

Lent and Holy Week



St. Francis Episcopal Church
2024

Lent is the most important time of the year to nurture our inner life. It is the time during which we not only prepare ourselves to celebrate the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, but also the death and resurrection that constantly takes place within us. Life is a continuing process of the death of the old and the familiar, and being reborn again into a new hope, a new trust and a new love. The death and resurrection of Jesus therefore is not just a historical event that took place a long time ago, but an inner event that takes place in our own heart when we are willing to be attentive to it. True repentance is an interior attitude in which we are willing to let go of everything that prevents us from growing into spiritual maturity, and there is hardly a moment in our lives in which we are not invited to detach ourselves from certain ways of thinking, ways of speaking, ways of acting, that for a long time gave us energy, but that always again need to be renewed and recreated.

Lent offers a beautiful opportunity to discover the mystery of Christ within us. It is a gentle but also demanding time. It is a time of solitude but also community. It is a time of listening to the voice within, but also a time of paying attention to other people's needs. It is a time to continuously make the passage to new inner life as well as to life with those around us.

When we live Lent attentively and gently, then Easter can truly be a celebration during which the full proclamation of the risen Christ will reverberate into the deepest place of our being.

-Henri J.M. Nouwen

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Calendar of Events for Lent through Easter.....	2
Lenten Challenge	3
Children & Youth Programs.....	4
Ash Wednesday	5
Morning & Evening Prayer	5
Wednesdays During Lent	6
Forgiveness Workshop	6
Sunday of the Passion	7
Maundy Thursday	7
Good Friday	8-9
Holy Saturday.....	9
The Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ	10
Holy Week Music.....	7-10
About Holy Week.....	11-14

SERVICES & EVENTS CALENDAR

Children & Youth Programs *(see page 4)*

February 14 ~ Ash Wednesday Services *(see page 5)*

7 am, 12:15 pm & 7 pm

February 18 - March 24 ~ Sunday Services during Lent

8 am, 9 am, 11 am & 5 pm

Morning & Evening Prayer *Monday thru Saturday (see page 5)*

9 am & 5 pm

Wednesdays during Lent *(see page 6)*

6 pm Holy Eucharist, Dinner & Program

March 23 ~ Forgiveness Workshop *(see page 6)*

9 am- 12 Noon in the Hogan Board Room

March 24 ~ Palm Sunday *(see page 7)*

8 am, 9 am, 11 am & 5 pm

March 28 ~ Maundy Thursday Service *(see page 7)*

7 pm Service

March 29 ~ Good Friday *(see page 8-9)*

12 Noon - Liturgy of Good Friday

12 Noon - Walk to Calvary

1 pm - The Seven Last Words

2 pm - Stations of the Cross

March 30 ~ Holy Saturday *(see page 9)*

11:00 am -1:00 pm - Private Confessions in the Chapel

4 pm - Easter Eve Baptisms

March 31—Easter Sunday Services *(see page 10)*

7:30 am, 9 am, & 11 am

8:30 am - 1 pm Easter Celebration Food & Fellowship

10 am Easter Egg Hunt

Bunnies—Petting, Feeding & Photo Opportunities

Easter Resurrection Flowered Cross Photo Opportunities (10 am & 12 pm)

2024 LENTEN CHALLENGE

Each year we put before our parish family a Lenten Challenge which is designed to engage our souls and our wills. This year, parishioners of St. Francis are challenged to do two things:

- 1) Add daily prayer to your life during Lent; please see Page 5 for more details about how to easily enhance your spiritual life through daily prayer.
- 2) Give alms to your needy homeless neighbors by supporting Lord of The Streets Houston (LOTS Houston) an Episcopal Mission in downtown Houston.

About Lord of the Streets

Since 1990, LOTS has been dedicated to life & ministry with and for the homeless in Houston. Lord of the Streets is a church community that *Relieves* suffering and *Restores* dignity by *Rebuilding* lives through ministries and relationships with people facing homelessness.

LOTS meets people's physical needs by providing or hosting life-sustaining services:

Meals, showers, clothing, medical care, mental health services, a vision clinic, a mailing address, and more.

LOTS also realizes that just meeting people's physical needs isn't enough because the lack of meaningful relationships and community is a devastating reality for those experiencing homelessness.

Therefore,

We offer faith and community to meet people's spiritual and relational needs as well.

CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS FOR LENT

Let it Shine Children's Bible Lessons for Lent: Sundays at 9 am

On Sundays during the 9 am Family Worship Service,
join other children to learn about:

February 18th – What is Lent and Why Ashes?

February 25th – Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

March 3rd – The Last Supper

March 10th – Garden of Gethsemane

March 17th – Trial by Pontius Pilate & Peter's Denial

March 24th – Stations of the Cross

Palm Sunday Passion Play at 9 am

Sunday, March 24th – Children can participate in a liturgical drama as we re-enact the events of Holy Week, waving palm branches as Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey and reciting the Passion Gospel.

The Let it Shine Lesson will teach the significance of the humble donkey.

Donkey Photos – The donkey will be available for family photos in the courtyard after the service.

Children's Walk to Calvary at NOON

Friday, March 29th – Meet in the FAC and follow Father Wismer & Mrs. Devlin on an interactive journey of the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.

Families are welcome to participate with their children. Children 6 and up can be dropped off while parents attend the Liturgy for Good Friday service in the church, which takes place at the same time.

Easter Sunday at 9 am

Sunday, March 31st – He is Risen!

At Let it Shine we will celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and learn about Jesus bringing salvation to the world.

Easter Egg Hunt & Bunnies – After the service, proceed through the FAC and join us outside for an Easter Egg Hunt. Please bring a basket!
There will also be bunnies to pet and feed.

Begin your Lenten journey that leads to the Cross and the Joy of the Resurrection with
the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist on
Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024.

The first day of Lent is a special day of Holy Obligation.
Services are at 7 am, 12:15 pm & 7 pm to accommodate your schedule.

MORNING & EVENING PRAYER

Add prayer to your Lenten journey. Short prayers for in the morning, at noon, in the early evening, and at the close of the day can be found in the *Book of Common Prayer* beginning on page 136. Online access to these and other online prayers and scripture readings can be found at:

The Forward Movement <http://prayer.forwardmovement.org>

(Click the daily readings or daily prayer any time to find the different prayers and readings appointed in the *Book of Common Prayer* for every day.)

To pray with others, Fr. David Price continues to lead corporate offerings of the Daily Office by zoom Monday through Saturday. These simple prayer offices, offered without sermons, last about thirty minutes. We encourage you to enter into this rhythm of prayer as often as you can.

Morning Prayer || 9:00 am, Contact: Fr. David Price / davidprice56@yahoo.com

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/74430393620?pwd=N2xoNmI4L1pUQndVZzB0UThOWkdtdz09>

Evening Prayer || 5:00 pm, Contact: Fr. David Price / davidprice56@yahoo.com

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/986428707?pwd=M0ZaMTJzcVpldGswTE1kU3NmOEx3Zz09>

Fr. Price's daily inspirational messages are found on the St. Francis website:
<https://www.sfch.org/father-david-prices-reflections>

Fr. Price's Daily Reflections on the Sunday readings are sent out Tuesday—Friday.
If you are not receiving them, contact Sally Jo Flores at sally@sfch.org.

WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT

“The Letter of James”

Wednesday Night Eucharist & Dinner

Weekly during Lent—Join Fr. Price each Wednesday during Lent for Holy Eucharist at 6 pm, followed by dinner in the Hogan Board Room and our Lenten study, The Letter of James. Led by Fr. Bates & Fr. Price, this letter consisting of five chapters, is utterly unique among the works of the New Testament and is loaded with practical, and spiritual help for real life. James addresses things such as the difference between genuine faith and counterfeit faith. How do we know our faith is real? Can we know joy even in trials? Can we know patience in suffering? Five sessions at 7 pm on Wednesdays - February 21 & 28, March 6, 13 & 20.

Cost of dinner is \$15 per person at the door.

Contact Fr. Price at dprice@sfch.org for more information.

FORGIVENESS WORKSHOP

March 23, 2024

Forgiving Others

This Lent, consider who you need to forgive and work through a process of forgiving them. On Saturday, March 23rd, Father Bates will lead a workshop on the steps to forgiveness from 9 am to Noon in the Hogan Board Room. Refreshments will be provided. Come ready to learn and release others and yourself!

RSVP to Sally Jo Flores:

832-325-2983 | sally@sfch.org

Take the challenge and find freedom!

THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION

March 24, 2024

Our worship at 9 am & 11 am begins outside in the courtyard. We process, waving palm branches hailing our King Jesus in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Our 9 am service includes a Palm Sunday Pageant for children. The Gospel reading for the Sunday of the Passion includes the dramatic shouting by the crowd, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!" Holy week begins...

8 am & 5 pm services continue as usual.

Palm Sunday Music

Prelude: "*Ah Holy Jesus*" by Johann Cruger

#154/All Glory Laud & Honor

"Ride on King Jesus, Ride!"

#168/O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded; Jesus Remember Me

#479/Glory Be to Jesus

Postlude: #439/"What Wondrous Love is This"



MAUNDY THURSDAY

March 28, 2024

This evening's service at 7:00 pm commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist in the Last Supper and Christ's new commandment to love one another as He has loved us. At the conclusion of the Eucharist, the altar is stripped bare in preparation for the solemn darkness of the Cross on Good Friday.

The service concludes with a crown of thorns placed on the bare altar. After a time of reflection, the congregation departs in silence.

Maundy Thursday Music

Prelude: Meditation on "*Cross of Jesus*" by John Stainer

#171/Go to Dark Gethsemane

#606/Where True Love and Charity Dwell

Offertory: "*O Remember Not*" by Jonathan Battishill

#341/For the Bread which You have Broken; Jesus Remember Me

#329/Now My Tongue the Mystery Telling



Noon ~ Liturgy of Good Friday

We begin the Liturgy of Good Friday in the same way we ended the Maundy Thursday Liturgy: in silence. We move from the Last Supper, the stripping and humiliation, to the cross and the tomb. The Liturgy of Good Friday is marked by somber reflection on the love of God revealed in the self offering of the Crucified Christ. We focus on the large wooden crucifix that looms behind the stripped altar. The service ends as we entered, in silent reflection on Christ's Passion for our salvation.

Good Friday Music



Prelude: Variations on "*O Sacred Head Now Wounded*"

Psalm 22 - choral; #166/Sing My Tongue, the Glorious Battle

Offertory: "*Final Chorus*" from St. Matthew Passion by JS Bach

#172/Were You There When They Crucified My Lord

Noon ~ Children's Walk to Calvary (*See Children's & Youth Page*)

1 pm ~ The Seven Last Words of Jesus

Jesus Christ made seven final statements during his last hours on the cross. These phrases are held dear by followers of Christ because they offer a glimpse into the depth of his suffering and faithfulness to God to accomplish redemption for us all. The use of these seven sayings in Good Friday Liturgy has been a tradition since the 16th century. The service is divided into seven segments, each focusing on one of the final statements, with silent meditation and complimentary hymns to help us reflect on the duality of Christ's divinity and humanity in his sacrifice.

Seven Last Words Music



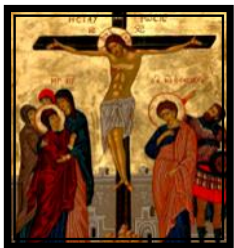
Prelude: "*At the Name of Jesus*"

#441/In the Cross I Glory; Jesus Remember Me; #160/Cross of Jesus;

#439/What Wonderful Love is This; Tree of Life;

#313/Let Thy Blood in Mercy Poured;

#474/When I Survey the Wondrous Cross



2 pm ~ Stations of the Cross

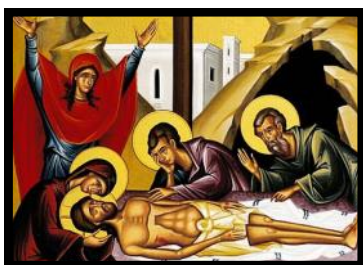
This service takes the faithful on a spiritual pilgrimage of prayer, through meditating upon the chief scenes of Christ's sufferings and death. The Celebrant travels to each of the 14 scenes (stations) placed around the church with readings, prayers and congregational responses reflecting upon each. Between each station, there will be appropriately reflective music by our orchestra and singers.

Stations of the Cross Music

Cello / Piano: Great Hymns of Faith

HOLY SATURDAY

March 30, 2024



What is Holy Saturday?

On Holy Saturday the Church contemplates the mystery of the Lord's descent into Hades, the place of the dead. Death, our ultimate enemy, is defeated from within. "Christ gave Himself as a ransom to death in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending into Hades through the Cross...He loosed the bonds of death" (Liturgy of St. Basil).

On this day our focus is on the Tomb of Christ. This is no ordinary grave. It is not a place of corruption, decay and defeat. It is life-giving, a source of power, victory and liberation. Holy Saturday is the day between Jesus' death and His resurrection. It is the day of watchful expectation, in which mourning is being transformed into joy.

Holy Saturday at St. Francis

•Confession

A priest will be present for private confessions in St. Clare Chapel from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

•Baptism

Easter Eve baptisms take place at 4 pm in the church.

If you would like to schedule a baptism for Holy Saturday, please contact

Sally Jo Flores: 832-325-2983 ~ sally@sfch.org.

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Easter Sunday

March 31, 2024

Christ is Risen!

Holy Week culminates in the “Feast of Feasts,” the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate our Lord’s Crucifixion and death, and His glorious Resurrection into the Life Eternal. Christ brings salvation to the entire world. This is our witness and our joy!

Upon the Cross, the love God has for humankind reached its apex as Christ descended to the lowest point of human existence: suffering and death. Only God incarnate could take upon Himself the consequences of man’s sin and thereby destroy them. Only God incarnate could enter the realm of death and fill it with His immortal life.

The Resurrection of Christ frees all humankind from the bonds of corruption and death, because death had no power over Him Who is life and love Himself. As we live now in the hope of sharing Christ’s resurrection, we find our fulfillment and completion as human beings in God’s love as it triumphs in our own hearts and lives.

Come and celebrate God’s victory over sin, evil, suffering and death through the faithfulness of Christ Jesus. Come and shout “Christ is Risen!” Come and proclaim that God’s love is stronger than death, because Christ has trampled down death by His death.

Easter Sunday Music



Prelude: “*Concerto grosso in G*” Opus 6 #1 by GF Handel

7:30am/Pie Jesu by Andrew Lloyd Webber

#180/He is Risen, He is Risen

#175/Hail Thee, Festival Day

7:30am/O Salutaris Hostia by Ch. Gounod

9am/11am/“*Holy Art Thou*” from Xerxes by GF Handel

#193/That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright

#304/I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord

#207/Jesus Christ is Risen Today

“*Hallelujah Chorus*” by GF Handel

Easter Services are scheduled for 7:30 am, 9 am, and 11 am (No 5 pm Service)

About Holy Week

For Christians, Holy Week is the most important time of the year. In it we celebrate the “paschal mystery,” the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The word “Paschal” is the New Testament word for Passover. Jesus’ death occurred at the time of the Passover festival, when Jews celebrate God’s delivering them from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. The death of Christ and His resurrection from the dead came to be understood in the Christian church as the fulfillment of God’s mighty acts to save His people. God acted decisively to free the Hebrews from Pharaoh and then to rescue them from Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, God acted to free His people from sin and to save them from death. Communion with God, which the Jewish people expected through participation in the Passover sacrifices, is fully realized by the Christian who participates liturgically and sacramentally in the death and resurrection of the incarnate Son.

In A.D. 324, the Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity. As a result, many churches were built in the Roman Empire, including churches in Jerusalem constructed at sites associated with the events in Jesus’ life. Because most Christians were unable to make a pilgrimage, it became customary to re-enact or represent these events in local churches in form of liturgical drama. These special Holy Week rites have been celebrated for nearly 1700 years.

Holy Week was difficult for Jesus. In our worship we literally take up the cross and follow him through accusation, sentencing, death, burial, and at last resurrection. In this we are moved to repentance, contrition for sin, forgiveness, and a more intimate relationship with our Savior. Our *Book of Common Prayer* provides special liturgies for Holy Week. Brief sketches are provided below and on the following pages.

Palm Sunday (*Book of Common Prayer—Page 270*)

Procession and acclamations of Hosannas. The mood reverses rapidly with the proclamation of the Passion Gospel when we, the crowd, cry, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” After all, it was our sins that brought about the death of Jesus.

Three Sacred Days

The Triduum begins with the principal liturgy of Maundy Thursday and concludes with the First Eucharist of Easter at the Great Vigil on Easter Eve. These are not unrelated services but one great liturgy that begins with the Maundy Thursday Eucharist and concludes with the Great Vigil of Easter. From each part of the Triduum we leave to attend our secular responsibilities, only to return to continue our work of worship. While our job as Christians is to be "in the world" representing Christ throughout the year, on these three days the focus changes. During the Triduum our Christian work is to be "the Church in church" participating in retelling the story of our salvation. It is from retelling the story of our faith along with its weekly remembrance (Sunday worship) that we draw strength to "go into the world to love and serve the Lord." For the Christian there can be no more important place to be nor things to do during these Three Sacred Days.

Maundy Thursday (*Book of Common Prayer—page 274*)

"Maundy" comes from the Latin "mandatum" which means commandment. It refers to Jesus' commandment to love one another. The liturgy celebrates the institution of the Lord's Supper or Holy Eucharist. What Jesus did at the Last Supper is re-presented in our midst. We gather with Christ and his apostles as they share the bread and the cup, and Jesus commands them to "do this in remembrance of me." A more accurate translation of the Greek is "do this to make me present with you again." After Communion, the altar is stripped of its raiment, reminding us of what this world would be like if we had truly lost Christ on the cross. We are put in mind of the cold, barren tomb that awaits the body of the crucified Jesus. Then we keep watch through the night, remembering Jesus' time in the Garden of Gethsemane when he asked Peter, "Could you not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40)

Liturgy of Good Friday (*Book of Common Prayer—Page 276*)

Our attention is drawn, in a somber and solemn manner, to the death of Jesus the Christ. However, while Good Friday is the saddest of days, it is also a day for joy- joy born of the hope that is won for us on the coming day of resurrection. The dramatic reading of the Passion Gospel, the ancient Solemn Collects, and Veneration help us focus on venerating the cross, the instrument of Jesus' most painful death. The Holy Eucharist is not celebrated on Good Friday nor on Holy Saturday until after sundown. The lack of the sacramental Presence of Christ is profoundly felt. At the conclusion of the service, all leave in silence.

Stations of the Cross

In ancient times, Christians made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for Holy Week. One popular activity while there was to walk the route from Pilate's house to Calvary, stopping for prayer and devotionals to commemorate events that took place along the way. In the Stations of the Cross, we make a spiritual pilgrimage to the chief scenes of Christ's sufferings and death. The congregation walks to fourteen Stations, pausing at each to reflect on Scripture readings and to pray. The Stations are: Christ is condemned to death; the cross is laid upon Him; His first fall; He meets his mother; Simon of Cyrene is made to bear the cross; Christ's face is wiped by Veronica; His second fall; He meets the women of Jerusalem; His third fall; He is stripped of his garments; His crucifixion; His death on the cross; His body is taken down from the cross; and His body is laid in the tomb.

The Great Vigil of Easter (Easter Eve) (*Book of Common Prayer—Page 285*)

It is evident from the gospels that the resurrection occurred sometime during the night, and because of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Christians expected the second coming to happen before daybreak; hence the widespread custom of vigil services developed in the Christian community. Expectant people gathered to watch and pray during the night before certain celebrations. The popular “midnight Mass” of Christmas stems from this. However, the Great Vigil of Easter is more ancient and has been widely restored. We gather to conclude the Three Sacred Days, to hear again the story of our salvation, to renew our baptismal promises, and to greet the coming morn of hope with a shout of joy that can only come from the lips of those who have walked the way of the cross, who have followed death's dark pathway to the Lord, and who know themselves to be risen with Him. The service consists of four parts:

- **Lighting of the Paschal Candle** – The church is in darkness, the paschal candle is lit from the new fire carried in procession to the sanctuary, and the Exsultet is proclaimed. At various points in the Vigil, the paschal candle symbolizes the light of God, which God made at the beginning of creation, the pillar of fire and cloud which led the Israelites from Egypt into freedom, the presence of the Risen Christ and the flame of the Holy Spirit.
- **The Liturgy of the Word** – We listen to the Holy Scriptures which tell of God’s saving acts in history and His continuing presence among His people. Among various selections from the Old Testament, the account of the Exodus from Egypt is always read.
- **The renewal of Baptismal vows** – As Jesus died and then rose to life on Easter, the Christian dies to the old life and is raised anew in the sacrament of Baptism. Baptism and the resurrection of Jesus are intimately linked. If there are no candidates for Baptism, the congregation renews its own baptismal vows.
- **Holy Eucharist and Easter Communion** – He is Risen! The altar candles are lit, the Gloria Excelsis of Eastertide has begun!



St. Francis Episcopal Church
345 Piney Point Road ~ Houston, TX 77024
The Rev. Stuart A. Bates, Rector
713.782.1270||www.sfch.org