



Christ Church

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*The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector*

March 30, 2023

Dear Friends and Parishioners of Christ Church,

The season on Lent is winding down and we are moving into Holy Week and Easter. I hope you can join us for many of our worship services and events in the coming week, which are detailed in this letter.

### **Pre-Easter Cleanup**

On April 1, from 9:00 am until noon we will clean. Our goal is threefold: 1) clean up all of the outdoor trash and litter that has gathered around the property throughout the winter; 2) finish organizing the conference room, Undercroft kitchen and other fellowship areas; 3) dust and the church and other accessible areas around out buildings. There will also be a team making Palm Crosses on Saturday morning in Library. Many hands make quick and light work. Donuts and Coffee will be provided, and those who attend are encouraged to get lunch after at a local restaurant.

### **Palm Sunday: Sunday of the Passion**

We offer two worship services on Palm Sunday. The liturgy on Palm Sunday is the only service of the year that includes two gospel readings. The first is the Palm Gospel which is followed by the blessing and distribution of Palms. The second is the Passion narrative, which is from Saint Matthew's Gospel this year. One of the wonderful aspects of Palm Sunday is the interactive, multi-reader presentation of the Passion narrative. Everyone plays the role of crowd, bystanders, people, etc., and other parts are assigned in advance.

The 8:00 am service will be said and will begin in the Church. The 10:00 am service includes the choir and (weather permitting) we will begin with the Palm Blessing outside behind the Church next to the Garden of Resurrection – if it rains we will begin in the Parish Hall. After the blessing and distribution of Palms we will process into the church. Processions work when everyone processes together – try not to sneak into the church early at the 10:00 am service unless you really need to. Both services will be followed by Coffee Hour. Please note that there will be no 5:00 pm liturgy on Palm Sunday.

## **Holy Tuesday Mass of Collegiality & Chrism Mass at the Cathedral**

If you are in New York City on Tuesday you might consider coming to this service at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine on 112th Street & Amsterdam Avenue. All of the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the diocese— and many laity too— gather at the Cathedral on Tuesday in Holy Week for this once-a-year liturgy which begins at 10:30 am. This service includes three special rites: 1) renewal of ordination vows for all of the clergy; 2) blessing of the Chrism Oil by the Bishop of New York that is given to every congregation to be used throughout the following year at Baptism; 3) consecration of a large eucharistic Host that is broken into hundreds of pieces (called *fermentum*) and distributed to every congregation in the diocese for use at the Easter Triduum as a sign of unity between every congregation and the Bishop. The *fermentum* piece that we receive will be placed into the chalice on Maundy Thursday.

## **Wednesday in Holy Week**

We will have our normal Wednesday eucharist at 5:15 pm during Holy Week. The service will be followed by a movie in the Parish Hall (beginning at 6pm). The film, called “The Miracle Maker” is about the life of Jesus and is appropriate for all ages. Bring \$10 to help cover the cost of pizza for the movie. All are welcome, and this is our second “Family Night” of 2023.

That evening, the Men’s Group will also making sandwiches and bagged lunches for Outreach at 6pm this Wednesday in the Undercroft.

## **Maundy Thursday**

As is our custom, we are having an Agape Supper at 6:00 pm prior to the main liturgy which starts at 7:30 pm on Maundy Thursday. The 6:00 pm Supper this year will be a feast of Mediterranean and Greek food, catered by a local restaurant. Please [RSVP](#) to Marie Main in the parish office if you are coming (dinner cost is \$35 per person – children under 12 are free).

The Liturgy of the Lord’s Supper begins at 7:30 pm, and it is one of the more popular and powerful worship services of the year. This liturgy includes a few special rites: The washing of feet (all invited to have their feet washed and to wash other’s feet); the *fermentum* consecrated by the Bishop is included in the Holy Communion; near the conclusion of the service the Sacrament is reserved at the Altar of Repose; the service does not end with a blessing or dismissal, but rather it concludes with the reading of Lamentations while the Sanctuary is stripped of ornamentation and the Altar is washed by the Clergy. In the darkness the Choir then sings “Stay with me” and the people are invited to “Watch” in silence at the Altar of Repose.

The Watch before the Blessed Sacrament continues until midnight, and the church will remain open until then. A sign-up sheet is available for those who are interested in

signing up in advance for the Watch. Ideally we have at least one “watcher” present at all times until midnight.

### **Good Friday**

Our Good Friday liturgy begins at noon on Good Friday. The Good Friday liturgy picks up where Maundy Thursday left off, and it too is one of the more popular and powerful worship services of the year. This liturgy includes a few special rites that are unique to Good Friday: the service opens in silence with no formal opening acclamation or song of praise; Saint John’s Passion is chanted by our choir; the Priest and Deacon offer the Solemn Collects which are the most ancient form of the Prayers of the People in the Church; the Good Friday Cross is processed to the altar and placed for adoration, and there is an opportunity to kneel in devotion before the Cross; and Holy Communion is distributed of the Reserved Sacrament. There is no celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Good Friday or during the day on Holy Saturday, and communion – when it is offered – is from the Sacrament reserved at Maundy Thursday.

I am available for Confessions before and after the Good Friday liturgy and also on Holy Saturday morning. Please reach out to me in advance if you would like to make a Confession at a set time. A useful form of self-examination prior to Confession is in the Saint Augustine’s Prayer Book ([you can find a PDF of the relevant portion here](#)). If you do not make an appointment, you should be able to make a Confession after the Good Friday liturgy or after the Holy Saturday Morning Prayer service, but you may have to wait until those who have made appointments have finished.

### **Holy Saturday - Daytime**

There will be a brief prayer service in the Garden of Resurrection (weather permitting) at 9:00 am on Holy Saturday morning. This service will be followed by a blessing of the Garden of Resurrection and (if we are outside) the reading by name of every person buried in the Garden as the niches are blessed. As noted above, I will be available on Saturday morning to hear Confessions.

### **Holy Saturday – The Great Vigil of Easter**

The Easter Vigil is the highlight of the liturgical year and concludes the Easter Triduum that began with Maundy Thursday, moved through Good Friday, and finds its culmination on the darkness when Jesus rose from the dead. If you are able to come to the Easter Vigil, you should - it's called the Great Vigil for a reason.

This is our first Easter service each year, and it begins at sundown at 7:30 pm. The Easter Fire will be kindled in the Garden of Resurrection, and the Paschal Candle will be prepared and lit. We will then process into the Church for the chanting of the Exsultet and the reading of the Great Prophecies by candlelight. At the conclusion of these prophecies, the Great Noise and Alleluia ushers in Easter Day. Bring your handbells for Easter Eve so you can ring them during the Great Alleluia! After the first Easter Gospel

we will renew our Baptismal Vows and then celebrate the first Eucharist of Easter together!

Following the Great Vigil of Easter we will gather in the Library for our annual Easter Vigil Dessert Potluck and the annual First Toast of Easter.

### **Easter Sunday**

As is our custom, we offer two liturgies on Easter Sunday, 9:00 am and 11:15 am. Both services include the choir, Easter hymns and music, and brass instrumentalists. The 9:00 am will be shorter (finishing around 10:00 am) and is designed for families with children. Immediately after the 9:00 am concludes we will have our annual Easter Egg Hunt on the Field and Potluck Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall. The 11:15 am will include a bit more music, and will be followed by mimosas, champagne, and cider. Please note that there will be no 5:00 pm liturgy on Easter Sunday.

All of these services will be livestreamed. Share the livestream links with your friends and on Social Media, and bring your family and friends to church for Holy Week and Easter! Have a blessed and happy Holy Week and Easter!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Hoxsie Mead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

The Reverend Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector