



CHURCH *of the* **HOLY NATIVITY**

CLARENDON HILLS



**INTERGENERATIONAL
EASTER
GARDENS**

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

5:30-7:00 p.m.

**In Memory of Her Supper at 5:30 pm*

CHRISTINE'S EASTER GARDEN

“Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane.”

Matthew 26:36

It is after dinner on the night before Jesus' death. He goes out from the Upper Room to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. From that time of private, passionate pleading with his Father, the next days are a public, wrenching, heart and body-breaking journey for Jesus and his followers—culminating in still another garden. There, by the empty tomb and the meeting with his beloved Mary, the triumphant resurrection is proclaimed.

It is an Easter tradition of many Anglican parish churches in England to create a small garden, usually including Calvary's hill and Jesus' tomb, silently to tell the story of these four days. I started to build such gardens several years ago with my own family, using the experience as a meditation—to watch and pray with our Savior through his trial, execution, entombment, and resurrection. The request to share this with our CHN family led to the Easter garden you may have seen. It symbolizes our walk with Jesus to Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha—and to the garden of resurrection.

On **Maundy Thursday**, the moss-covered hill lies empty except for the crown of thorns, three prone crosses, and the bare and open tomb.



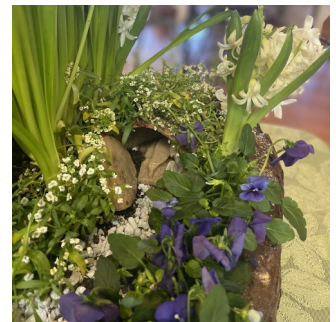
On **Good Friday**, the crosses stand upright; the tomb is closed and sealed after the Good Friday devotions.



Holy Saturday is a time of silence and reflection.

On **Easter Sunday** morning, the seal is broken. The tomb is empty, save for the discarded shroud and the separate head cloth. The center cross bears a floral spray to celebrate the miraculous journey from death to life. Some other symbols:

- ◆ *Tall, fragrant white flowers* at the tomb's entrance represent the dazzling angelic messengers who tell the disciples, "He is not here—why seek the living among the dead?"
- ◆ *A cluster of blue flowers* at the other corner represents the women of Jerusalem on the Via Dolorosa, also Mary and the women keeping vigil at the foot of the cross and by the sealed tomb.
- ◆ *The gravel path* tells of the way of the cross and of our life's journey.
- ◆ *The golden daffodils' trumpets* announce the Good News.



Perhaps if a visitor to an English church were to ask what all this means, they might be told it's "just England's traditional Easter garden." The meanings, described above come from the mind of this gardener—and hopefully each one who sees it may find their own meaning.

"There was a garden near the place where he was crucified—and in the garden a new tomb in which none had yet been placed."

John 19:41

Dr. Christine S. Winter Massie

REFLECTIONS FOR A CHILDREN'S EASTER STORY GARDEN

HOLY WEEK

The last week in Lent is called **Holy Week**. Holy Week is filled with stories about Jesus.

On **Palm Sunday** we hear how Jesus and his friends traveled to the great city of Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover. At Passover the people of God remember that they were once slaves in Egypt. They remember how God saved them. They remember how God led them through the sea and the desert to freedom. As Jesus came near Jerusalem, crowds of people welcomed him. They threw their coats and palm branches on the road and shouted, "Hosanna!" "Save us now!" I wonder who they thought Jesus was? I wonder what they hoped he would do for them?

On **Maundy Thursday**, we hear the story of the night Jesus and his friends ate together for the last time. Before the meal, Jesus took a cloth, a bowl, and a pitcher of water. He got down on his knees and washed his friends' feet, which were dirty and sore from walking. That is who Jesus is. He pours himself out like water from a pitcher. He touches what is dirty and hurting and makes it clean and whole. Jesus told his friends: *This is what you must do for each other. Love one another as I have loved you.*

On **Good Friday** we hear how people who did not like Jesus came and carried him away. They made fun of him, bullied him, hurt him. They took everything from him, even his clothes. They nailed him to a cross. Jesus died.

As we listen to this story everything around us changes. The candles on the altar are snuffed out one by one. Darkness creeps in. All the colors are carried away. The cross is draped in black. The church is not dressed in purple anymore. It is bare and sad and full of shadows.

But then, on **Easter Sunday**, the darkness drains away and the air feels full to the brim with color. God has done a wonderful thing! "Alleluia!" we sing. "Jesus is risen!" "The Lord is risen indeed!" The colors of the sunrise spill over and splash into our church. Everywhere there are flowers and green leaves, beautiful banners and bright sunlight. The shadows are gone. The tomb is empty. Lent is over.

***We have made time. We have made space. We have made room. We are ready now.
Everything is different. The whole world is new! It is Easter morning!***

*The above reflection is adapted from Laura Alary, *Make Room: A Child's Guide to Lent and Easter*

Ready to make your garden? Include things from Jesus' story in Holy Week: the cross, the tomb, and a path. Choose other items you'd like to help you tell the story. Read the following stories each day and open one egg. Move things around in your garden to tell the stories of Holy Week.

PALM SUNDAY

Hosanna!

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in Heaven. Glory to God!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Mark 11:1-11 – *The Peace Table*, p. 260

Read the story "Hosanna!" on pages 260-261 in *The Peace Table* and open the first egg. Wave your leaves and branches around and place them on your garden path. Would you like to add a donkey like the one Jesus rode into Jerusalem? When Jesus came to Jerusalem, people greeted him as king, but he was a new kind of king—one who rode into the city humbly on a donkey. How is Jesus different from other kings you've heard about?



JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

A Generous Offering

“This woman gave more than everyone else.”

Mark 12:38-44 – *The Peace Table*, p. 266

Read the story “A Generous Offering” on pages 266-267 in *The Peace Table* and open the second egg. What did you find? Does the coin remind you of any other coins you have seen? Do you think it was worth a little or a lot? The woman in our story gave two coins like this one to the Temple where she worshipped God. The Greek words in the Bible for what the widow gave translate to “her whole life.” Just like Jesus gives his whole life during Holy Week, the widow gave everything she had to God. Read the next story to find out about the heart.



The Greatest Commandment

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength’ [and]

‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Mark 12:28-34 – *The Peace Table*, p. 264

Read the story “The Greatest Commandment” on pages 264-265 in *The Peace Table*. How can you love God with your whole self? There are some ideas on pages 348-349. What about loving your friends, family, classmates, and neighbors? Make a list of ideas of loving things you could do for people. Pick one each week through the season of Easter to do for others.

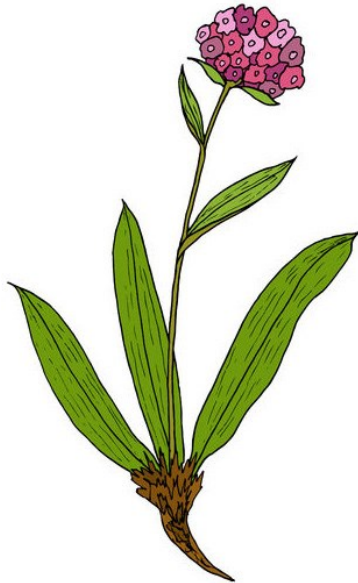
IN MEMORY OF HER

A Gift to Remember

“She showed great love to me. . . . She anointed me before my death and burial. Whenever the good news is told in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

Mark 14:3-9 – *The Peace Table*, p. 268

Read the story “The Gift to Remember” on pages 268-269 in *The Peace Table* and open the third egg. Before the Passover festival, Jesus was having dinner with his friends. A woman brought an expensive and special jar of perfume called nard to anoint Jesus’ head, the way a king was anointed. Jesus said she was anointing him for burial and that people would always remember what she did for him whenever the good news is told. I wonder what good news Jesus was talking about. I wonder who the woman was and what she believed about Jesus. Is there a figure of Jesus in your garden? If so, take the felt heart from Day 3, dip it into the oil, and anoint Jesus’ head. What does your garden smell like?



This is what a spikenard plant looks like. Nard oil is made from its roots.

It was very expensive in Jesus’ time.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Last Supper

“He took a loaf of bread, thanked God for it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: ‘This bread is my body, which is given for you. Eat this to remember me.’ He took a cup, and after giving thanks, he shared it with them and said, “This is my blood, which will be poured out for many. When I die, there will be a new covenant between God and all people.”

Mark 14:12-26 – *The Peace Table*, p. 274

Read the story “The Last Supper” on pages 274-275 in *The Peace Table* and then open the fourth egg. Passover is a time when Jewish people remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt. God promised the people that they would be freed from oppression and protected from death. God promised them a future. A symbol of this promise was blood. People put the blood of a lamb on their doors to show they believed in God’s promise.

Jesus was eating a Passover meal with his friends and remembering what God had done. Jesus told his disciples that his body would be given for them, and his blood would be poured out for many. This is what we remember every Sunday when we take the bread and the cup during Holy Communion. It’s a way we remember what Jesus did for us. How do you remember things that are important?



GOOD FRIDAY

Jesus suffers death.

Read the story “Jesus Suffers” in *The Peace Table* on pages 277-279 and open the fifth egg. Jesus gave everything to God, and to us. He died on a cross to show his love for us. Is there a cross in your garden? Stand it up and place the crown of thorns on it to represent Jesus’ suffering and death. Is there a tomb in your garden? Place the linen cloth in the tomb to represent Jesus’ burial. If you have anointing oil left, you can anoint the linen to show the care that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus showed to Jesus. Put a stone in front of the tomb or seal it closed another way. This is a hard and sad story. When Christians are sad, sometimes we say a prayer of *lament*. In lament, we share our hard feelings and questions with God.



HOLY SATURDAY

It is quiet in the garden.

EASTER SUNDAY

He Is Risen!

“Jesus has risen! He is no longer in the tomb!”

Mark 16:1-8 – *The Peace Table*, p. 280

Read the story “He Is Risen!” on pages 280-281 in *The Peace Table* and open the last egg. White is the color for Easter. It is also the color for Christmas. What do we celebrate at Christmas? What do we celebrate at Easter? I wonder what the color white represents on Easter Day. I wonder if it represents new life, like Jesus’ birth and his resurrection. I wonder if it represents joy and victory. What do you feel when you think about Jesus’ resurrection? Take your white flowers and attach them to the cross to show Jesus’ victory over death. Move the stone away from the tomb.

Jesus is risen! The tomb is empty!



Draw your Easter Garden here:



Church of the Holy Nativity

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