

Holy Week

Devotional Guide

2010

*South Main
Baptist Church*

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FOREWORD

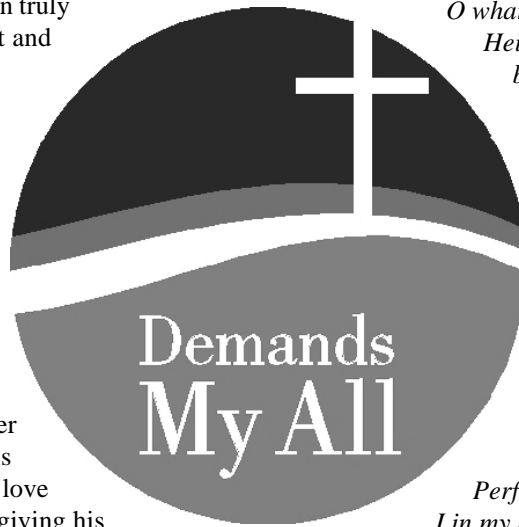
Dear Church Family,

During Holy Week, the last week of Lent, we move behind the joyful celebrations of Palm Sunday and Easter, and focus on the suffering, humiliation, and death of Jesus Christ. It is important to place the hope of the Resurrection, the promise of newness and life, against the background of death and endings. It is only in walking through the shadows and darkness of Holy Week and Good Friday that we can truly understand and celebrate the light and hope of Easter Sunday.

In observing this truth, that new beginnings come from endings, many people are able to draw a parable of their own lives and faith journey from the observations of Holy Week. We hope this booklet will be one resource to you in your Holy Week journey. Regardless of how you pray and read this week, our prayer is that each of us will take time this Holy Week to remember the great love and sacrifice Jesus showed us in giving his life so that we might find true life. May we come before God with humility, may we ask God's forgiveness for sins, and may we rejoice knowing that we live a life of grace because God so loved the world.

Blessings to you this Holy Week 2010,

The South Main Discipleship Committee



Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

O what a foretaste of glory divine!

*Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.*

Refrain:

***This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.***

*Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.*

*Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love.*
-Frances J. Crosby

HOLY WEEK 2010

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HOLY WEEK 2010

Schedule of Events

Sunday, March 28

8:30 & 11:00 Palm Sunday Worship

Sanctuary

Bells, Brass, Children & Palms will help us ponder the question, "What have I put before Jesus in my life?", this morning's worship will kick off Holy Week in a wonderful way.

Monday, March 29th-Friday, April 2nd

12:00-1:00 pm Holy Week Services/Lunch

Westmoreland Chapel/Garden

As part of our Holy Week experience, we will gather daily at noon for a 30-minute service of reflection in the chapel. Monday - Thursday, our Pastor, Steve Wells, will lead us in reflecting on the Beatitudes. Good Friday's noon service will be a musical reflection by organist, Daryl Robinson on stations of the cross. Following the services, stay for a box lunch in the garden. Bring a friend!

Thursday, April 1st

7:00 pm - Service of Shadows

Westmoreland Chapel

A service of communion, scripture, music and prayer recalling the darkness of the crucifixion.

Saturday, April 3rd

9:00 am - Children's Easter Celebration

Front Lawn

This annual family tradition is free but requires an rsvp. Sign up at www.mainkids.org or call Brenda at 713-529-4167 ext 116 to make a reservation for breakfast, egg hunting and infant childcare. No need to bring eggs but each child needs to bring an Easter basket.

Sunday, April 4th

8:30 & 11:00 am - Glorious Easter Worship

Sanctuary

We celebrate Resurrection Sunday, praising from the depths of our souls Christ who died and rose again. Joyous worship will be filled with Hallelujahs to the Risen Lamb!

Short Term Memory

Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, in the love of Yahweh your God, obeying his voice, holding fast to him, for in this your life consists.

Deut. 30:19-20

My, how quickly we forget. We often feel pain when we come to realize how many times we are faced with the same trials and tribulations before we finally see the purpose and offer it all up as we come closer to God along our journey. What we may interpret as punishment or torment can often be our repeatedly missing the lesson. Let us also be wary of shielding those we love from our troubles, because teaching the lessons of what we've learned is what brings us closer to our greatest teacher, Jesus Christ. Often, the purpose of our experience could be sharing that learning with another and helping take them one step closer in their walk with God through our own experiences.

Experiences are our purpose. They are our life blood. They are our exhilarating motivators and our cruelest discouragers. Finding the balance between accepting the lesson and blocking out the possibly painful experience can be challenging, but our gift and promise of forgiveness and eternal life keeps us close to our greatest encounter – the love of God.



We need to be mindful of sharing our experiences, be open to transparency, and be gracious with our wisdom.

We need to remember what we have seen, what we have felt, and to grow from those. We need to share those lessons with ones we love and to share it all with God.

We need to learn from God who sent his child to teach us and to empower us to teach our children as well.

Dear Lord Jesus, As we come before thy throne of grace and mercy, help us to care for and value our lives as well as the gift of experience. Be it good news or bad news, who are we to say? Let us not dwell on the pain, but grow from the healing. Help us to humble ourselves and stay true to our deepest purpose and to your love. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Kaci Coble is a new member at South Main. She is a member of the Young Adult Community and often contributes to the South Main blog.

MONDAY, MARCH 29

Suffering

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

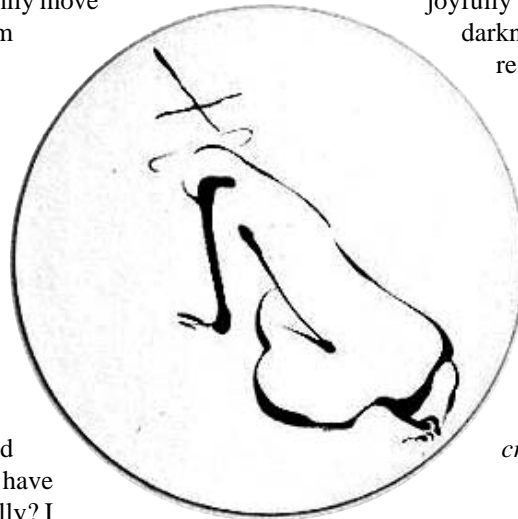
Isaiah 53

I was stumped reading through the instructions for contributing to the Lent devotional book immediately! “Your writing will help our church family move beyond the joyful celebrations of Palm Sunday and Easter, and focus on the suffering, humiliation, and death of Jesus Christ.”

For my entire life the center of Easter has been the joyousness, miracle, and excitement of the resurrection. It is always a celebration of the generosity of our Father to give HIS only son for me and you. I realized I have never taken time to sit with what Jesus went through up to the moment he breathed his last human breath. What he must have been feeling emotionally and physically? I have only a snippet of the truth of his torture, ridicule, and judgment day.

Why have I abandoned this part of the story? If I fully felt the weight of his sacrifice, how would that change the

way I live? Would I be nicer to my family and closest friends the same way I am to perfect strangers? Would I joyfully witness to those who live in the darkness? Would my perceived Christian responsibility change? The answer is yes.



Sitting with the suffering of Jesus changed me this week. It has possessed my every free thought. It has thrown me into the dissection of my own behavior and responsibility.

Dearest Lord, Thank you for bearing the weight of my sins for me. I pray my change is permanent in You. Open my eyes to see your pain and gifts of your crucifixion. Amen.

Kristen Kemp Jurek grew up at SMBC. She is married to Todd Jurek and the mother of three children: Ethan Rosenthal 9, Saige 2, and Linden 1. She teaches the 6th and 7th grade Youth on Sundays and loves them so much!

A Changed Heart

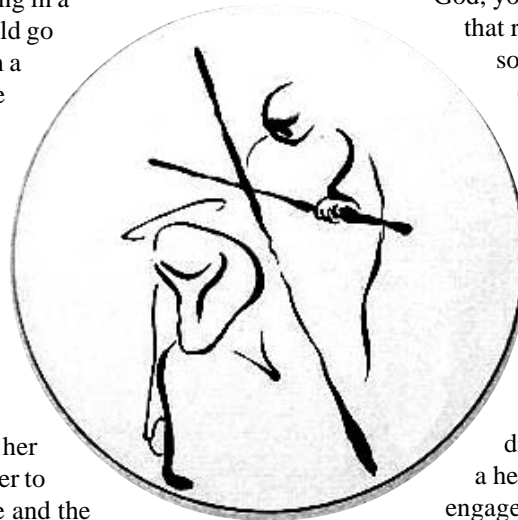
In your prayers do not babble as the Gentiles do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matt. 6:7-8

The last semester of college for our only daughter! Engaged, making good grades, working in a national political campaign, what could go wrong? She had just come home from a semester abroad, and for the first time was sharing living space with people she had not known before. Still, just four months to go. What COULD go wrong?

A major catastrophe, that's what. Her engagement ring was missing! She knew just where she had put it before going to bed, and it was not there. She tore her room apart; I went to Aggeland and systematically tore her room apart from wall to wall and corner to corner. We took the washing machine and the plumbing apart—no ring! In her heart, she knew one of the roommates with a rather questionable character had it. I didn't know what to think.

She prayed; I prayed; all of our family and friends prayed. I offered up verbose, grandiose prayers in my best English teacher and Christian voice. I read books on prayer. I pleaded with God. I promised God. Still, no ring to be found.



In desperation one night, I offered this short prayer:

“God, you know we need to find this ring, but that ring is not the most important thing. If someone does have the ring, please change that person's heart. In your name I pray. Amen.” I went to sleep feeling peaceful for the first time in weeks.

Around noon the next day, our daughter called shouting, “My ring was under my door when I came in from class!” A miracle? No. Our God answered a prayer humbly offered up for the right reason. He knew before we did what needed to happen. He changed a heart! Our good fortune in having the engagement ring back was secondary.

Most precious God, Thank you for listening to us so intently when we empty our hearts to you in faltering words. Thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow during the dark moments of life. Help us to be aware of your presence every minute of every day. Amen

A retired educator, Bettye Carpenter is a member of the Power and Light Community.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

Pass It On

But take care, as you value your lives! Do not forget the things which you yourselves have seen, or let them slip from your heart as long as you live; teach them, rather, to your children and to your children's children.

Deut. 4:9

What memories flash through my mind when I think of the old hymn “Blessed Assurance” which is this year’s Lenten Theme. I remember special Sunday evenings in my childhood church with song services called “You Pick the Hymn.” My Dad always requested his favorite: “Blessed Assurance.” But it was never just “Blessed Assurance”, rather “Blessed Assurance, JESUS IS MINE”—with great emphasis on that last phrase! Jesus was real in Dad’s everyday life.

On Valentine’s Day 2008, Dad died at the age of 93. He was the grandest of earthly fathers—the epitome of what a Christian dad is all about. He taught me from his knowledge of life based solely on Biblical principles which he had studied throughout his life and which he used as his road map for living. Dad graced my life by living those principles daily. He taught me as much by the way he lived as he did through the gentle instruction he gave.

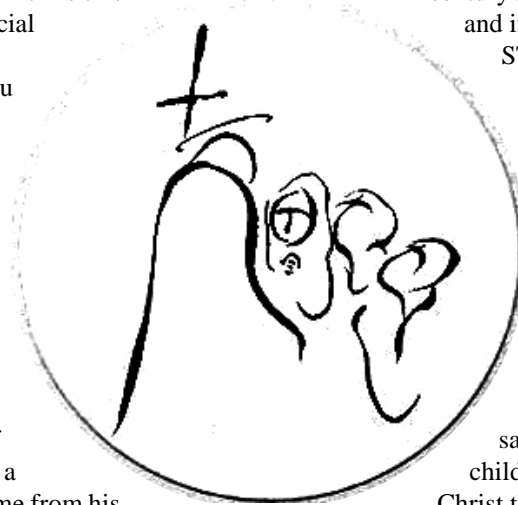
What does Moses’ instruction to the Israelites “not to forget the things which you have seen, or let them slip

from your heart” have to do with our lives in the 21st century? Our lives today are so full of STUFF; and if we are honest, we often find that STUFF is what we are worshipping rather than the Living God. The relevant message of Moses for today is TEACH! Teach children God’s principles for living. My task is to pass on, to teach, what I have seen and heard from my Dad’s Christian life and teachings to my children and to their children.

Christ taught that we as Christians are to be the salt of the earth. May our saltiness as Christian parents make our children so thirsty for what we have found in Christ that they rush to the Fountain of Life and find Living Water to quench their thirst. Dad did!!

Heavenly Father, Help us to claim the blessed assurance of your gift of an abundant life here, now, and forevermore through Christ’s redeeming love. Amen

Gary Inman is the father of Skyler and a member of the Pilgrimage Class.



MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 1

What Wondrous Love is This

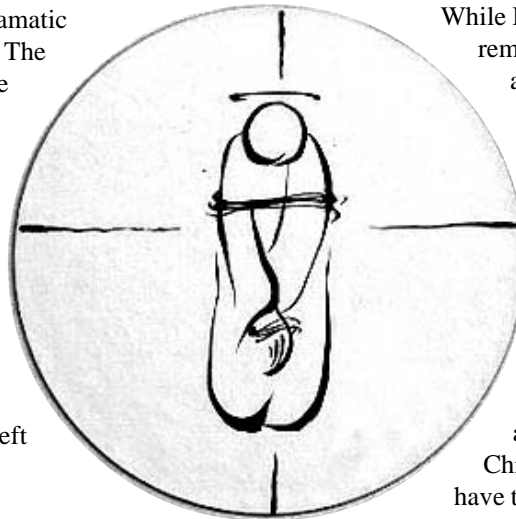
Both the one who makes men and women holy and those who are made holy are of the same family, so Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 2:11

Like many children, I was prone to dramatic displays of emotion to win attention. The one occasion when my emotions were never an act, however, was Maundy Thursday.

Much like at South Main, the North Carolina church in which I grew up held an annual service in which lights were slowly burned out as congregants heard the story of Christ's final days before his death. When the Christ Candle was carried out of the room and we were left in tomblike silence and darkness, our confusion and grief was genuine.

The disjointed atmosphere between Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday always comes as a shock to me. I wondered how events in Jerusalem could have turned so sour so quickly. How could the disciples who had traveled at Jesus' side abandon him as he was being sentenced to die? I asked myself if there was any likelihood that I would have acted differently, but even as a child, I knew that I could not have stood blameless before the cross.



While Holy Week invites us to examine the remarkable life and sacrifice of Jesus, it also calls forth an introspective, penitent, and perhaps unusually truthful mindset. This week makes Christians marvel like the hymn writer, "What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!" Who are we that God could possibly love us?

Let us take time during Holy Week and beyond to express our gratitude for Christ's sacrifice that enables us "who have the Son to have life" (1 John 5:12).

God, we are truly grateful to be your children and Christ's brothers and sisters. Help us to remember our spiritual bloodline when we are sinking under the weight of our fear and grief. Thank you for your endless blessings and love.

Marie Parks is active in South Main's music, college, and youth ministries. She is a writer for The Methodist Hospital Foundation.

The Difference

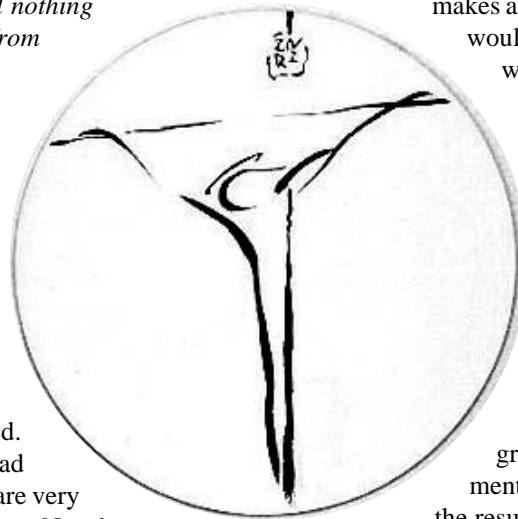
The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.'

Luke 10:17

He took the twelve aside and said... 'The Son of Man...will be mocked, maltreated, and spat upon. They will flog him and kill him. And on the third day he will rise again.' But they understood nothing of this...its meaning was concealed from them.

Luke 18:31-34

We were sitting in Mr. Negi's office at the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute in New Delhi getting to know each other, exchanging small talk. He wore a turban, which told me he was a Sikh, one of India's minority religions. "What do you like to do in your spare time?" he asked. "Each Sunday I teach a Bible class," I replied. Immediately his face lit up, "I have read your book! Sikhism and Christianity are very similar," he told me. He continued, "Guru Nanak (who founded Sikhism in the fifteenth century) and Lord Jesus both taught and believed in good works, in community service, helping the needy and feeding the poor. Both believe in one God, and our good works bring us into favor with God." Unfortunately our busy schedule did not allow us to finish our conversation.



But for Holy Week Mr. Negi would have been right. Even Jesus' disciples rejoiced at the good works but could not comprehend Christ's coming passion. Holy Week makes all the difference; without it Christianity would be but one other in the long list of world religions.

When I returned to the States I wrote Mr. Negi. In part I said. "I am sorry that we did not have time to continue the discussion on our respective faiths. We had talked about good works, and I should let you know that Christians believe that forgiveness by God is a free gift, because of the sacrificial death of Christ. Our good works come in gratitude for that gift and in acknowledgment of God's love for us and our belief in the resurrection." The passion does make a difference!

Heavenly Father, Help us to remember the love of Jesus shown on the cross and to accept the new life and love and freedom that He offers us. Amen

Peter Almond is a retired medical physicist. For many years he taught the Men's Bible Class and is currently teaching the Gospel of Luke in the Artesian Well Bible class.

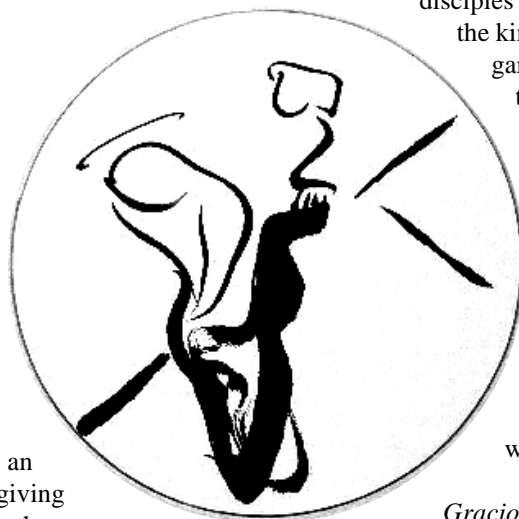
Love So Amazing

Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself and took on himself the form of a servant and was made human. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even a death on the cross.

Philippians 4:5-6

In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton tells a story of an angel seeking to be equal with God who was cast out of heaven. The fallen angel says, “Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.” What a difference between those words and the words of Paul. Christ did not consider equality with God as something to be valued over all else. Instead he lowered himself to the level of humanity, and in humble obedience gave himself to death. It is an act of divine grace – undeserved, all-giving love, the supreme sacrifice of self for others.

How often our Savior could have turned back. During his wilderness experience, he could have turned back fearing that the road ahead would lead to a cross. He could have turned back the many times he found himself with little to eat and no place to call home. He could have turned back when the Pharisees hounded his every step, cross-examined his every gesture, stirred up public opinion



against him, and with every passing moment plotted his death. He could have turned back when he observed his disciples arguing over who would be greater in the kingdom or when they fell asleep in the garden. He could have turned back when they turned their backs on him and ran.

But he did not. Instead his heart was filled with love as he heard the despair of the lost. He saw their faces some weeping; some obscured by fear or twisted with hate. Among the faces he saw your face and mine, our fear, our tears, and our silent pleas. For that reason, we offer him our worship and praise while seeking to serve and follow him.

Gracious Father, thank you for your amazing love. As we explore its sacrificial meaning during this Holy Week, teach us how we might humble ourselves to better serve and follow you.

Many years ago Susan Sellers discovered SMBC through an outreach program known as “Kids Klub.” She has a passion for parent ministries which enrich families.

In the Garden

Going a little ahead, he fell to the ground and prayed for a way out. “Papa, Father, you can—can’t you?—get me out of this. Take this cup away from me. But please, not what I want—what do you want?”

Mark 14:35-36

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.

John 3:16

This glimpse of Jesus praying in the garden depicts dread, honesty, love, trust, commitment, and courage.

Jesus was about to endure events more horrific than anything we can imagine. His slow, agonizing death on a cross after being beaten and ridiculed by His accusers and deserted by his friends, makes our most difficult situations pale in comparison.

He really didn’t want to do it, and as he prayed, he said so. Jesus asked to be spared but with a clear sense that he trusted God his loving father and would do his father’s will, not his own. Jesus prayed desperately and honestly explaining his feelings and desires then committing himself to do what God wanted him to do. We sometimes sing, “I surrender all.” Jesus did that—literally.

His time in the garden seemed to help clarify His calling, solidify his resolve, and empower Him for what lay ahead. It can serve as a model for us when we face difficult and/



or painful situations. Jesus left the action and interaction of all that was unfolding to go to the garden and pray, to honestly express his thoughts and feelings to God, to commit himself to doing God’s will, and to being and doing all that was asked of him. In his use of the endearment “Papa” (Abba in the NIV), Jesus expressed affection and love. In his commitment to God’s will, rather than his own, he conveyed selflessness, trust, and courage. It is a clear but sometimes difficult-to-follow model for facing adversity.

During Holy Week, it seems appropriate for us to recommit ourselves to following Jesus’ model. In both good and tough times, we need to include prayer, honesty, openness, love, trust, commitment, and courage as we seek to know and follow God’s will.

Gracious God, Help us follow Jesus’ model. Grant us wisdom, grace, energy, peace, and courage as we face difficult situations. Guide and empower us. Help us feel your love and trust your provision. Amen

Linda Brupbacher, an education professor at HBU, is a Bible study teacher, Discipleship Committee member, Hart’s wife, Lee and Lori’s mom, and Lauren’s mother-in-law.