**Update: April 3, 2020**

**Pastor Mark Kvale**

Hello Dear Members of Trinity,

God’s love and peace to you today and always!

I know that sometimes, well, all the time, I have this habit of stating the obvious. So, here is something obvious: I, we, have never experienced a Holy Week like the one coming up. This week for me, has always been at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Christ. We walk with Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, shouting *Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!* We gather on Maundy Thursday, hearing of Jesus’ love for his disciples and for us. We stand at the foot of the cross on Good Friday. We mark Jesus’ Passover from death to life at the Vigil of Easter. And we proclaim on Easter morning,

*Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

We are living a new reality for all of us right now, scattered, sheltering in our homes as the covid-19 virus is something we face. And while our following Jesus will not lead us to worship in a building at 612 N. Water St. in Sparta, we are still Trinity Lutheran Church, called to follow where Jesus leads, called to worship, called to love all in Jesus name, called to be loved by Christ, who gives everything for us and for the world!

Some things of note for us at Trinity:

**Our worship together;**

**This Sunday, April 5: Palm Sunday**

-Worship will be at 9 am and will be streamed live on Facebook, and recorded for viewing shortly after. A link will be made available on our website ([www.tlcsparta.org](http://www.tlcsparta.org)). You can also find the bulletin and announcements, as well as the sermon for Sunday on the website.

-Here are a few things to help us prepare for Sunday’s worship: first from Missy Erickson:

Hello Trinity Sunday School Families!

Drive-thru palm and/or Easter egg pick-up at Trinity

**Saturday, April 4** **from 10:00-12:00.**

We will have Palms and bags with filled Easter eggs (12/child) for you to take home, along with other activities for your family to use during Holy Week. We are trying to get a rough estimate of how many bags to have ready, so if you could please let me know if you plan to drive through that would be greatly appreciated. Also PLEASE REMAIN IN YOUR VEHICLE; unless you need to open your trunk, as we will put the items in your trunk. Be mindful of keeping a safe distance at all times.

Hope to see you on Saturday!

Be well,

Missy

And then, I have attached a palm branch coloring page. Please print this out, our make your own, color it, and then in worship, during the processional hymn, I invite you to wave your palm branch and join us in the joyful procession in your own homes!

**The Three Days: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Vigil of Easter, Easter Sunday**

**April 9: Maundy Thursday: Worship at 7:00 pm**

-Thursday Evening’s worship will be truly a ‘dinner church’ experience. We will be pre-recording worship for this evening and the worship will be designed to be done while you share a meal with your family,

or even if you are on your own. More information coming next week for how to access worship (video, bulletins, readings, etc.)

**April 10: Good Friday: Community *Stations of the Cross* at 11am, Tenebrae at 7 pm**

**Community *Stations of the Cross:*** We gather with our sisters and brothers in Christ from the community of Sparta. This worship will be streamed on YouTube. A link will be provide for accessing the worship. And the worship will be recorded for viewing later in the afternoon.

***Come, Mourn with me awhile: A Service for Tenebrae, 7pm.***

Tenebrae means ‘darkness.’ This worship revolves around this theme and the lengthening shadows of suffering that Jesus experiences from Maundy Thursday to Good Friday. This worship will be pre-recorded and links for viewing and participating in the worship, as well as information on where to find the bulletin will be shared by next Wednesday.

**April 11: Vigil of Easter: Worship at 8:00 pm**

This is the night! This is our Passover with Christ from darkness to light, from captivity to freedom, from death to life. The Easter Vigil is at the heart of our celebration of the Three Days and the pinnacle of the church's year. The resurrection of Christ is proclaimed in word and sign, and we gather around a pillar of fire, hear ancient stories of our faith, give thanks for the gift of baptism, and go forth into the world, aflame with the good news of the resurrection.

**April 12: Easter Sunday: Worship at 9 am**

Easter Sunday brings us the joyous opportunity to worship the risen Lord, Jesus Christ! This worship will be streamed live on Facebook and recorded for viewing later in the day. At 10 am, following the worship, the church bells at Trinity will be rung, and you are invited to step outside and proclaim as loud as you can, ***Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!***

**Prayer concerns:** If you have any prayer concerns, that we can join in prayer with you and for you, please let Pastor Mark know (608.487.2030 or pastor.tlcsparta@gmail.com)

Finally, I would like to share some thoughts from a dear friend and colleague of mine, Pastor Melissa Johnson-Bills, on what Easter means for us this year: Jesus’s resurrection didn’t happen as a grand celebration in the midst of big crowds. He emerged from the tomb mostly alone. Appeared to just a couple of women in a near-empty garden. And the witness of these women went on to spread beyond themselves, to the disciples, to all the ends of the earth. Jesus will rise, even if we don’t have front-row seats for the event. Jesus will rise, and I will proclaim it inside a near-empty sanctuary, and I will channel the women in the gospel, and have every confidence that even one voice shouting “Alleluia” is enough for this news of hope to spread throughout the congregation, the community, and the world.

Jesus doesn’t need us to help him rise. He just needs us to proclaim the good news.

In the love of Jesus,

Pastor Mark Kvale