

The Anchor

Volume 2 | Issue 2 | April 2024

Contents

- 1 Letter from the Associate Rector
- 2-5 Worship
- 5 Education
- 6 Mission
- 7 Parish Life

For the Human Family

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength is known but the strength of love; So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever. *Amen.*

Letter from the Associate Rector



Dear Parishioners and Friends,

From the pulpit, I recently asked you to think about how many different voices you hear each day. We all hear the voices of our spouses, our children, our friends, and our neighbors. We hear the voices of coworkers, students, teachers, patients, and parishioners; and we also hear the public voices of the press and of the entertainments we choose.

Our relationships are grounded in the ability to hear one another's voices. On a bad day, the voices we hear can be hurtful, divisive, and destructive. But on a good day, the voices help to deepen our relationships with the communities we are a part of. They can remind us of who we are, and who we are meant to be.

Particularly in this season's Gospel readings, we hear the loving sound of the Good Shepherd Jesus, guiding us as we strive to follow him. In carrying out the disciplines we chose during the forty days of Lent, we strengthened our commitment to serve our families, our communities, and the wider world as disciples of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, whose loving voice is echoed and embodied in our common prayer.

The love of Christ belongs to all of you. And because you belong to that Good Shepherd through your baptism, the people of Grace and Holy Trinity will always be here to echo his love to you wherever you are, calling you back into his flock, and back into the House of the Lord, where you will live among us forever.

Faithfully in Christ,

The Reverend Paul Evans
Associate Rector

Grace & Holy Trinity Church

an Episcopal parish on Monroe Park



8 N. Laurel Street • Richmond, Virginia
(804) 359-5628
ghtc.org

Worship

Palm Sunday

Mason New, who serves as a lector, sums up this service and its meaning with his reaction to Palm Sunday's familiar 10:30 a.m. service, saying, "I thought Paul Evans' sermon on Palm Sunday about what Christian sacrifice and service means, related to the woman visiting the church to find her father's name and her uncle's name, who was killed at D-Day, to be the highlight of the entire season for me."

In thanking him, Mason said, "You described exactly what it means not only to live a Christian life of sacrifice, but even if that is not one's religious conviction, it is what is required to live in a free society. Freedom from fascism and hate and power is only possible if we will sacrifice our life and treasure for that ideal."

Maundy Thursday

On Maundy Thursday, the service commemorates the Last Supper, wherein Jesus sits down with his disciples for the traditional Passover Seder, celebrating Moses leading the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt after the angel of death passed over those households and saved the firstborn. That strong tradition is still carried forward by Jewish families and their friends all over the world on the first evening of Passover, which this year was Monday, April 22nd. Its ancient rituals of unleavened bread and wine were reinterpreted by Jesus on that first evening in Passover, and gave us our Eucharistic tradition, which is celebrated all over the world by Christians of all traditions.



(pictured from left to right, pages 2-3)
**Palm Sunday Procession,
Maundy Thursday's Washing of Feet,
Stations of the Cross in Monroe Park,
and Good Friday's Passion Narrative**



Stations of the Cross in Monroe Park

Kathy Wommack, who attended all these services and helped with many of them, including this one, gives us her thoughts about how it was in the park: “Walking the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday in Monroe Park was a powerful reminder of the journey Christ walked and suffered after His betrayal. It was a beautiful, breezy day, and students and others passed by us as they crossed the park. As it happened, there were the perfect number of us to read the verses at each of the stations. It was a solemn and meaningful preparation for the Good Friday service at three that afternoon.”

Good Friday

The tone of the Good Friday service was set by a silent procession of the quartet and clergy, robed in only their black cassocks. The service was solemn and respectful of grief over a cruel death of hope. Many of us were familiar with passages of the reading from Isaiah, from which numerous texts sung in Handel’s *Messiah* are taken.

After the interactive presentation of John’s description of the trial, conviction, execution, and burial of Jesus, we sang *Were You There?*, the moving African American spiritual that probably predates the American Civil War. A series of prayers was next, and then the choir quartet



brought many of us to tears with a flawless rendition of John Stainer’s *God So Loved the World*. Then communion from the reserved sacrament was served, the celebrants and singers filed out, and we followed in uncharacteristic silence.

The Great Vigil of Easter

The Great Vigil of Easter was new to many of the parishioners. The service begins with the Service of Light, illustrating the light coming back into the darkened world, and brought home as a kindled fire is brought to the Paschal candle and, one by one, to the candles held by everyone in the church.



The Great Vigil of Easter

There is real poetry in the liturgy. “This is the night,” it says, “when you brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land. This is the night, when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life. This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave.”

The celebrant introduces the whole story of our Christian heritage with this: “Let us hear the record of God’s saving deeds in history; how he saved his people in ages past, and let us pray that our God will bring each of us to the fullness of redemption.” That history is told in the Service of Lessons, with five passages and six psalms read by lectors. The liturgy continues with the Renewal of Baptismal Vows. At last, the Eucharist is celebrated, and the church is filled with light, bells, alleluias, and the joyful realization that Jesus is not dead, and that God’s promise of our

reconciliation through his Son’s resurrection has been fulfilled.

More than one parishioner has said that the service was more satisfying and meaningful than they had expected. More guidance for the congregation in how to handle both the candles and the Bulletin, and what to do with those candles at the end, was suggested. With that realization noted, this service is sure to become richer as more people are able to attend.

Easter Sunday

The whole week’s experience of the full process began with wandering in Lent, welcoming Jesus on Palm Sunday to what his followers thought would begin a new earthly kingdom, remembering the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, sorrowing on Good Friday, and gradually awakening to the resurrection

through the Vigil. Then we were brought on our way rejoicing into the joyous service of Easter Sunday, with the resurrection of the Alleluia and the flowering of the cross by the adorable children of Grace & Holy Trinity Church (GHTC). In their incorruptible beauty, they are indeed our hope for the future.



Easter Sunday Children’s Homily by Director of Formation Kate Given

Kathy Wommack expressed it for us all like this: “Having grown up Baptist and Presbyterian, never have I ever before uttered ‘Jesus Christ is Risen today!’ until Easter day. Having experienced the emptiness of Maundy Thursday, the power of the Stations of the Cross on Friday, and the bleak darkness of Good Friday, it was a profound release on Saturday night when we experienced the empty tomb, and were finally able to rejoice in singing, ‘Now above the sky He’s king! Alleluia! Where the angels ever sing Alleluia!’”

Alleluia indeed.

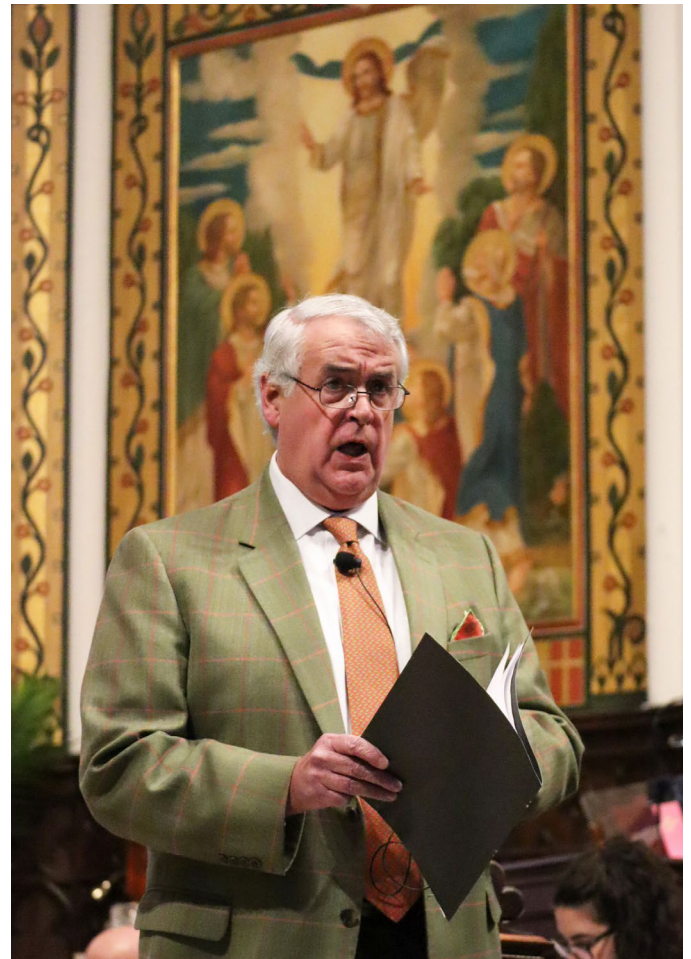
– Ann Norvell Gray

Education

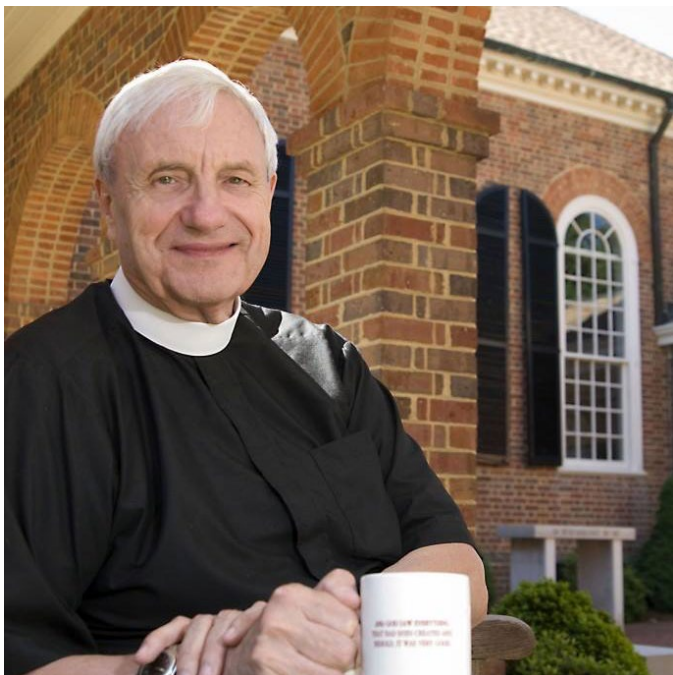
Holy Week’s Scriptural Frames

Palm Sunday to Good Friday, called Holy Week, begins and ends with two lengthy Gospel accounts of Jesus in his Passion. They are lengthy readings because both are the summary of the whole ministry and mission of Jesus.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus enters the time of his fulfillment, understood to be a triumphant king and general. He is hailed by the crowds as king by people who hope, but who misunderstand. The week concludes with his execution by cruel torture on the cross at Good Friday; a king indeed, but one whose crown is fashioned not with jewels



Palm Sunday’s Passion Narrative



The Rev. Charles Joy

but with thorns. He moves from what people expect him to be to what his coming really is: from what we expect him to be to who he really is.

The four gospels are not biographies in any modern sense. They emerge from the memory of the first century Church as those memories were shaped, and then enshrined in the worship at the altar in the power and inspired leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The two we offer in our services were read at GHTC on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, the days that are the poles at the beginning and the end of Holy Week. Mark is the earliest, and John the latest. They lead into the deepening complexity of the Church's understanding after the first century, in the Age of the Church Fathers, and are the basis of their theological understanding.

Both of these gospels center in the Passion of Jesus. While they see that event with the same commitment of belief, Mark's account is streamlined and simpler, while John is more detailed and interpretive. Taken together, they framed our experience this year of Holy Week, and bloom together on Easter Day, in the Paschal Mystery of our redemption.

So Holy Week moves between these poles of our preparation for the Lord; dead, and risen. The liturgies in church are not peripheral. They help us explore and experience the mystery of our salvation, beginning and ending in these two gospel readings, with accounts of what we celebrate liturgically, as the people of God, at the altar of our worship.

– The Reverend Charles Joy

Mission

Youth Mission Project at Bellevue Elementary School

On Sunday, April 14th, Neely Dykshorn collected a group of young people, several of whom were fresh from the morning's Confirmation Retreat, and went up to Church Hill to plant a garden at Bellevue Elementary School. The school was among the first three of the city's public schools, and first opened in January of 1872 at 22nd and E. Broad Streets. 35 years later, the top floor was condemned and taken off the building. Seven years after that, a new building opened where it stands now at 24th and E. Grace Streets.

This address has a significant meaning in Richmond's history. Two remarkable and very different women had ties to this site, and each rejected the roles assigned to them at birth. Elizabeth Van Lew, a rich white abolitionist and spy for the Union Army, lived in the fine house that stood there. Maggie Walker, the child of a formerly enslaved cook in the Van Lew kitchen, achieved national prominence as a businesswoman and community leader, and in 1906 became the first African American woman to charter a bank in the United States.

The patch of land earmarked for the new garden is intended to be a memorial to a Kindergarten teacher named Delois Vaughan.

Because the spot is small, and surrounded by existing shrubs, the plan was based on shade-tolerant bulbs. The garden now includes a wide range of sizes, from tiny Lilies of the Valley to giant elephant ears, which are arranged around a dollhouse sited in the middle by the school. To all reports, the young gardeners were an enthusiastic group of teenagers who worked wonderfully well together. The fruits of their labors will surely be an inspiration to the urban youngsters who are the beneficiaries.

Parish Life

Choosing Our Leadership

On April 16th, the Discernment Committee of the Vestry emailed this message to the GHTC Parish Community, and we're including it in its entirety with the committee chair's permission:

On behalf of the Discernment Committee, I wanted to thank you for your patience and understanding about the need for confidentiality around the discernment for a Priest in Charge. We are grateful for your constant words of encouragement and prayers of support.

We have felt the Holy Spirit at work, and I am pleased to report that we continue to work hard to vet the incredible slate of candidates that we have received. We have evaluated written applications, held Zoom interviews, performed follow-up interviews, and have entered the final phase of in-person visits to our beautiful church.

These in-person visits include eating meals together, holding extended interviews, having question and answer sessions, taking a tour of our building, and performing a private Holy Eucharist and a homily for the Discernment Committee. It is fair to say that we are excited about our finalists.

Barring any unexpected developments, which are admittedly always possible, we anticipate



Clay Hilbert, Chairperson of the Priest-in-Charge Discernment Committee

presenting our recommendation to the Vestry by the end of April or early May.

Lastly, I wanted to thank my fellow committee members: Susan Hankins, Debra Cole, Megan Lecky, Harold Williams, Courtney Scottow, and Chase Peak. They have devoted considerable time and energy into ensuring a thorough and thoughtful process of discernment. They each bring a unique skill set and perspective that has been invaluable to our work and has effectively represented our entire parish. It has been a pleasure discerning with them.

Thank you again for your continued love, support, prayers, and encouragement.

Sincerely,

Clay Hilbert
*Chairperson of the Priest-in-Charge
Discernment Committee*





Grace & Holy Trinity Church

Church Staff

The Rev. Gregory Bezilla
Priest Locum Tenens (Interim)

The Rev. Paul Evans
Associate Rector

The Rev. Stephen Y. McGehee
Priest Associate for Pastoral Care

The Rev. Stephen Y. McGehee
*Campus Minister &
Pace Center Student Engagement Coordinator*

Stanley M. Baker
Assistant Choirmaster & Organist

Roland Boone
Sexton

Judy F. Bowman
Financial Secretary & Administrative Assistant

Tyler Brady
Communications Associate

Dr. Elizabeth Melcher Davis
Choirmaster & Organist

Lauren Frazier
Parish Administrator

Kate Given
Director of Formation

Barbara Hobson-Simpson
Receptionist

Kyle Reed
Communications Associate

Abigail Stinnett
Children's Choir Director

Lay Ministry Leaders

Dan McNamara, *Acolytes*

Jean Jumet, *Altar Guild*

Mary Cay Kollmansperger, *Belize Mission Team*

Meredith McGuire, *Caroling in Monroe Park*

Donna Campbell, *Chalice Bearers*

Nancy Smith, *Christmas Ministry*

Glenn Moore & Christy Ellis, *Circles RVA*

Catherine Perrin, *Flowers for the Church*

Maurice Cole & Deborah Cole, *Foyer Groups*

Lisa Dawson, *Greeters*

Susan Hankins, *Holy Strollers*

Sandie Hale & Karin Walker, *Hospitality Committee*

The Rev. Jack Sutor, *Lectionary Group*

Beth McClelland & Mary Ann Blankenship

Lectio Divina

Ann Norvell Gray, *Lectors*

Chuck Bleick, *Men's Group*

Betsy Featherstone, *Prayer Shawls & Needlers*

Billy McGuire, *Property Committee*

Mary Douglas Erikson, *Shining Examples*

Molly Howle & Porsche Pierson, *Red Door Ministry*

Shelley Thompson, *St. Andrew's School*

Judy Carlson & Mary Ann Blankenship

Spirited Readers Book Club

Cathy Saunders, *Spirited Sisters*

David Hetherington, *Sunday Breakfast*

Terry Hathaway, *Youth Formation*

Clay Hilbert, *Ushers*

Vestry

Meredith McGuire (*Senior Warden*), Chuck Bleick (*Junior Warden*)

Mike Joyce (*Treasurer*), Mary Ann Blankenship (*Register*)

Jane Carlson, Judy Carlson, Maurice Cole, Lisa Dawson, Dan McNamara,
Marshall Morton, Mason New, Nick Sollog, Fielding Williams, & Kathy Wommack