



Greetings,

In the weeks leading to Easter we have traveled the dusty and winding roads with Jesus. Along the way we gave pause to ask serious questions about our understanding of God, ourselves, and our relationship with God. In addition, a few of us participated in Adam Hamilton's study on the life of Simon Peter, reflecting upon this "flawed but faithful disciple." We have done well to prepare for Jesus' death upon the cross and his resurrection on Easter morning.

We approach our final destination marked with hopeful and celebratory shouts of "Hosanna" to the silent tears of disappointment and resignation by week's end. In between the shouts and tears, we are inspired by the widow's offering, blessed to break bread with Jesus at the Last Supper, and hold vigil as he prays in the garden. We are saddened by Peter's denial, mortified by Judas' kiss of betrayal, and horrified at Pilate's spinelessness. The long week concludes with Jesus' death on Friday afternoon.

We have two options for April 10th; the light hearted and festive waving of palm branches (Palm Sunday) or the harder and darker hours of Jesus' crucifixion (Passion Sunday). Jesus' death will be our central focus on April 10th. We will focus on what Jesus accomplishes on the cross and why his death matters for us. Robert Steward asks of the apostle Paul's words to the Corinthians, "Does it not seem odd that... he was resolved not to preach the greatness of God, or the love of God, or even the law of God, but rather the crucifixion Jesus?" Since there were relatively few crucifixions in the Roman Empire, it is prudent we attend to Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross.

On April 14th, @ 7pm with Jesus' death freshly on minds and in our hearts, we will gather at the church for *A Service of Darkness/ A Service of Shadows*. Throughout the evening the story of Jesus' crucifixion will be placed back in the contexts of its larger narrative. We will hear once again, the accounts of Jesus' last week. The service will grow progressively darker, as candles are extinguished one by one. The darkness is designed to resemble the tomb Jesus' body was laid in following his death.

Our community will gather at the First Presbyterian Church at noon on Good Friday. Once again, we will spend roughly an hour reflecting and meditating upon the meaning of Jesus' death for world and for us. This is an annual service calling us to return to the primary importance of these events.

Easter morning, we will offer two very different services. The Rev. Carmen Perry will lead a Sunrise Easter Service @ 6:30am. The service will be held outdoors (weather permitting). We will have our Easter Service at @ 10:30am, complete with some of our favorite Easter hymns, individually wrapped elements for Holy Communion, and the long-standing tradition of decorating the cross with flowers. On Easter morning, we will announce that the grave is empty, but that through God's resurrection power, we are forgiven, and that Christ's victory over Sin and Death opens to us the hope of everlasting life. As we look forward to this year's Easter Alleluia's, can we expect your presence helping us to proclaim, "Christ is risen!"?

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Nick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicholas Perry, *Pastor*

Easter Week Schedule

Sunday, April 10 – Passion Sunday

Thursday, April 14 – Holy Thursday Service – 7pm

Friday, April 15 – Community Good Friday Service at Noon –
Presbyterian Church



Sunday, April 17

6:30 am – Sunrise Service

***FREE** Breakfast in Fellowship Hall

Eggs, sausage, fruit, coffee and juice

*Please sign up on the list outside the church office (or contact Gail Boardway 716-867-2319) so we know how many to prepare for

9:30 - Sunday School

10:30 – Worship with Communion & Decorating the cross