



The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist
Post Office Box 441 / 307 Federal Street
Milton, Delaware 19968



www.stjohnthebaptistmilton.org

The Rev. Thomas M. White, Rector

Holy Week and Easter 2019

Dear Sister or Brother in Christ,

We are on the threshold of the holiest week in the church year! Beginning Palm Sunday, we will hear again the greatest story ever told, the story that transforms and redeems the world, the story of our salvation by God's extraordinary and incomprehensible love. What would you think, though, of opening a best-selling book, and skipping several of its chapters? Or reading only the first and last chapters? How would we get the full story that way? And so I write to invite, encourage, really plead with you to commit to being present for all of our Holy Week services, concluding and climaxing Easter Sunday. Let's follow Jesus with our palm branches and "Hosannas!" as he enters Jerusalem; be with him in the Upper Room as he washes his disciples' feet and shares with us his Holy Supper; follow in his footsteps on the way to his cross; stand at the foot of that cross to behold his horrible and unimaginable agony, anguish, pain, and innocent death; and finally to peer into his tomb Easter morning with Mary Magdalene to hear the most glorious Good News ever heard—Christ risen from the dead!, and then to sing our unending "Alleluia!" The critical core of Holy Week is called the Great Three Days, also known as the Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day. The ancient church fathers, knowing how necessary it is for worshippers to be present all three days, and so hear the whole story, wisely made sure there was no Benediction at the end of the Services of Holy Thursday and Good Friday. They were making the point that the worship services of the Triduum are actually one service, but over three days. The greatest story ever told, the story of our redemption by Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection, wasn't finally told until the Benediction at the end of Easter Mass.

Let me here list the services (chapters) of "The Greatest Story Ever Told:"

April 14 - Palm Sunday - Procession of Palms, Reading of the Passion According to St. Luke, and Holy Eucharist, 10 AM.

(Weather permitting, we will gather at the front entrance to the church. If not, we will assemble in the parish hall.)

April 18 - Holy Thursday - Holy Eucharist and Stripping of the Altar, 7 PM.

April 19 - Good Friday

- Stations of the Cross, 12 Noon.

- Liturgy of Good Friday - Reading of the Passion According to St. John and Holy Eucharist from the Reserved Sacrament, 7 PM.

April 21 - Easter Day - Festival Mass of the Resurrection of our Lord, 10 AM.

Anthems by the choir and Sunday School.

Easter Egg Hunt for the children during Mass.

Fellowship and food in the parish hall after Mass.

The celebration of Christ's resurrection—and ours with him!—continues on Friday, April 26, 6 to 9 pm, with our Spring Fling! We will gather at the Heritage Creek Clubhouse for the buffet, for which you can sign up by speaking with Sandy Criscimagna after Mass, or emailing: sandycris@comcast.net or deaconstjohnthebaptist@gmail.com. And it's a BYOB event.

Holy Week and Easter tell the story of how the Savior Christ leads us from cross to crown, suffering to glory, darkness to light, hatred to love, sin to mercy, violence to peace, sorrow to joy, despair to hope...because, finally, it is a pilgrimage from death to life, now, all our days, and forever! Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

Wishing you and yours an Easter celebration bursting with joy and love!

In the Name of the Risen Christ,
Fr. Tom