

How to make Holy Week special

In one sense, there's nothing special about "Holy Week." It's another sequence of eight days each spring. There is nothing intrinsically holy about this Sunday to Sunday that moves around the calendar each year. There is no mandate from Jesus or his apostles to mark these days for particular observance. Paul, for one, would be quite happy for us to partake, or not. "One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5)

So there's no requirement for any of us to make this journey. Celebrating Holy Week is not an obligation, but it is an opportunity. It is a chance to walk with the church, throughout time and throughout the world, as she walks with her Bridegroom through the most important week in the history of the world. It is a chance to focus our minds on, and seek to intensify our affections for, the most important and timeless of realities.

While not mandating the observance, the New Testament does give us indirect reason, if we're looking for it. The final eight of Matthew's 28 chapters are given to this one week, along with the last six of Mark's sixteen and the final six of Luke's 24. Most significant, though, is John. Ten of the Gospel's 21 chapters — essentially half — deal with the final week of our Lord's life, his betrayal, his trials, his crucifixion, and his triumphant resurrection. Even Acts, which then narrates the life of the early church, returns to the events of Holy Week with frequency.

So without any 'rectorial' arm-twisting or guilt-tripping, I would encourage you to consider how you might make the most of the coming week. These are some of the darkest and brightest days in the history of the world, and they are rich with soul-sustaining food and life-clarifying vision. In the chaos of our increasingly fast-paced and hectic society, Holy Week is a reminder to pause and ponder, to carefully mark each day and not let this greatest of all weeks fly by us like every other.

You might think about reading through one or two of the Passion narratives from the Gospels in the coming week (Matthew 21–28, Mark 11–16, Luke 19–24, John 12–21). Block out a bit of time each day and find a comfortable place to sit. Seek to quiet your soul and pray that God would meet you in the events and significance of this week. And

spend a few moments in prayer after you read and turn the truth Godward in thanksgiving to Christ. Receive this week with thanksgiving and make it holy by journeying with Jesus. Come along on Maundy Thursday (which can be the 'Cinderella' of the Holy Week services, and is often the most moving), try out some – or even all! of the Good Friday Three Hours' Service. Next year, I'll add an Easter Vigil too!

There's a prayer of St Paul's (or a close associate of his) in Ephesians, that "according to the riches of his glory God may grant you to be strengthened with power through the Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

What a great prayer for the Holy Week journey!

May God make this to be for you a week of being newly grounded in the love of Christ, so plainly on display from the resolve of Palm Sunday, to the ultimate sacrifice of Good Friday, to the triumph of Easter Sunday. And may you freshly know the love of Christ, in all its breadth and length and height and depth — and wonder upon wonder, be filled with all the fullness of God.

Simon Butler

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please do so by visiting our website and www.htsmguildford/newsletter or contact Chloe at comms@holytrinityguildford.org.uk

Notices

LAST CHANCE TO SIGN UP! Holy Week Seder Meal: Monday of Holy Week, 7pm, 25th March, in Holy Trinity, organised by Stephen Marriott. Ben Cahill-Nicholls will be reflecting on his own Jewish heritage during the meal and Simon Butler will offer thoughts on the Last Supper in the light of its Passover origins. Please book via the Parish Office: comms@holytrinityguildford.org.uk.

Parish Office Closure - The Parish Office will be closed from Good Friday and will re-open on the 8th April.

Spring Clean - Holy Trinity Church - Saturday March 23rd 10am – 12 noon.

It would be lovely to have the church looking spic and span before Easter. If you have any time to come and help for just one small job it would be grand. Thank you!

Maundy Thursday Service, 28th March at 7.30pm. This service will include an opportunity for twelve members of the congregation to have their feet washed as part of our commemoration of the Last Supper. To volunteer for what is always a special moment, please email Rod Pierce: rod@holytrinityguildford.org.uk. There will be a Watch of Silent Prayer from the end of the Service until 10pm.

Good Friday: Ecumenical Walk of Witness (Meet outside McDonald's at 10.30am)

The Three Hours' Service 12noon: Simon leads us through the first two hours with a series of addresses entitled *People of the Passion (addresses at noon, 12.20, 12.40, 1.00, 1.20. 1.40)*. The traditional Good Friday Liturgy follows at 2pm, led by Jonathan Hedgecock and Holy Trinity Choir.

Try to keep Good Friday as more a holy day than a holiday!

Easter Sunday: There will be an ecumenical sunrise service at St Martha's Church, St Martha's Hill, at 6am. Our own services will be at the usual time, with the Festival Evensong at 6pm including an enlarged choir reunion.

Elections of Churchwardens, PCC and Deanery Synod Members: Our Annual Vestry & Parochial Church Meetings will be held at noon (i.e. after both churches' morning services) on **Sunday 14th April** in the Trinity Centre. Nominations for elections to the above roles will open soon. To find out more, please speak to the clergy or Mike Bishop, Lay Vice Chair of the PCC (mikebishop@ntlworld.com).

Tech Team Open Day: Would you be interested in being part of our tech team, broadcasting our Sunday services? If so, there will be a demonstration and explanation of the system next Sunday shortly after the Palm Sunday Service at about 1:15 am. We always welcome new people if you are interested in joining.

The Right Reverend Michael Adie RIP Previously Bishop of Guildford, The Right Reverend Michael Adie, died on the 4th March, 2024. Michael was chosen to lead the final debate on the legislation for women priests in General Synod and later on took the role as Chair of the national Board of Education, supporting Church Schools nationwide. His funeral is to be held at Guildford Cathedral on Monday 25th March at 12.30 and you can join online by visiting Guildford Cathedral's YouTube channel.

Events this week

Thursday 21st March	Morning Prayer at St Mary's at 8.30am Lent Reflections - 12.30pm in St Mary's
Saturday 23rd March	Holy Trinity Cleaning Party at 10am in church Practical Aspects of Spirituality 9.30am in St Mary's Spring clean in Holy Trinity 10am - 12 Epworth Choir 7.30pm in Holy Trinity
Sunday 24th March (Palm Sunday)	Evening Service sung by In Nomine choir 6pm in Holy Trinity
Monday 25th March	Morning Prayer at St Mary's at 8.30am Passover Meal in Holy Trinity at 7pm
Tuesday 26th March	Morning Prayer ONLINE TODAY at 8.30am
Wednesday 27th March	Morning Prayer ONLINE TODAY at 8.30am
Maundy Thursday 28th March	Morning Prayer ONLINE ONLY at 8.30am The Liturgy of the Lord's Supper with Watch of Prayer 7.30pm in Holy Trinity 19.00 Informal Communion with Tenebrae at St Mary's

This week's services

Lent 6 • 24 th March 2024 Palm Sunday	
<p style="text-align: center;">HOLY TRINITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10am Palm Sunday Eucharist <u>Sermon by Jonathan Hedgecock</u> Mark 11:1-11 Isaiah 50.4-9a Philippians 2.5-11 Mark 14.1-15.47</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6pm Evening Service <i>A Service of Music & Readings for Palm Sunday with music sung by In Nomine</i> Led by Andy Wheeler</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ST MARY'S</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>8am BCP Holy Communion</u> Led by Jonathan Hedgecock Philippians 2.5-11 Mark 11.1-11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10.00am Palm Sunday Procession and service start leading to Holy Trinity Led by Rosemary Lee Mark 11:1-11</p>

Contact Us

Rector: Simon Butler – rector@holytrinityguildford.org.uk
Operations Manager: Corinne Jones – office@holytrinityguildford.org.uk
Communications Manager: Chloe Benson – comms@holytrinityguildford.org.uk