

# A GUIDE TO HOLY WEEK

Church of the Holy Comforter  
Vienna, Virginia



Thorns take the shape of a crown. Popular acclaim turns to public execution. Sorrow and love flow mingled down. Life ends and begins. This coming Holy Week reenacts a powerful story of change—a story that continues to change the world, and to change people's lives.

It's possible to fast-forward to the great celebration of Easter and hear only the story of joy that came on that resurrection morning. But the impact, indeed the change, will be deeper and more powerful if we walk with Christ through these holy days.

Join our children in the joyful procession of Palm Sunday and be astonished at how quickly the whole story turns to tragedy with the reading of St. Matthew's account of the Passion. Share in the festive Agapé meal which becomes the last supper on Maundy Thursday and discover something about the transforming gift of love expressed in simple acts of care.

On Good Friday, enter into the mystery of God's love revealed on the hard wood of the cross, "a perfect sacrifice for the whole world."

Experience the "in-between time" of Holy Saturday morning, a time when all is still and death seems to have had the last word. In quiet prayer, with eyes beholding the nascent flowers of Spring, we catch a glimpse of resurrection life to come.

Then comes the profound shift from darkness to light at the Great Vigil on Saturday evening before Easter, a liturgy of extraordinary depth and beauty. On Easter day, celebrate the transforming evidence that the worst that can happen in this life is never the last thing that can happen. Jesus takes our human nature through the experience we call "death" and shows us beyond it, in ways we might never have dreamed, there is resurrection life and new creation already breaking into our world. It is this story the Gospel of Easter proclaims.

We offer the following annotated guide to Holy Week as a way to encourage you to find your own path through these important days. Keep it in a place where you can find it and make plans to enter deeply into a service, or two, or three this week. You may find more than you can ask for or imagine.



**PALM SUNDAY, April 13**  
**SUNDAY OF THE PASSION**

**VIGIL EUCHARIST, Saturday 5:00 PM,**  
**Saturday, April 12 in St. Mary's Chapel** *No Incense Blessing of Palms, Eucharist and reading of Matthew's Passion*

**PALM SUNDAY EUCHARISTS**  
**Sunday, April 13**

**\* 7:30 AM** *Blessing of Palms, Eucharist and reading Matthew's Passion (No Incense)*

**9:00 AM** *(With Incense)*

**\*11:15 AM** *(With Incense, childcare at 9:00 and 11:15)*

These later services begin with the great festivity of the procession of palms. The mood shifts quickly with the dramatic reading of the Passion Gospel, Jesus' journey to Calvary, leading to the Eucharist and the entrance into Holy Week.

*\*Indicates change from regular service schedule*



**MONDAY, April 14**

**TUESDAY, April 15**

**WEDNESDAY, April 16**

**12:10 PM Eucharist in St. Mary's Chapel**

Join us for worship in the quiet setting of our beautiful chapel. Each of these three days comes with its own focus. On Monday, we reflect on the story of the woman who anointed Jesus before his death. On Tuesday, we explore with St. Paul the mystery of the power of the cross. And on Wednesday, the theme of betrayal surfaces.



**MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 17**

**6:30 PM Agape Meal in McGill Hall**

*Bring bread, cheese, fruits, simple foods and wine to share*

**7:30 PM The "Mandatum" and Holy Eucharist**  
*Incense, childcare provided*

**8:30 PM Garden of Gethsemane Vigil - St. Mary's Chapel**

The word "maundy" comes from the Latin *mandatum* which means "commandment." **At 6:30 PM**, we share an Agapé meal, a wonderful experience of companionship, breaking bread together, and seeing one another as brothers and sisters called to love as Christ loved us.

**At 7:30 PM**, we reenact Jesus' demonstration of what it means to be a servant through the care of serving one another in the washing of feet. At the conclusion of this service, the altar is stripped, the sacrament is reserved to be used on Good Friday. **At 8:30 PM**, the Garden of Gethsemane Vigil begins until noon on Good Friday. Spend time in the Chapel in quiet, in prayer, in watchfulness. Sign up for a segment of the Vigil in the Narthex.



## GOOD FRIDAY, April 18

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*Childcare provided at 7:30 p.m. service*

### 12:10 PM The Way of the Cross

with spoken and musical devotions

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross is an adaptation of an ancient custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. The Stations of the Cross at the Church of the Holy Comforter, a gift from the Episcopal Church Women, are made from hand carved Lindenwood by the Demetz Studio in Val Gardena in the Alps of Northern Italy. The liturgy consists of prayers at each of the 12 traditional stations, interspersed with readings from Scripture, prayers, silence, and music offered by musicians and singers.

### 7:30 PM The Liturgy of Good Friday

Good Friday is a day of intense sorrow, but of sorrow that holds tightly to Christian hope. The remembrance of what Jesus Christ suffered for us cannot fail to arouse in us feelings of sorrow and regret for our share in the brokenness of the world.

The liturgy falls in four parts:

- Liturgy of the Word
- Veneration of the Cross & Solemn Collects.
- Holy Communion
- Sealing of the Sanctuary Doors and departure in silence



## HOLY SATURDAY, April 19

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### 9:30 AM Holy Saturday Liturgy – Chapel

Holy Saturday is a threshold day, a day of waiting. A day to open ourselves to the one who goes into the places of deepest pain and darkest fear, in order to bring us out. A brief service of Scripture, prayer, and meditation by the Rector.

### 8:00 p.m. THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER *(with Incense)*

The dramatic service begins in darkness, and consists of four parts: The Service of Light (kindling of new fire, lighting the Paschal candle); The Service of Lessons (readings from the Hebrew Scriptures); Christian Initiation (Holy Baptism) and the first Eucharist of Easter (with candles, and incense).

*Followed by a Festive Champagne Reception  
in McGill Hall*



## EASTER DAY, THE SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION, April 20

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***Note: The Great Vigil of Easter on Saturday Evening is observed as the First Eucharist of Easter. There will not be a Sunday Eucharist at 7:30 a.m. this year.***

### 9:00 AM Festival Choral Eucharist – Easter Bells, Brass Quintet, childcare provided *(With Incense)*

*(No Sunday School or Adult Forum)*

### \* 11:15 AM Festival Choral Eucharist – Easter Bells, Brass Quintet, childcare provided *(With Incense)*

*\* Indicates change from regular service schedule*

Alleluia Bells, Brass, Organ, and Choirs singing music to uplift the soul. Easter anthems and favorite hymns for congregation and choir are sung with the incomparable joy of Easter Day.

The full Fifty Day Season of Easter that follows Easter Day, celebrates what happened in and through the remarkable life of Jesus—what he said and did before he died, and what we believe he accomplished after his death. There are good reasons to believe, to give one's heart to God's mission in this world, and to deeply trust the One "whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning."

*Come early for seating in the Sanctuary.*

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A Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia  
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