential ministry in the church: We greet guests and newcomers fresh from the Mass. We gather to listen to each other, to share news, have a light bite, and to engage our guests or people that we don't know well in conversation.

This is one of our simplest and best opportunities to become community. As Sandy Stonhouse has pointed out, it is in these conversations that we learn about the many unique people at St. Elizabeth and the wide variety of their talents and backgrounds. This leads to inviting others who are sometimes seeking friends and seeking their own Christian walk.

Teams of people continue to serve the community. Each Sunday, two or three or more have planned ahead for these opportunities. Anyone can participate!

Sandy is happy to help you find your way onto one of these teams and Ryan Davis will gladly show you how to make the coffee that the church supplies! If you are not ready to host, we also keep a list of supplies that we need and can almost always use donations. Our office administrator, Celeste Alfred, has created a log that is displayed on one of the hallway bulletin boards to keep us up to date. (We are currently in need of paper towels).

These contributions allow us to simply offer something to eat and drink to without the awkwardness of a collection basket that give the appearance of expecting our guests to pay. If you are unable to supply cookies, crackers, fruit or some other nibble, there are ways that you can still host (see Fr. John!) and there is always need for help with set-up and clean-up!

Hosting is an opportunity for the people of St. Elizabeth to practice welcoming each other, guests and strangers as Christ, and that is always more satisfying when two or more people work together. Whether you are hosting, helping arrange chairs and small tables in the St. John or cleaning up, in the togetherness of simple food and conversation with each other and those whom God has brought to us, we become more fully who we are and learn what it means to be bearers of Christ for others.

You might surprised at the number of people who have chosen to make St. Elizabeth their church because of the hospitality they experienced here at the door before church and again at Coffee Hour. Visitors and guests become newcomers and from there become Coffee Hour hosts themselves!

## **Have a story for the Elizabethan?**

We want to encourage your participation in creating content! Please give some thought to writing a few paragraphs about your history and experience with St. Elizabeth. The more we tell people about what happens here and why people are drawn to this place, the more people we attract. How did you come to find St. Elizabeth? From where? More importantly, what keeps you coming back? Tell your story and send it to Fr. John!

## Vestry changes

At our Annual Meeting in January, we thanked Jena Scott and Carolyn Terry for their three years of service on the vestry and we added Sue Chamberlain and Sue Kaas, both relatively new to the parish. They both bring great ideas, helpful energy and fresh perspectives.

At our first meeting as a new vestry in February, the vestry chose to move away from a “care-takers” role in the parish to a more collaborative “coordinators” approach to overseeing facilities for the parish. The change aligns us with the Canons and also with the practices of those parishes who are able to focus on maintenance and upgrades instead of the constant emergencies that vestries faced three or four years ago.

Consequently, the vestry did not name a Junior Warden. Instead, Ryan Davis will serve as a “co-warden” for the remaining year of his term on the vestry. Kirk Utley will stay in his role as Senior Warden, but the parish is now at a point where we can involve more people in doing the work required in keeping up the building and grounds, and rely less on vestry members for that work.

They will continue to keep the parish focused on why we are here and to protect the financial integrity of the church as they live into their own unique leadership abilities and give their unique gifts in concert with the gifts sprouting up in the congregation.

Spring is here! Expect to see people blossoming, and leadership helping what God has planted to grown and thrive!

## 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.

### St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church

**Street** 1005 SW 152nd Street

**Address:** Burien, WA 98166

**Mailing** PO Box 66579

**Address:** Burien, WA 98166

**Phone:** (206) 243-6844

**Email:** [info@stelizburien.comcastbiz.net](mailto:info@stelizburien.comcastbiz.net)

**Website:** [www.stelizabethburien.org](http://www.stelizabethburien.org)



**Rector:** Fr. John Forman

**Associate Priests:** Fr. Alwyn Hall

Fr. John Fergusson

**Sr. Warden:** Kirk Utley

**Co-Warden:** Ryan Davis

**Treasurer:** Linda Knutson

**Admin Assistant:** Celeste Alfred

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see Maundy Thursday as a commemoration of the Last Supper, Good Friday as a memorial of Jesus' death and Holy Saturday as a remembrance of his burial.

Over the centuries, the Paschal Triduum lost prominence as the liturgical calendar expanded. And though the traditions continued in Anglo-Catholicism, the liturgies grew steadily less specific. The 1789 and 1892 versions of the Book of Common Prayer, for example, provide collects and readings for the "Thursday Before Easter," Good Friday and Easter Eve. The 1928 version added "commonly called Maundy Thursday" to the title, but it was the 1979 version that restored the ceremony of foot-washing as an option, distinguished Holy Saturday and the Easter Vigil, and provided the proper liturgies for each of these days that we now use.

*What makes each day different?*

As a unified three-day experience, the liturgies represent the people of God on a pilgrimage. The specific liturgy for each day has a unique focus on phases of the journey from life to death to resurrected life in Christ.

Maundy Thursday: On the night before his betrayal, arrest, trial and crucifixion, Jesus and his disciples gathered at table. For them, and for us, this meal reflected Israel's redemption when the angel of death passed over those homes marked with lamb's blood. Because Jesus washed his friends' feet as a sign of his self-giving love and the life of service to which he had called them, we follow in his example and wash each other's feet.

Our readings recall the Jewish Passover feast, the institution of the Eucharist and the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. At the end of the Mass, the altar party carries the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose in All Saints' Chapel, then strips the chancel and washes the altar with wine and water. The congregation then proceeds in silence, lit only by candlelight, to the Altar of Repose where all are invited to keep silent watch for some period of time until 8:00 the following morning. In this way, we dramatically experience the love of Christ in word, meal, service and prayer.

Good Friday: Because this second part of the Triduum is understood to be a continuation of the previous night's liturgy, the altar party enters the sanctuary in silence. Following the readings, the Passion according to St. John and a homily, the congregation stands for the praying of the ancient Solemn collects on behalf of all creation and all people.

The liturgy continues with a veneration of the cross that has been placed at the foot of the chancel. A cantor sings the reproaches with the people responding and the congregation sings the 6th c. *Crux fideles* the as a way to visibly and audibly participate in the recollection of the crucifixion.

Finally, we take communion from the sacrament reserved from the night before, conclude with a prayer and leave in silence.

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**Holy Saturday:** An ancient, traditional day of fasting, this is the only day that Eucharist may not be celebrated. As the final movement of the Triduum, it is a day of quiet prayer and reflection on Jesus' entombment. The Holy Saturday liturgy consists of a set of short readings on death, waiting and living for God, and either John's or Matthew's account of the burial of Jesus. After the readings and a brief homily, the congregational sings a burial anthem and the service concludes with an "Our Father" and a blessing. In addition to commemorating the burial, the liturgy is part of a day of quiet preparation for the Easter Vigil and is done with the chancel stripped bare, the sanctuary light extinguished and the tabernacle emptied with an open door.

*Why do we celebrate these three days?*

The liturgies of the Triduum help us to avoid moving too quickly to the triumph of Easter morning without evoking Jesus' commandment to us to love each other as he loves us and without recalling the pain of Good Friday or the emptiness of Holy Saturday. To participate in the liturgies of the Triduum is to enter into God's redemption of humankind and God's on-going process of restoring creation to the Creator's intentions. To participate in them is to reinvigorate and enliven our baptisms, and deepen our experience of God. To hear, experience and embody the Gospel in both collective and individual dimensions.

*To learn more:*

Bradshaw, Paul F.. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*.

Foley, Edward. *From Age to Age: How Christians Have Celebrated the Eucharist*.

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

Holmes, David L.. *A Brief history of the Episcopal Church*.

Marshall, Paul Victor. *Prayer Book Parallels: The Public Services of the Church Arranged for Comparative Study*.

Martos, Joseph. *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church*.

Richter, Klemens. *The Meaning of the Sacramental Symbols: Answers to Today's Questions*.

Smolarski, Dennis Chester. *Sacred Mysteries: Sacramental Principles and Liturgical Practice*.



# *The Elizabethan*

St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church

PO Box 66579

Burien, Washington 98166-0579



**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

“As Christians our every living moment is the living out of the on-going experience of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ: life is made new, death is destroyed, the Kingdom is here and yet still coming. Lent helps us to be present to this saving mystery. The various practices of Lent are all geared in some way or another to help us focus on this.” ~ **Dom Robert Hale, OSBCam**

**Coffee and conversation:** The last Spring opportunity to come for an informal “get-to-know-you” gathering will be on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Come and chat over coffee cookies and conversation from 10 a.m. to noon in the St John room. Susan Preusse has arranged a program on "Daughters of the King," an Anglican lay religious order of which she is a member.

These are casual get-togethers for parishioners, interested friends and curious neighbors to get more acquainted with each other in small groups outside our worship together as a larger congregation. If you are interested in hosting one of these monthly events, Janey Montgomery has put up a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the library. Please join us and bring a friend. All are welcome!