

THIS WEEK AT THE CREEK

April 2, 2009

YEARNING FOR TRANSCENDENCE

"It may seem contradictory to live in the present and yearn for a transformed future. But isn't this true to our experience? So many of us practice the contemplative and meditative techniques of Eastern traditions, which are so effective at grounding us in the present. And many of us spend so much time thinking about the future, in part because our culture is rooted in monotheistic religions that emphasize progress and more linear visions of the world. Living in the present prevents us from living a life deferred. And yearning for a new age keeps us from settling for less than what's possible. There is a power of now and a power of what can be. We'll never fully reconcile these learnings; but we can dance between them.

-- Rabbi Irwin Kula, YEARNING: EMBRACING THE SACRED MESSINESS OF LIFE, p.290

Dear Cross Creeker:

This weekend we will begin *Holy Week*, which for Christians is the most sacred of all our holy days. *Holy Week* begins with Palm Sunday and concludes with Easter. But the only way to get from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday is by way of a rugged road through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. If you are not paying attention, and if you come to worship only on Palm Sunday and Easter, you may think that *Holy Week* is all about singing, giddy laughter, bright lights and exuberant joy. However, between Palm Sunday and Easter there is a lot of messiness: betrayal, mocking, deserting, denying, deceiving and crucifying. Our *Holy Week* story from Palm Sunday to Easter makes no sense unless it is understood against the messiness of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

I invite you bring your life with you into Holy Week. Yes, we will read and reflect on our sacred accounts of waving palms and loud hosannas; of a Passover supper with friends and Judas' stinging betrayal; of Peter's fearful denial and the crowd's bloodthirsty calls for crucifixion; of blood, sweat, prayers and tears; of love, life, death and life again. But the truth is, if we think *Holy Week* is just about all of *that* and what happened a long time ago, we are sadly mistaken. For sure, the sacred stories we are about to hear again are about all of that, but they are about us, too. We are the ones who betray, mock, desert, deny, deceive and crucify. We are the ones who fail in so many ways. We are the ones who put Love to death and choose the way of death over the way of life. We are not always who we hope to be, and no revising of our own history will change this. The cock crows for us as well! This is our story.

But *Holy Week* also names someone else's story, too. It is the story of the One who gave himself in spite of all this brokenness to mend our shattered hearts and fractured lives. It is the story of the One who showed us, and continues to show us, the more excellent way of love and life. It is the story of the One by whom we are invited to release our dark realities and claim the power of God's grace, forgiveness and empowerment in our lives.

So during *Holy Week* we hear the story of who we are, who we have been and what we have done. But we also pay attention to who Jesus is and what he does. This is *Holy Week*...a time to look honestly at ourselves and a time to look closely at Jesus. To see him again! To see him there on the cross! To see what the ugliness in us does – it kills! But even more, to see what Love does – it gives itself away. For you. For me.

Holy Week is not an easy journey to make. We will find ourselves tossed and unsettled between exhilaration and dread. Let us not glorify in what is to come, nor over simplify it, therefore losing the stories' power to change us. Instead, let us listen to the stories anew and receive their power. Embrace the overwhelming dignity of the life of Jesus and the Love of God he sought to live and proclaim amidst the folly of the world. And in the week to come, may you dare to look at all that is yours to live: the pain and the passion, the power and the foolishness, the strength and the struggle. And bring your own foolish, messy, and wonderful life to God, just as Jesus did. We will find that compassion and grace always comes too!

One of the church fathers, writing of the baptism of Jesus and of our own baptism, reminds us that although

that day belongs to the past, the power of the mystery which was then revealed has not passed away; we are not left with a news report of bygone events, to be received in faith and remembered with veneration. God's bounty toward us has been multiplied, so that even in our own times we daily experience the grace which belonged to those first beginnings.

--St. Leo the Great

May the mysteries into which we are now entering this *Holy Week* remain powerful for each of us, offering healing and hope. May our first encounter with Jesus, whenever, however and wherever that took place for each of us, endure and grow. And, as we pray this *Holy Week* for our wounded and weary world, so often dividing and disrupting and despairing, may we also remember to pray for one another that we may each encounter the Risen Christ anew and afresh all along our messy, magnificent way.

I'll be looking for you this weekend as we enter into *Holy Week* and bring our lives with us!

Peace, Pastor Mike

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IN WORSHIP THIS WEEKEND

This weekend we will complete our Lenten series **YEARNINGS: EMBRACING THE SACRED MESSINESS OF LIFE**. Pastor Mike will be offering a prompting entitled "*Living in the Present, Yearning for a Future (Yearning for Transcendence)*". We'll be reading from the Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 and Mark 11:1-11. If you are following along with Rabbi Irwin Kula's book **YEARNINGS: EMBRACING THE SACRED MESSINESS OF LIFE** we'll be considering the section **YEARNING FOR TRANSCENDENCE**. Since it is **Palm Sunday**, we will waving palm branches. **Kenny Roaden** will be singing. We will also partake in communion.

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HOLY WEEK

April 4-5, 2009 – Sixth Sunday of Lent – **PALM SUNDAY** at 5:30 Saturday & 9:30 and 11:00 on Sunday

**Communion served at all weekend services.*



HOLY WEEK

April 9, 2009 – **MAUNDY THURSDAY** at 7:00 p.m.

Communion Tenebrae Service or "Service of Darkness/Shadows": an medieval tradition of readings and extinguishing candles.
Childcare available for children age 5 and younger.

April 10, 2009 – **GOOD FRIDAY WALK FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE**

From 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m., leaving from Courthouse Square

The Good Friday Walk for Justice and Peace, an annual event bringing together Miami Valley organizations committed to doing justice, is a walk through downtown

Dayton with stops at each of the 14 Stations of the Cross, each Station highlighting a particular justice issue. At this year's walk Cross Creek will be hosting Station 5, "Simon Helps Jesus," as we raise the issue of discrimination against LGBT people. Please join us during this important Holy Week event!

April 10, 2009 – **GOOD FRIDAY** at 7:00 p.m.

Completion of the Tenebrae Service and worship in the Style of Taize.

Childcare available for children age 5 and younger.

April 11-12, 2009 **EASTER CELEBRATIONS** at 5:30 Saturday & 9:30 and 11:00 on Sunday

**Communion served at all weekend services. Cross Creek Choir Singing!*

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For a complete listing of events, please go to www.crosscreekchurch.org.