

# North Raleigh Presbyterian Church

## Devotions for Holy Week 2020

### *Stations of the Cross*

The Stations of the Cross depict Jesus' journey through Jerusalem to Calvary in a series of fourteen 'stops'. Some of the stops have their basis in scripture; others are from traditions outside the Bible. Each stop offers us a chance to ponder and respond to Jesus' suffering. A fifteenth station representing the resurrection is often included in order to take the story through Easter.

Artist Jean Silvestri, a resident of Croix des Bouquets, Haiti, hand carved these stations and other works of art from cast-off steel oil drums. Nolan Huizenga, a Teaching Elder in the PC(USA) (and a friend of Lisa's), photographed Silvestri's artwork and is glad to share his work with us.

This booklet leads you through the Stations of the Cross by considering two stations each day from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday. We have offered prayers, liturgy and simple activities you might choose to use as you consider each station.

If you want a deeper experience of the Stations of the Cross, there are many ways to expand your engagement with them. For example, you might:

- 1) Identify each of the characters depicted in the depiction. There are not right answers for who's who; decide how you see the story in the artwork.
- 2) Read the scripture lesson that is paired with the station.
- 3) Choose one of the characters whose perspective you want to explore more deeply. You could choose Jesus, another person, an animal or even a plant in the depiction.
- 4) What is this character doing? seeing? saying? thinking? feeling?
- 5) How does the scripture lesson speak to that character? (If you think it does.)
- 6) Write a short prayer from the perspective of the character.

It is our hope that this devotional guide will help you observe Holy Week in such a way that your Easter morning celebration is ever more glorious!

Peace to you,

Lisa FW Hebacker

Brandon Melton

## Palm/Passion Sunday Morning

### 1. Jesus is condemned to death



Isaiah 53: 4-8

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people.



Palm Sunday begins with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Crowds shout "Hosanna! Save us!" while they wave palm branches in celebration.

How would you celebrate such an arrival at your house? Consider clipping some tree branches to wave around the yard or as you walk down the driveway.

Imagine welcoming Jesus to your neighborhood. What would you want to shout to him as he goes by?

The celebration that begins Palm Sunday quickly turns into jeers and taunts and shouts of "Crucify him!" How is your celebration and welcome different when you know that Jesus' journey is going to lead to his death?

## Palm/Passion Sunday Evening

### 2. Jesus takes up his cross



Mark 8: 34-38

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”



A Prayer for Palm/Passion Sunday:

Merciful God,  
as we enter Holy Week and gather at your house of prayer,  
turn our hearts again to Jerusalem,  
to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
that united with Christ and all the faithful  
we may one day enter in triumph  
the city not made by human hands,  
the new Jerusalem, eternal in the heavens,  
where with you and the Holy Spirit,  
Christ lives in glory forever.  
Amen.

## Monday Morning of Holy Week

### 3. Jesus falls the first time



Luke 22: 39-46

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”



Monday Morning Activity - Do Morning Prayer as a family. The steps are simple:

1. Say Opening Sentences, like, “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.”
2. Give thanks for your Baptism.
3. Read Psalm 36:5-11.
4. Read Luke 22:39-46.
5. Pray for the church, the world, our community, and yourself.
6. Dismiss each other with a blessing.



## Monday Evening of Holy Week

### 4. Jesus meets his afflicted mother



Matthew 12: 46-50

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”



A Prayer for Holy Monday:

O Jesus, you said your disciples, your brothers and sisters,  
are the ones who do your will.

Give us the strength to follow in your footsteps,  
doing your will by loving and serving those in need. Amen.

Tuesday Morning of Holy Week  
5. The cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene



Isaiah 58: 9-11

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.



Simon helps Jesus carry the burdensome cross. When has somebody helped you make a difficult journey? Has there been a time when someone prayed for you during a hard time or when someone was a listener for you through troubles? How did such a friend help you make that difficult journey? Share about a time when you were the one who helped someone else.

Now think about a time when Jesus has been the one who has helped you. How does it feel to know that Jesus shares the burdens you carry?

Make and send a thank you card for someone who has helped you. If you want to send a thank you card to Jesus, maybe for the privilege of helping others or for the help Jesus offers, you may send it to church and we'll share it with the congregation sometime.

Tuesday Evening of Holy Week  
6. A woman wipes the face of Jesus



Matthew 25: 37-40

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’



Visit <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/poverty/> to learn about ways Matthew 25 leads us to serve. Then offer a prayer like this one inspired by Matthew 25:

Merciful God, you have taught us “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. Trusting in your grace, we offer our prayers for the church and the world, neighbors and loved ones.

We ask your provision for all people. Teach us compassion and generosity. Put an end to economic exploitation. Fill this world with your abundant life. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We search for your beloved community. Break down systems of oppression. Dismantle patterns of privilege. Establish justice and equality for all. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We knock at the door of your house. Gather us in as disciples of your way. Nourish us in faith and faithfulness. Send us out to share good news. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Living God, we ask, we search, we knock — answer our prayers with the power of your Spirit, who transforms our lives to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## Wednesday Morning of Holy Week

### 7. Jesus falls a second time



Psalm 18:5-7, 18-20

The cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me; for they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity; but the Lord was my support. He brought me out into a broad place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he recompensed me.



Wednesday Morning Activity – The psalmist says that God delivered her because God delights in her. To delight in something or someone means to take pleasure in something or someone.

For your morning activity, tell one another or someone you love one thing you delight in about who they are and then give thanks to God for the loved ones in your life.



Wednesday Evening of Holy Week  
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



Luke 23: 27-29

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’

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A Prayer for Holy Wednesday from the *New Zealand Prayer Book*:

Loving God, you cause rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

Hear our prayers for your church and world:

for the hungry and the overfed, may we have enough;

for the mourners and the mockers, may we laugh together;

for the victims and the oppressors, may we share power wisely;

for the peacemakers and the warmongers, may clear truth and stern love lead us to harmony;

for the silenced and the propagandists, may we speak our words in truth;

for the unemployed and the overworked, may our mark on this earth be kindly and creative;

for the troubled and the secure, may we live together as wounded healers;

for the homeless and the pampered, may our homes be simple, warm, and welcoming;

for the vibrant and the dying, may we all die to sin and live to love.     Amen.

## Maundy Thursday Morning

### 9. Jesus falls a third time



#### 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10

[The Lord] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.



Maundy Thursday is when Jesus taught his disciples about the nature of true ministry by washing their feet. Many people would see such an action as a sign of weakness because it was something that servants would do. Discipleship – ministry – is about becoming a servant.

Fill a basin with soapy warm water and grab a towel or two. If you live alone, soak your feet and dry them off tenderly; imagine Jesus has washed your feet. If you have two or more in your household, wash each other’s feet and notice how it feels to serve someone in such an intimate way. How does it feel to be washing someone else’s feet? Share your observations.

Maundy Thursday Evening  
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments



Philippians 2: 5-8

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.



Set a special table for supper tonight. Use “the good stuff” from your cabinets, silver chests and linen drawers. Light candles and put flowers or greenery on the table. Then set a very simple meal – fruit, cheese and bread, maybe a little yogurt or soup.

While you share your meal, read from the Bible about two special meals: Exodus 12:1-4 (5-10) 11-14 and John 13:1-17, 31b-35. What makes those meals special ones?

After supper, put everything away and make sure your table is entirely cleared. If we were gathering at church, we would be clearing the table (actually the whole chancel area!) to remind us that Jesus is about to be denied and betrayed, stripped and whipped, mocked and crucified.

What made your meal special tonight?



Good Friday Morning

11. Jesus is nailed to the cross



John 8: 1-7

..Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

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**THE SOLEMN REPROACHES OF THE CROSS** – Traditionally, these Reproaches are said on Good Friday at the conclusion of the service as an act of communal confession of our own complicity in Christ’s death. They are responsive. As your morning activity, say them responsively or together.

O my people, O my church, what have I done to you, or in what have I offended you? Answer me. I led you forth from the land of Egypt and delivered you by the waters of baptism, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**

I led you through the desert forty years, and fed you with manna: I brought you through tribulation and penitence, and gave you my body, the bread of heaven, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**



What more could I have done for you that I have not done? I planted you, my chosen and fairest vineyard, I made you the branches of my vine; but when I was thirsty, you gave me vinegar to drink and pierced with a spear the side of your Savior, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**

I went before you in a pillar of cloud, and you have led me to the judgment hall of Pilate. I scourged your enemies and brought you to a land of freedom, but you have scourged, mocked, and beaten me. I gave you the water of salvation from the rock, but you have given me gall and left me to thirst, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**

I gave you a royal scepter, and bestowed the keys to the kingdom, but you have given me a crown of thorns. I raised you on high with great power, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**

My peace I gave, which the world cannot give, and washed your feet as a sign of my love, but you draw the sword to strike in my name and seek high places in my kingdom. I offered you my body and blood, but you scatter and deny and abandon me, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**

I sent the Spirit of truth to guide you, and you close your hearts to the Counselor. I pray that all may be one in the Father and me, but you continue to quarrel and divide. I call you to go and bring forth fruit, but you cast lots for my clothing, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**

I grafted you into the tree of my chosen Israel, and you turned on them with persecution and mass murder. I made you joint heirs with them of my covenants but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy.**

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters; I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy. Amen.**

Good Friday Evening  
12. Jesus dies on the cross



Romans 8.35-39

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.



THE SOLEMN INTERCESSIONS - On Good Friday, prayers for the whole family of God and the afflictions of the world are said. Say these prayers aloud, add in your own prayers, or adapt them to fit for your family context.

God sent Jesus into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death and become heirs with him of eternal life.

Let us pray for the Church throughout the world:

for its unity in witness and service,  
for all church leaders and ministers  
and the people whom they serve,

for all Christians in North Carolina,  
for all Christians in Raleigh,

for all in NRPC that God will confirm us in faith, increase our love, and preserve our peace.

**Silence.**

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them: for Donald, the President of the United States, and the Congress and Supreme Court, for all who serve the common good, that by God's help they may seek justice and truth, and live in peace and concord.

**Silence.**

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind:  
for the hungry and homeless,  
the destitute and the oppressed,  
and all who suffer persecution, doubt, and despair,  
for the sorrowful and grieving,  
for prisoners and captives,  
that God will comfort and relieve them, and grant them the knowledge of God's love, and stir us to minister to their needs.

**Silence.**

Let us pray for all who have not received the gospel of Christ:  
for all who have not heard the words of salvation,  
for all who have lost their faith,  
for all whose sin has made them indifferent to Christ,  
for all who actively oppose Christ by word or deed,  
for all who are persecutors of Christ's disciples,  
for all who in the name of Christ have persecuted others,  
that God will open their hearts to the truth and lead them to faith and obedience.

**Silence.**

Let us commit ourselves to God, and pray for the grace of a holy life, that with all who have departed this life and have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to God alone, we may be accounted worthy to enter into the fullness of the joy of our Lord, and receive the crown of life in the day of resurrection.

**Silence.**

Eternal God of unchanging power and light, look with mercy on your whole church. Bring to completion your saving work, so that the whole world may see the fallen lifted up, the old made new, and all things brought to perfection by him through whom all things were made, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Holy Saturday Morning

### 13. The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother



#### Revelation 7: 14-17

I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”



Holy Saturday Activity - One service in the Great Vigil of Easter is the Service of Reaffirmation of Baptism. One way to reaffirm your baptism is through sprinkling water on yourself and others. Take a bowl of water and then using the tips of your fingers or a leafy branch you find outside, dip into the bowl of water and then flick the droplets of water onto yourself and those with you who have been baptized as you say joyously, “Remember your baptism!”

Another way to reaffirm your baptism is through the following prayer:

Faithful God, in baptism you claimed us; and by your Spirit you are at work in our lives empowering us to live a life worthy of our calling. We thank you for leading us to this time and place of reaffirming the covenant you made with us in our baptism. Establish us in your truth, and guide us by your Spirit, that, together with all your people, we may grow in faith, hope, and love, and be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.



Holy Saturday Evening  
14. Jesus is taken to the tomb



John 12: 23-29

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”

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Holy Saturday Prayer - Saturday of Holy Week is a day-long vigil. The First Service of the Great Vigil of Easter is the Service of Light. In this service, the gathered light the Paschal candle and pray together, giving thanks to God for the inextinguishable light of Christ.

For your Holy Saturday prayer, we encourage you and your family to keep vigil. You may light a candle and keep it lit all night or you may participate in the Service of Light by following the prompts below. You will need three candles: one already lit, one New Candle, one Paschal Candle (a big, white candle).

## A Service of Light:

Sisters and brothers in Christ, we gather in vigil and prayer, waiting for tonight when our Savior Jesus Christ passed from death to life.

This is the Passover of Jesus Christ: Through light we recall Christ's death and resurrection, we share Christ's triumph over sin and death, and with invincible hope we await Christ's coming again.

Hear the Word of God: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[Light the New Candle from the previously lit candle.]

Let us pray.

Eternal God, in Jesus Christ you have given the light of life to all the world. Sanctify this new fire, and inflame us with a desire to shine forth with the brightness of Christ's rising, until we feast at the banquet of eternal light; through Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. Amen.

[Light the Paschal Candle from the New Candle, and then speak the following words]

The light of Christ rises in glory, overcoming the darkness of sin and death.

[Keep the Paschal Candle lit throughout the night.]

## Easter Sunrise

### 15. The tomb is revealed to be empty



Luke 24.1-5

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.



All through Lent we’ve been asking a pair of questions, “What needs to die?” and “What needs new life?” Take some time today to imagine that all of the “new life” items you’ve recognized have been infused with resurrection. How is your life and ministry different in light of the resurrection?

As you embrace Resurrection, sing this brand new Easter hymn to the tune of *Jesus Loves Me*:

Christ is risen shout Hooray! Sing his praise this Easter Day.

He forgives me for my sin, Saying come and live in him.

Shout Hallelujah! Shout Hallelujah! Shout Hallelujah!

Christ is ris’n today.

(Hymn courtesy of Carolyn Drum)

Sometime today, make a cross (this can be as simple as lashing two sticks together) and decorate it. You could use paint, tie on bright ribbons or lengths of yarn, or do what we do at church and cover it in flowers! Take a picture with your Easter cross and share it with the congregation through Facebook or by clicking the “Submit Photos” button at [NorthRaleighPC.org](http://NorthRaleighPC.org) or click this link [NRPC at Home Form](#). Look for the completed photo gallery to be posted around 4 pm Sunday afternoon.