

EIGHT DAY

Holy Week Devotions



The Gift of a Holy Week

In the Christian tradition, some time is set aside as sacred time; time when we live differently, time that is hallowed, time that is offered to God for unique activity. We set aside the Lord's Day each week as a day of special remembrance and worship. There are annual observances such as Christmas and Easter. There are special seasons like Advent and Lent. And, then there is **the week, that week, Holy Week.**



The week from Palm Sunday to Easter is a week set aside for us to remember and relive the most important week in human history, the week that changed lives and created the Christian community. We remember the last week of Jesus. From his entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, through his Last Supper with the disciples, into his death and burial, and his glorious resurrection from the tomb, we remember and relive. The Christian community observes the Sacred Triduum: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday. In the darkness of the night between Holy Saturday and Easter, Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. The tomb was empty at sunrise. Holy Week presents and interprets Jesus Christ to the world.

Holy Week worship touches all the senses. We see the descent of darkness and the return of the Light. We feel the agony of Christ. The smell of candles lingers in the air. We pray with Jesus in the garden. The silence of death touches us. We watch the darkness be overcome by light. We hear the sad and glorious words again describing the events that changed the world.

What language shall I borrow
To thank thee dearest man?
For this, thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end.
O make me thine forever,
And should I fainting be,
**Lord, let me never, ever
Outlive my love to thee.**

(Thirteenth Century Latin Hymn, emphasis mine)

I invite you to join me in setting aside our special week and allow God to make it a holy experience. Block out these days and make them unusual. Let the way you observe this week be a witness to the world. Allow the Holy Spirit to do a new work. Let the sights and sounds of our worship services translate the life of Christ into our lives. Let the days that changed the world change your life.

**With Confidence in Christ,
The Reverend Dr. Jeff Patterson
Senior Pastor**

Palm Sunday, April 10

Mark 11:1-10

Palm Sunday has always conjured an image for me which goes back to my early Sunday School days - Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the back of a colt to the shouts of "Hosanna in the Highest" from the adoring crowd. With the unprecedented rise in His renown on the heels of restoring sight to the blind and raising Lazarus from the dead, it's easy to understand how the atmosphere was electric with excitement over the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah!

Over time however, I've come to realize that Palm Sunday is so much more. I now see it as a Divine Appointment when the Kingdom of Heaven crashed head-first into the powers of this world and, more importantly, into the powers of darkness. It was the beginning of a chain of events beyond human imagination by which God's amazing plan of redemption would come to fruition - a plan that only Jesus fully understood. On the surface, Palm Sunday was the gentle and humble Jesus riding into the center of religious authority. In actuality it was the Son of God coming to wage war with the forces of evil and upend Satan's reign of terror.

We know how the story plays out, but where does Palm Sunday become personal for us? For me, it's trying to recognize and resist the ways of the double-minded crowd within myself, rejoicing over Jesus' approach one moment only to turn around and join the mob calling for His life the next. This type of hypocrisy would seem to be unimaginable for the believer. However, I would argue that every time I yield to compromise, which happens far too often, I am in essence one of the mob yelling "crucify, crucify" because I have turned my back on His authority in my life to pursue my own will. Our life in Jesus is freedom...freedom to make mistakes and yet be restored. But it is not the freedom to pick and choose where we will follow and where we won't. The path of discipleship is a journey whose destination is our complete surrender to His Lordship. Our faith cannot be on a part-time or "not-to-interfere" basis. It should penetrate every aspect of our lives. For the crowd which demanded Jesus' life from Pilate later that week, this became an "inconvenient truth" even after witnessing the evidence of His divinity. Lord please show me those areas that I too have withheld from you.

So as we celebrate Jesus' Triumphal Entry, my prayer for you and me is that we would make progress in learning how to fully surrender ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus and that the chorus of "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord" would resonate in our hearts always.

David Adams

Co-Chair Mission & Community Impact Team

Monday, April 11

John 12:1-11

There was no need for an RSVP when Mary asked Jesus to dinner at the home she shared with her siblings. She knew their dear friend would be there, just as he'd been when her brother had died. She might have felt a pang of regret in remembering that day, how bereft she and sister Martha had been – how they had even chastised Christ at the time. When Lazarus emerged alive from the tomb, however, their hearts leapt at this revelation of divine love. Of course, Jesus would come to the dinner, and Mary would express her devotion.

Mary of Bethany appears to us in scant few biblical stories, but her impact is profound, nonetheless. She is the calm to sister Martha's storm; a contemplative soul who prefers a place at Jesus' feet over a traditional seat at the table. She is unwavering in her gratitude to Jesus her friend, and unshakable in her faith in Jesus the son of God. Her devotion leads to an incredible act at the dinner that night: she decants a full bottle of expensive perfume to anoint his feet. Nothing is too good for my Lord, she says, nothing is too good.

What Mary did is emblematic of a true believer, and we would do well to follow her example. Although she might not understand how Mary knows who Jesus is. With Lazarus at the table, hale and healthy and whole, how could she not believe? Why wouldn't she give Jesus all that she had, with no regard for cost? Judas scoffs, calling her a spendthrift, but Jesus upbraids him and defends Mary, and we realize a deeper meaning at work.

As modern-day believers, we can see the themes in this story. We see the joining of death and resurrection – in the life of Christ, but also in Lazarus, present at the table, proof of God's healing miracles. And we're reminded of the call to discipleship as we witness Mary's act of devotion.

Devotion is priceless, yet following Christ is an incredibly costly act. Jesus himself warns that we must give up all we possess so that we might follow him. We must part ways with the world. We must die to sin and to ourselves and endure the slings and arrows of those who would refute the path we've chosen. And Mary's right: nothing is too good for our Lord.

This dinner in Bethany points to another dinner, upcoming when Jesus would share the bread and cup with his disciples for the last time. Once again Judas would naysay, and once again Jesus would scold him, but ultimately forgive him. Once again the disciples would be called on to cling to what Jesus had told them and to see beyond the present reality in the assurance of God's promise. Moreover, Christ's mission would become their own.

Theirs is our mission, too. Every day we can show our devotion to the Lord by giving the most priceless gifts we've been given – our hearts, souls, minds, and bodies – and dedicating ourselves to the mission of sharing the gospel. May Mary of Bethany be our inspiration as we remember the extravagant love of God, and may we respond to God with all that we have.

Reverend Lisa Tanico



Tuesday, April 12

John 12:20-36

We gathered around the cozy fireplace to share honest conversation and join our voices together in worship. In our monthly Student Ministry “Edge of Adventure” event, we take time to gather high school seniors for a moment to escape the demands and constant cries of this world for their affection and attention. We pray each month that our students are further prepared and equipped to see and hear testimonies of individuals that have said “Yes” to serving and following Jesus. Our most recent guest speaker shared her time and talent by leading us in worship. As we joined her in singing “We Rise” by Cageless Birds, my heart was drawn to the similarities between the lyrics in this song and the lesson Jesus is teaching in John 12:20-36. Though most of us are no longer seniors in high school, on the edge of a new adventure, we each have the same lessons being posed at us as Jesus taught before His death. Will we be willing to lay down our life, will we choose to serve Him, will we choose to follow Him? May the words of this song encourage our hearts this week as we each embark on the “Edge of Adventure” in our relationship with Jesus, with a resounding “YES” in our spirit that says, “I will follow You anywhere You want to go!”

“We Rise” by Cageless Birds
We rise by bowing
We live by dying
When we give what we could never keep
We gain what we will never lose

Like beauty from ashes
And joy from mourning
Only You can take brokenness
And make it something beautiful

From glory to glory
You tell our story
We will overcome
We’ll walk on the water
With our eyes on the Father
Nothing is impossible

Rest in our weapon
Joy is our strength
We wait upon the Lord and find
Strength to spread our wings and fly

I’ll follow You anywhere
And I’ll follow You anywhere
I’ll follow You anywhere You wanna go

Jessica Nelson



Wednesday, April 13

John 13:21-32

I can't believe she told him I said that! She is my friend and I shared everything with her, even things that were said in anger. We always talked about the future, what God had planned for us, what we wanted life to be. Do I now feel betrayed? Of course I do.

When Jesus met with his disciples, he shared all his thoughts and plans with them. He was a man, the son of God and a young virgin from Nazareth. Therefore, he had all the same feelings as you and I. The disciples were his closest friends and he trusted them. How betrayed he must have felt when he shared this last meal with them. They had gathered to celebrate Passover, but he knew what lay ahead for all of them. How sad and alone he felt to be with his friends and know that one would betray him, one would deny him, and the others would run away in fear. How did his disciples feel when they heard him say that one of them present at the meal would betray him? Did they each think it was them - or did they all think it couldn't possibly be me?

How did Judas feel at that moment? Did he think he was betraying Jesus or was he so consumed by greed he didn't care? Or was he actually thinking as a revolutionary that he was forcing Jesus to set up his kingdom on earth, the kingdom Jesus had promised?

How do you and I feel when we read this story and say that we would never betray our Savior? And yet, we are guilty every day of not loving our neighbor as ourself. Does Jesus feel the same betrayal over and over that he did that night at the last supper? Only we know the answer to that question. Is your answer "yes" or "no"?

Ladies of Susanna Wesley Sunday School



Maundy Thursday, April 14

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Years ago, when Barry Osborne was on staff, he organized a re-enactment of this passage for a Maundy Thursday service. Barry gave me the honor of playing the part of Christ. (I had more hair then.....lots more actually.)

As I bent over to wash the feet of the other men playing the roles of the disciples, I thought about what it must have been like in those days. There was no sanitation. Folks threw their night-soil out into the road. Sheep and other livestock were driven right down the middle of the street. Animal urine and manure were everywhere. It was dusty and dirty. Combine this with the fact, that people of that time wore sandals and walked around all day, every day, on hot, dusty, dung covered streets. I'll bet one's feet got pretty ripe!

What impressed me the most, and I'm just now recalling all this as I'm preparing for this devotion, is that the Son of God, the creator of the universe and everything in it, washed the feet of his disciples.

I imagined this man they called Teacher and Master, getting down on his knees, picking up a rag and washing dirt, dust, and excrement from the feet of his disciples one after the other.

Then...and this is the best part....he gives them a new command: Love one another in the same way.

The beauty of this scripture for me is that he showed them love first, then gave them his pronouncement. He humbled himself and just finished washing the dung off their feet when then tells them to do the same. To love one another in this same way. Love one another. "In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other."

How beautiful is that?



He's making a point that to be a Christ follower, we need to love one another. And we need to love one another in midst of everything we are going through. Through the dust, grime and the manure.

Mac Lane

Good Friday, April 15

John 18:1-19:42

Moral courage – a person’s willingness to overcome fear in defense of his or her core values and ethical principles – often comes at a high personal cost. Yet effective leadership of any group, organization, government, or society requires it. More importantly, our inner peace demands it. As revealed in the reading for this Good Friday, our Savior fully understood the importance of moral courage to lead effectively. He knew the grievous cost of our redemption, yet willingly went to the cross to pay it. He recognized this act as God’s will and demonstrated by example that only by acting in accordance with the Father’s will can we truly find peace.

In contrast, Peter’s actions in this portion of scripture display a failure in moral courage. Three times he denied his association with Christ. Yet it is important to recognize Peter’s redemption a short time later, in John 21:15-17, when the risen Christ asks him three times, “Peter, do you love me?” and challenges Peter to then tend his sheep. From that day forward, given this leadership commission, Peter never appears to have suffered another lapse in moral courage. Indeed, following Christ’s example, he endured public scorn, multiple beatings, and, ultimately, crucifixion himself in the defense of truth. It was clear that Peter learned to fear the pain and anxiety of being separated from Christ more than anything, including death.

In our society today, Christian morals and values often appear to be under assault. Yet we are reminded that the consequences of displaying the moral courage needed to defend them, while they may require us to endure ostracism or come at other personal costs, normally fall well short of physical beatings or loss of life. The courage demanded of us is modest when compared to that required of our Savior and the apostles, and their example serves as great encouragement. The alternative, as Peter knew well, is the shame, anxiety, and loss of peace associated with being out of synch with our risen Lord. On this Good Friday, we celebrate Christ’s example for us and his continued leadership, through us, in the world.

Retired Brigadier General Norm and Beth Cooling



Holy Saturday, April 16

John 19:38-42

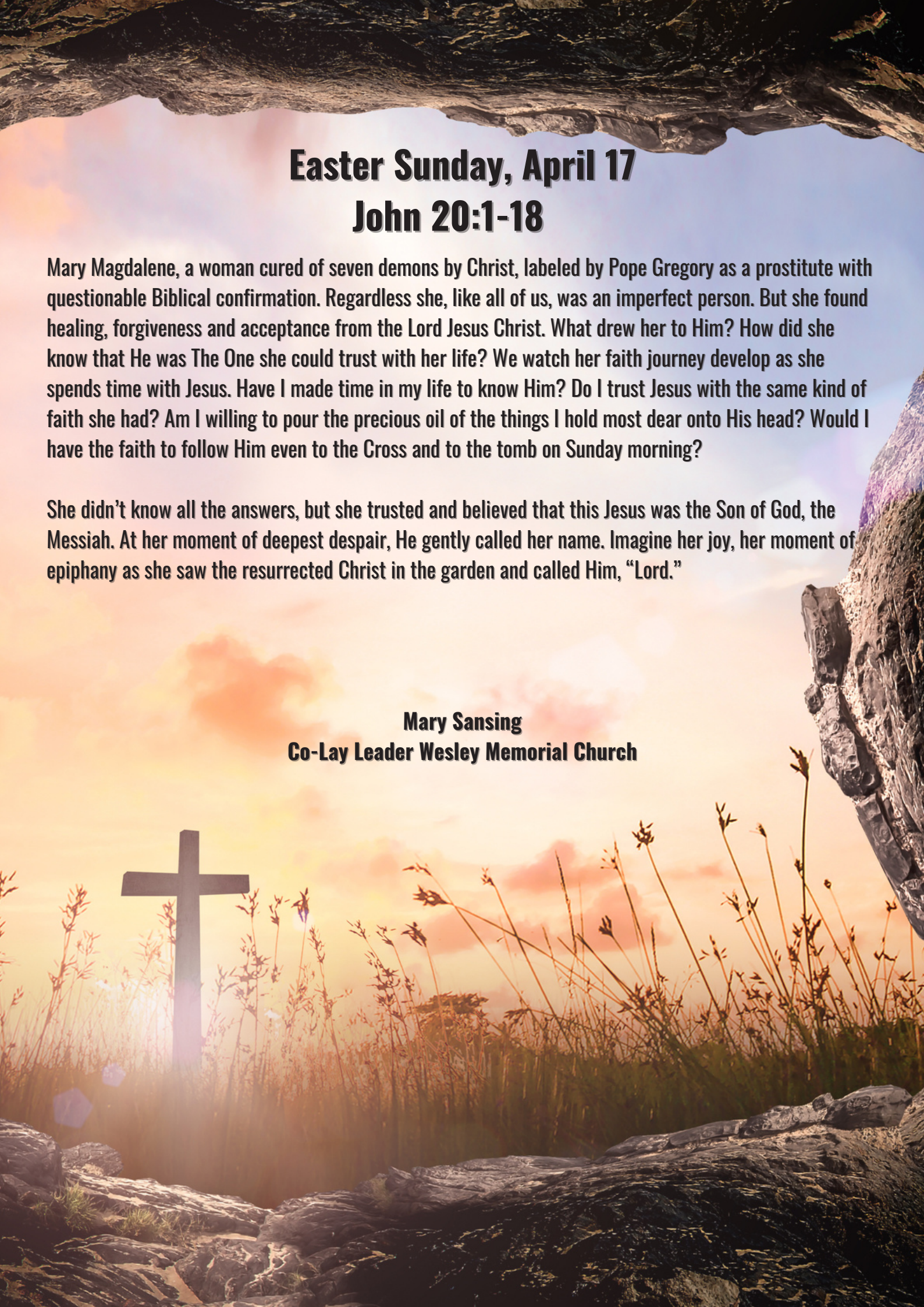
Reading scripture can give an immediate powerful vision, recall a personal memory, or bring on questions of understanding. From personal experience I have found that there are many different interpretations of scripture from the perspective of friends and family. I believe no matter the interpretation there is a peace that scripture was intended to be written that way. Times change, life changes, generation to generation bring on new ideas and new ways to just live according to the word.

After reading John 19:38-42, I immediately pictured in my mind that late night 18 years ago that my mom laid on what was to be her death bed at Baptist Hospital. There is a lot of medical history that brought her there. We were told she may have only 2-3 months left but little did we know that she and God had other plans. She passed peacefully surrounded by my Aunt Ginny, her sister, who held her hand and my brother Darren. Where was I? I was in the waiting room. WHY? Why did I choose not to go be with her? Was it too difficult? At the time looking back I just couldn't say goodbye. I had no idea how to do that or to witness that. Who was going to take care of her for me? Such strange emotions. I knew in my heart she was healed, whole and happy. At Peace! I knew she would always, and forever be with me, my children, my family, that we would most certainly be together again one day for eternity. That's what He promises. That's what our purpose in this mortal life is for. To live as Jesus taught and then to be with him again one day. But I couldn't be by her side. I don't regret my decision, but I do envy those who have stood by their loved ones, holding hands, singing hymns, reading poetry, retelling stories, sharing memories, and watching them take their last breath on this earth.

It is for us to care for the body of our loved ones who die. For we know they will be raised again. Joseph and Nicodemus did this for Jesus. There are so many cultural traditions for celebration and burial. My mom's wishes were to be cremated. Her ashes would be kept in a niche in the Columbarium at Wesley Memorial. Our family gathered early to share in Holy Communion and inurn her ashes. We had a beautiful service in the Chapel. The family gathered and friends shared their love and respects. It is still a difficult but beautiful memory.



Susan Kelley
Associate Director Wesley Memorial School



Easter Sunday, April 17

John 20:1-18

Mary Magdalene, a woman cured of seven demons by Christ, labeled by Pope Gregory as a prostitute with questionable Biblical confirmation. Regardless she, like all of us, was an imperfect person. But she found healing, forgiveness and acceptance from the Lord Jesus Christ. What drew her to Him? How did she know that He was The One she could trust with her life? We watch her faith journey develop as she spends time with Jesus. Have I made time in my life to know Him? Do I trust Jesus with the same kind of faith she had? Am I willing to pour the precious oil of the things I hold most dear onto His head? Would I have the faith to follow Him even to the Cross and to the tomb on Sunday morning?

She didn't know all the answers, but she trusted and believed that this Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. At her moment of deepest despair, He gently called her name. Imagine her joy, her moment of epiphany as she saw the resurrected Christ in the garden and called Him, "Lord."

Mary Sansing
Co-Lay Leader Wesley Memorial Church

Children's Activities

Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt in Sanctuary

Friday, April 8

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Third - Fifth Graders

\$5 per person - pizza for dinner

Register at wesleymemorial.org/hunt.

Easter EGGSTRAVAGANZA

Family Event

Sunday, April 10

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Register at wesleymemorial.org/egg.



Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday - Sunday, April 10

8:30 a.m. - Traditional - Chapel

9:45 a.m. - Contemporary - Fellowship Hall

11 a.m. - Traditional - Sanctuary

Wednesday, April 13

5:30 p.m. Vespers - Chapel

Maundy Thursday, April 14

7:30 p.m. - Sanctuary

Good Friday, April 15

7:30 p.m. - Sanctuary

Holy Saturday, April 16

7:30 p.m. - Sanctuary



Easter Sunday, April 17

7:30 a.m. - TV WGHP FOX8

7:30 a.m. - Sunrise - Columbarium

8:30 a.m. - Traditional - Chapel

9:45 a.m. - Contemporary - Fellowship Hall

11 a.m. - Traditional - Sanctuary

Kona Ice following 9:45 a.m. service

Lemonade on the Lawn immediately following 11 a.m. service

Easter Offering

The Mission & Community Impact committee has approved a three-way split of the Easter Offering between A Simple Gesture, Open Door Ministries and West End Ministries. Each of these community partners focuses on hunger and homelessness. Please give generously as part of our 2022 Easter Offering. Thank you for making the great heart of Wesley Memorial Church visible in this act of kindness.

Special Easter Gift

As a gift to you, on Easter Sunday there will be a photo station set up to provide you with a free digital image and a free 4x6 photo print. The photo will be taken of you by the flower crosses, located outside in front of the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall after both the 9:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. services.



Easter Lilies

We will decorate our worship areas with lilies for Easter Sunday. If you would like to order in memory or in honor of a loved one, please contact Tish at 336-812-4808 by April 12. The cost is \$28 per lily.



Let's spread the Hope of Christ with one another! Come out to the porte cochere at the side entrance to the narthex Friday, April 8 between 6-7 p.m. and pick up spring flower(s) to deliver to our R.E.A.C.H members (**R**estricted or **R**educed mobility, **E**xceptional circumstances, **A**dvanced Aging, **C**onvalescing, **H**omebound). Each flower arrangement will be labeled with the address and contact information of the person for whom it is to be delivered within our church family. Contact the individual, take it and drop it off at their home in the upcoming week to share the hope of the resurrection!

Bible Study

Pastor Jeff Patterson will be leading a Bible study "Finding God's Joy in Tough Times: A Study of the Book of Habakkuk" at the Wellness Center Classroom in the River Landing Retirement Community.

The six sessions will be Thursdays, April 21-May 26, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.



Save the Date

An Evening with C.S. Lewis will be held Friday, May 13 at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The event will include a one-man, a Q&A and a reception. Complimentary tickets are available in the church office for this special event.



Thanks to the following for support of this publication

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