

Shepherd's Voice

The monthly parish newsletter of

GOOD SHEPHERD ANGLICAN CHURCH

MARCH 2023



WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 2023

WHAT WE BELIEVE...

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down
from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the
Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance
with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver
of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son
who with the Father and the Son is wor-
shipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic
Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the for-
giveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Friday, March 3 @ 12:15 PM

Praying The Great Litany

Sanctuary open from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM for silent prayer

Sunday, March 5 @ 8:30 AM or 10:00 AM

Sunday morning Holy Eucharist—Lent 2

Monday, March 6 @ 6:00 AM

The ARISE Sacred Hour (online only)

Friday, March 10 @ 12:15 PM

Praying The Great Litany

Sanctuary open from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM for silent prayer

Sunday, March 12 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM

Sunday morning Holy Eucharist—Lent 3

Friday, March 17 @ 12:15 PM

Praying The Great Litany

Sanctuary open from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM for silent prayer

Sunday, March 19 @ 8:30 AM or 10:00 AM

Sunday morning Holy Eucharist—Lent 4

Friday, March 24 @ 12:15 PM

Praying The Great Litany

Sanctuary open from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM for silent prayer

Sunday, March 26 @ 8:30 AM or 10:00 AM

Sunday morning Holy Eucharist—Lent 5

Friday, March 31 @ 12:15 PM

Praying The Great Litany

Sanctuary open from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM for silent prayer

Sunday, April 2 @ 8:30 AM or 10:00 AM

Sunday morning Holy Eucharist—Palm Sunday

FROM THE RECTOR'S STUDY

AGONY IN THE GARDEN

All three of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 26:36–46, Mark 14:32–42, Luke 22:39–46) give us an account of what is often called *the Agony in the Garden*. (NOTE: John's 17th and 18th chapters also give an account of Jesus praying and entering a garden just prior to his arrest.) According to the synoptic Gospels, this event in the life of Jesus occurs immediately after the Last Supper. Following the Passover Feast where Christ has just instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, he leaves the Upper Room and retires to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, bringing Peter, James, and John along with him.

This is clearly an incredibly stressful moment in the life of Jesus, the man of Nazareth. He knows that soon he will be betrayed by a kiss—a betrayal that will inevitably lead to his death on a cross following his arrest, trial, and scourging. With this reality weighing heavily on his mind, he prays three times the following petition: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but your will be done.” After each time of prayer, he returns to his three disciples who Scripture states are just a “stones throw” away from him. But what Scripture also tells us is that while they are in physical proximity to him, they are also asleep.

Three disciples follow the Lord to the Garden to pray. Three disciples instead fall asleep. Jesus is clearly aware of what awaits him—it is the reason he was born. While both fully God and fully man, we see the rawness of Christ's humanity on display in this story. One cannot help but wonder how we might respond if we were in Jesus' shoes that evening.

Knowing that betrayal, vitriolic insults, physical torture, and inevitably death on a cross is what awaits, how would we handle that scenario if we were Jesus? Would we experience such anguish by the impending scene that even in our prayer, we too would exhibit hematomas—a condition in which small capillaries that feed the sweat glands rupture, causing them to exude blood? Would we have the strength to both plead with God for our human life yet also acknowledge that what we really want is whatever the will of the Father is? How would we view our closest friends, if in our darkest hour, rather than praying with and for us, they instead fell asleep?

The typical Holy Week experience for most church parishes begins on Palm Sunday and continues with great emphasis being placed later in the week on the Maundy Thursday celebration of the Last Supper and the crucifixion of our Lord on Good Friday. All of this, of course, plays out so that when we arrive at Easter Sunday, we have the joyful experience of celebrating the Resurrection of the Lord—victory over sin and death!

In most church parishes, the story of the Agony in the Garden is heard during the reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday. Yet little else is ever done with that story. And what a powerfully poignant story it is. For even Christ himself is recorded to have said “do not fear those who can kill the body...” (Matthew 10:28), yet, the pain of this event would be unavoidable for Jesus.

In the Agony in the Garden, we get a glimpse of the true humanity of Christ, who despite the pain of betrayal by friends (Judas by a kiss; Peter, James, and John by falling asleep) and despite knowing the looming physical pain that will slowly but surely result in his physical death, Jesus still manages to pray. In fact, if we read what is often called his “High Priestly Prayer” in John 17, we see that Jesus not only prays for himself, but he prays for his disciples, and for those who will come to believe in him through their message—the Gospel message passed on through apostolic tradition and teaching throughout all the ages to come.

But what if we could offer an intentional act of reparation, at the very least, for the way our Savior’s own disciples abandoned him for sleep? What if there was something we could do to make the story turn out better? Well, the reality is, we really can’t. This story is the story. Two-thousand years later, the Agony in the Garden remains the story of the final hours of the pre-resurrected Christ’s final night on earth.

But what we can do is immerse ourselves in a re-presentation of the story. And that is what I am inviting you to do.

On Thursday, April 9, we will hold our Maundy Thursday Holy Eucharist as we always do. It will begin at 6:35 PM as it always does. It will likely conclude about an hour later after all have partaken of the Body and Blood of our Lord. But as we’ve just been discussing, the evening did not end there for Jesus—and so it won’t for us on April 9. Immediately following the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service, we will begin an all-night vigil in our own prayer garden. From sundown Holy Thursday (approximately 7:30 PM) until sunrise Good Friday (approximately 7:30 AM), members and friends of Good Shepherd Church will take shifts in the prayer garden to participate in an over night prayer vigil.

A sign-up sheet to participate in the prayer vigil is now available. Anyone wishing to participate is asked to sign up for blocks of time (one hour minimum) to assure prayer coverage throughout the night. We fully intend to hold this vigil outside in our prayer garden, but we also recognize that weather can sometimes play havoc with our plans. In the event of rain, we’ll make indoor arrangements. We’ll also have a fire stove in the garden to give off some warmth and light throughout the night and we’ll make provisions for water, hot coffee, and any other items that participants may require.

This vigil is open for participation by all. For anyone with safety concerns given that this will take place over night, please know that I plan to be present the entire time and I’ve also lined up a minimum of one other adult male to be present with me for each of the 12 hours.

As we progress through this season of Lent and approach Holy Week, you’ll be hearing more about this over night prayer vigil. Until then, and...

Until next month, let your light shine!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Randall M. Graf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Randall M. Graf, Rector

AN EXPLANATION OF LENT

From THE PRAYER BOOK REASON WHY (By The Rev'd Nelson R. Boss—Originally published in 1890)

What is the Lenten season, and why is it set apart?

It is a period of six weeks preceding the anniversary of the Savior's death, and is set apart as a special season of fasting, penitence, and prayer.

Why is it called Lent?

Because it always comes in the Spring of the year, and the old Saxon word Lent means spring.

With what remarkable event in the Savior's life does the Lenten season correspond?

The forty days He spent fasting in the wilderness.

Why is the first day of Lent called Ash Wednesday?

It is called so from the custom which prevailed in the early Church of sprinkling ashes on the heads of penitents the first day of Lent, in token of humiliation and sorrow for sin.

Are there any examples of this custom mentioned in the Bible?

Yes; the example of Daniel and of David and the people of Nineveh, to which our Lord Himself refers (St. Matt. 11:21).

If Lent is only of forty days' duration, why does it begin forty-six days before Easter?

Because there are six Sundays in Lent, and as all Sundays are feast days, kept in honor of the Resurrection, they are taken out; and to make up for these, six days are added at the beginning of the season.

How should the Lenten season be observed by Christian people?

As a special season for drawing near to God by extraordinary acts of penitence, charity, and religious devotion; by fasting, and abstinence from public places and of amusement, and from all things that tend to draw away the heart from God.

What is the object of keeping Lent?

To deepen the religious life, to purify the heart from sin, and to unite us more closely to the Savior.



Why does the Church require us to observe the Lenten fast?

1. Because repentance and humiliation are essential to growth in grace; and
2. because these duties are apt to be neglected and forgotten unless some special time is set apart for their observance.

What objection do people sometimes urge against the observance of the Lenten Fast?

They say it is a useless and superstitious custom, and that Christ nowhere commanded His disciples to fast.

What answer do we make to this objection?

1. Fasting was a common practice not only among God's chosen people and His prophets under the Old Testament dispensation, but even heathen people practiced it (e.g., Ex. 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; II Sam. 12:16; Joel 1:14; Jonah 3:5; Ps. 35:13).
2. Our Lord fasted and so did His disciples; (St. Matt. 4:2; Acts 13:2-3, 10:30). And although Christ did not command His followers to fast He assumed that they would do so and gave them direction how to do (St. Matt. 6:17). No one can say therefore that the custom is either useless or superstitious, for it has the highest of divine authority.
3. A few persons who accept the principle of Lent complain that the season is so long that people weary of its observance and relax its discipline. But it is intentionally made long, so that it must be kept by ordered rule and rational self-control, instead by impulsive actions and emotional devotions.



What is the effect of a Lenten season rightly kept?

It purifies the heart from greed and lust, breaks the force of evil habit, brings us near to Christ, and creates a closer bond of union between our souls and heaven.

How long has the custom of keeping Lent been observed by the Church?

We know that it was observed in the first century after Christ, and probably from the very days of the Apostles, though the season was not always forty days in length.



Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and also an example of godly life: give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive these his inestimable gifts, and also daily endeavor to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOTES FROM RINDA

Many of you know that I have a love for Appalachian folk hymnody. One of my favorite hymns is especially relevant for the season of Lent.

The text of "Wondrous Love" first appeared in publication in 1811, and the melody was derived from a popular English ballad.

Shape note singing in 1845 helped to popularize "Wondrous Love" and many other songs of the era. Most people could not read; therefore there is a great deal of repetition which helps the congregation participate in the singing of the plaintive Lenten hymn. It pulls together both the heavenly and the earthly. In the same way that we do not become more heavenly by separating from the world, the Incarnation of Christ teaches us to take part in the heavenly through simple acts on earth--singing, loving, praying. The love of Christ sustains us throughout our lives.



What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!

What wondrous love is this, O my soul.

What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss

To bear the dreadful curse, for my soul, for my soul!

To bear the dreadful curse, for my soul, for my soul.

Rinda Coleman
GSC Music Director



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023

On Sunday, February 26, leaders from Good Shepherd Anglican Church to discuss Vacation Bible School for the summer. The initial planning is underway and continues. Dates have been picked.

VBS will run evenings at Good Shepherd this year from Monday, June 19 to Friday, June 23. Our start time will be 5:30 PM and VBS will dismiss each evening at 7:00 PM.

Please keep your eyes and ears open for more information as plans come together and be thinking about youngsters in your life that would benefit from attending VBS.

Of course, we can always use additional volunteers, so please step up if you are able to help. There is plenty of room for assisting, from working directly with students to helping prepare snacks.

For more information, see Rinda Coleman or Fr. Randall.



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A LENTEN COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

From the ACNA (2019) Book of Common Prayer, page 544.



PRAYING AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown began, Good Shepherd Church has been streaming our 10:00 AM Sunday morning Service of Holy Eucharist each week. During the distribution of Holy Communion, the lector reads a prayer entitled ***An Act of Spiritual Communion*** for those who are watching at home and are unable to partake in the reception of Holy Communion sacramentally. That beautiful prayer comes from the Book of Common Prayer (pg. 677, ACNA 2019) and can be prayed by a Christian any time they are longing for the grace of Holy Communion but are unable to receive the tangible elements of the sacrament. These are the words to that prayer:

***Dear Jesus, I believe that you
are truly present in the Holy Sacrament.
I love you above all things,
and I desire to possess you within my soul.
And since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart.
I unite myself to you, together with all your faithful people
gathered around every altar of your Church,
and I embrace you with all the affections of my soul.
Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.***



GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

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Father Randall M. Graf, Priest & Rector

REGULAR WORSHIP SERVICES

Holy Eucharist

8:30 AM & 10:00 AM every Sunday

Red Letter Holy Days

12:15 PM or 6:30 PM

