

Holy Week & Easter 2021



Just over a year ago, COVID-19 forced us to close our doors. We didn't gather for Palm Sunday. Our Maundy Thursday Passover—Lord's Supper meal was cancelled. We could find no substitute for being at table together, eating, singing, praying, and remembering God's liberating story. We did our annual "Stations of the Cross" on Zoom rather than walking through uptown and making stops along the way to tell the story of Jesus' final hours on the earth. Rob and Jean did create beautiful "Stations" all around the churchyard fence, and people walked those stations, one-by-one, wearing masks. On Good Friday, we called off Dzieci's theatrical presentation of St. Matthew's Passion. On Easter Sunday rows of lilies adorned the sanctuary, but only a handful of folk were actually physically there to celebrate resurrection, with others on live-stream.

I do thank God for the technologies that have kept us connected over the past year *AND* that things have gotten better. Since September, we have been able to gather for worship with washed hands, wearing masks, separated in our pews. More and more vaccines are "getting into arms," and things are beginning to open up. But, as we come to Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter, we aren't all able to congregate fully and freely, so still we innovate. **Read on the flip side to see what is planned.**



The last two nights I have had this dream of people gathering for some kind of celebration. Some of them I know, others are new to me. Some of them are friends or family members who died years ago, or in the year past. I find my mother in the kitchen making coffee. I discover old Seminary friends who died of COVID talking theology on the couch. There is lots of food and laughter and joy. It is all a great surprise. I am delighted and confused. I am scrambling to find my mask. And then I realize that no one else is wearing a mask. No one is keeping their distance. People are hugging and touching freely. When I wake, I am crying. I have been dreaming about the God's new heaven and new earth where all dis-eases are healed, all our tears are wiped away, and people from every tribe and nation come to feast at God's welcoming table, face to face without masks. The whole creation turned round right in joy and delight. It is coming and it is already here. Alleluia. Amen.

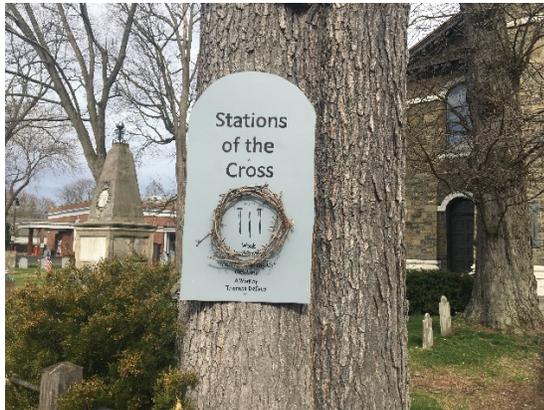
In peace and hope,
Pastor Renée

Palm Sunday Worship



On March 28, you are welcome to gather for Worship in the sanctuary or join the live-stream on the Church's Facebook site. Gathering music begins at 10:25 a.m. For those worshipping from home, palms will be available on Saturday, March 27, by 5:00 p.m., outside the Main Street sanctuary entrance.

Holy Week—Stations of the Cross



Beginning on Palm Sunday and through Holy Saturday, all are welcome to walk the way that Jesus walked with those who stayed with him through his passion and death. Remember his arrest by the Roman soldiers and the fear that overcame some disciples. Remember his interrogation by Pontius Pilate and his unjust condemnation. His torture and execution. Remember his words of forgiveness, love, and anguish from the cross. His last breath and burial. Remember how far God will go to redeem creation, release us from the powers of sin and death, heal us, and bring us home in peace, with rejoicing. From the Cross, sorrow and love flow mingled down.

Maundy Thursday—"The Passion According to St. Matthew" April 1, 2021, 7:00 p.m.



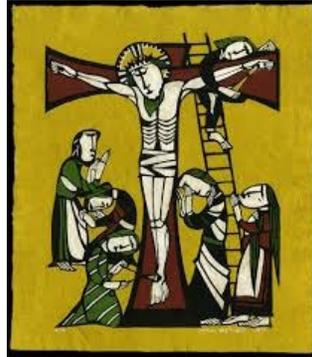
The Passion, performed by the New York City theatre ensemble Dzieci, will be offered via Zoom, Thursday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m. Described as a "dramatic choral liturgy which embraces all religions," The Passion is set in the shadows of a Warsaw Ghetto and incorporates Hebraic song and chant, and ritual elements of Judaism. Our own Willow Kristin Harrington is a member of the cast. You can join on Zoom from your own home, or gather with others at the Church to participate via Zoom on large screen. Have bread and juice on hand to share in the Passover.

Zoom meeting ID: 818 9769 2423 Passcode: 862549. Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81897692423?pwd=RGZzYmorbWNLTHNXtnU5RHhmR3BTUT09>

Easter Sunday Worship Celebration

On April 4, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and the rising of the whole creation, and we with it, to embrace new life and hope. You are welcome to gather for Worship in the Sanctuary or join the live-stream on the Church's Facebook site. Gathering music begins 10:20 a.m. The trumpets, piano and handbells will sound! We hope that the organ will be renovated and ready to play again. Songs of joy will be sung. Good news will be heard. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated. Our special **Easter Offerings will be used for COVID relief—to assist neighbors in paying rent or moving into different housing, and respond to other needs.**



“Crucifixion” by Sadao Watanabe

Luci April-Wine Windsong Rain offers us her **“Haiku In Passion”** (A Series of the Heart)

Feed My Sheep

Seek hungry lonely
Dying homeless rejected
Lost chained, this is love

Never Get the Message

O Jerusalem,
Missed My call – I paid phone bill
Get message machine-

Shallow Root

Palm branches in cheers
A King and a donkey's colt
Tomorrow, cry jeers

The Inner Room

Wine bread delivered
Shed broken given for you
Take eat drink and live

A Portrait of Passion

Painted red crimson
Flesh torn against splinter, Love
Mosaic in wood

IMeMy Nail

The Cross- this the Cross
Nailed- by me, you, meant for
Me, you- for you, me

The Curtain

Top ripped torn in two
Shredded- parting the waters
Free now from Egypt

Comes the Sunrise

Morning Son – breaking
Dawn reborn fresh new alive
This is the third day

©2020

Yesterday we received news of yet another mass shooting in Colorado. For years, the Reformed Church in America (RCA) has called on Congress to implement stronger laws in support of gun control. As we enter these days in which we remember the violent execution of Jesus, we remember the victims of gun violence in our communities, and in this nation, and we pray for the family and friends who grieve their deaths, as well as for those who murdered them. I share here an abridged **Statement from the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) in response to the Atlanta shootings last week.** The RCA, the denomination of which Old Dutch Church is a part, is a member of the NCC. This statement is also our statement:

“We lament the tragic shooting deaths at three locations in Atlanta and the surrounding area on Tuesday evening. Reports indicate that six of the eight victims were of Asian descent and seven were women, deepening our concerns about the increasing anti-Asian and gender-based violence against women and girls in this nation. We grieve for those who have lost their lives and send our condolences to their families. May the heaviness of their sorrow be lifted and may they find peace.

While we do not yet know if the shootings are hate crimes, we do know that 3,795 hate incidents were documented by the Stop AAPI Hate reporting center from March 2020 to February 2021. We also recognize that reported incidences represent only a fraction of the number of hate instances that occur against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) persons.

Since the use of the derogatory term “China virus” was used for political purposes, our AAPI neighbors have experienced a heightened level of discrimination and anti-Asian xenophobia during the COVID-19 pandemic. An alarming series of violent crimes and brutal attacks has occurred across the country while this hateful rhetoric spread. NCC stands with all who live in fear due to the discrimination unleashed on the AAPI community.

Historically, white-only immigration policies in the United States have discriminated against people from Asian countries which was most evident in the Chinese Exclusion Act in the late 19th century. During World War II, people of Japanese descent were the majority of those suspected of being an enemy and unjustly incarcerated in internment camps.

We lament the fear and pain that grips the Asian American community and we stand in solidarity with them,” said Jim Winkler, NCC President and General Secretary. “Racism is ensconced in our country’s history which is founded on injustice and white supremacy. We all need to confront discriminatory acts and racial vitriol that deems people as ‘foreigners’ or the ‘other’. In order to end racism, we must dedicate ourselves to changing the hearts, minds, and behaviors of people in our churches and society to bring healing and wholeness to all.

.... To end racism in our society, we must name it wherever it emerges and do everything in our power to root it out and replace it with just, safe, and equitable communities for all of God’s people.”

As a congregation within the RCA, as a community of Jesus, we are committed to confront racism, and call on Congress to strengthen our nations gun control laws, for the sake of life.