



April 7, 2020 Vol. 72, No. 13

A Strange Holy Week

The phrase, "These are strange days," is getting high mileage right now. As I talk with people, I hear similar stories. Some share the creative ways they are dealing with social distancing. Others talk about the precautions they are taking. People tell me how they are keeping routines while this pandemic disrupts normal life. There are articles about the COVID-19 graduates and how to make masks at home. The news is full of projections and assessments of how officials have responded.

I think about the week we call "Holy Week" and wonder what it must have felt like for Jesus and the disciples. In Matthew, between Jesus' triumphal entry (21:1-11) and some movement on the plot to kill Jesus (26:1-5), there are parables, conversations with Jesus' disciples, and exchanges with others. Reading the way Holy Week unfolds in Matthew reveals some jarring shifts. It starts with great expectations. Is Jesus the divine warrior and righteous one of Zechariah 9:9-17 (echoed in Matthew 21:4-5)? That's not the way the week unfolds.

After entering Jerusalem and hearing people's prayer for deliverance, Jesus' schedule did not slow down. Many of us were still enjoying the wonder of Palm Sunday after church. Yet, if we read Matthew as if the events were unfolding in real time, before Sunday dinner Jesus shifted far from the cries of "Hosanna!" He cleared the temple of money changers (21:12-17). The next morning, a tree that had no fruit frustrated Jesus (21:18-22). Then, it's off to the races. He teaches, answers questions, and encounters the scribes and pharisees.

Going through each step in Matthew means not skipping these lessons, questions, and encounters. It means wrestling with some sticky parables. It means hearing about sheep and goats and trying to figure out how to live more like the sheep. For Jesus and his disciples, the week would have felt strange for different reasons. The Roman occupation probably always carried a fair amount of uncertainty. Passover was coming and they would celebrate Seder together. I wonder if this meant that they were celebrating this sacred time away from their families.

On Wednesday, Judas peeled away from the group. He met with the chief priests and agreed to identify Jesus for them. For the other disciples, his

WATCH

SERVICE OF HOLY WORSHIP

April 12, 2020
11:00 AM

Sermon:

"Something New & Unexpected"

Dr. Matthew Tennant

Scripture:

Matthew 28:1-10

Anthems:

"Christus Resurrexit"
by Young

"Jesus Christ Is Risen
from the Dead"
by Bach

"Hallelujah"
by Handel

CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, April 8

10:00 PBJ Bible Study
(Zoom)

12:00 Spy Wednesday
Service (livestream)

7:00 Sanctuary Choir
(Zoom)

THURSDAY, April 9

6:00 Maundy Thursday
Service (livestream)

decision would have been difficult to reconcile with their worldview. He was one of them. He held a trusted position in their group. They probably struggled with why he would do something like this. Before they could wrap their minds around what his betrayal would mean, they fled in fear. As much as they loved Jesus and believed in him, they probably all thought, "Not me!" and ran to preserve their own lives.

Friday would have felt surreal. They must have wondered how this could be happening. It would have been especially difficult if they thought Palm Sunday pointed to the kind of Messiah Jesus would be. The divine warrior of Zechariah could not be killed. He was supposed to be the one doing the killing. Instead, Jesus presented a picture of absolute obedience to God's path. It's a picture we can aspire to follow.

During this strange Holy Week, during these strange days, we can model the life of Christ. We can look at all of those teachings between the triumphal entry of Palm Sunday and the darkness of Judas' betrayal. Consider the following parables from Matthew: "Two Sons" (21:28-32), "Wicked Tenants" (21:33-41), "Wedding Banquet" (22:1-14), "Signs of the Times" (24:29-31), "Fig Tree" (24:32-35), "Faithful and Unfaithful Servant" (24:45-51), "Bridesmaids" (25:1-13), "Talents" (25:14-30), and "Sheep and Goats" (25:31-46).

As I went through each one, I thought about Jesus telling these stories just a few days before his death. I thought about the added weight of knowing his earthly ministry was almost finished. I also thought about how they each speak to our world right now. In the Parable of the Two Sons, one said he would not go but did. The other said he would go but didn't. It's a story of transformation. During these strange days, we can change from the way we were and become the people God wants us to be.

During this strange Holy Week, what is God saying to you? How is God speaking a fresh word to you? Read these parables and see what fresh word God has for you.

Peace,
Matt



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Spy Wednesday - April 8, 12:00 noon

Maunder Thursday - April 9, 6:00 pm

Good Friday - April 10, 12:00 noon

All services will be broadcast live on YouTube and Facebook. Details available here: [universitybaptist.org/live](https://www.universitybaptist.org/live)

FRIDAY, April 10

12:00 Good Friday Service (*livestream*)

SUNDAY, April 12

9:45 Online Bible Study

11:00 Morning Worship (*radio and livestream*)

7:00 Youth Real Life (*Zoom*)

Looking Ahead:

April 19: Associate Minister Search Committee Meeting, 8:30am (*Zoom*)

Other events and activities are being canceled or modified to be online-only when possible. Please contact the Church Office with any questions.

For our most up-to-date calendar, [click here](#).

Prayer Concerns

Pray for our world, as we all face the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pray for those infected with the virus, for people who are taking care of them, and for all who are especially at risk.

Pray for our church family, that we may draw closer, even as we keep a physical distance from one another.

Scenes from Zoom...

A variety of groups within the church have been meeting online during these days when we cannot gather in person. In addition to those pictured here, we have also had meetings of the Associate Minister Search Committee, our children, Jubilate, our ministerial staff, and some Bible Study groups. If you'd like help setting up a meeting like this, please contact Matt, Alba, or Will, and we can help you with the logistics. Here are a few snapshots:

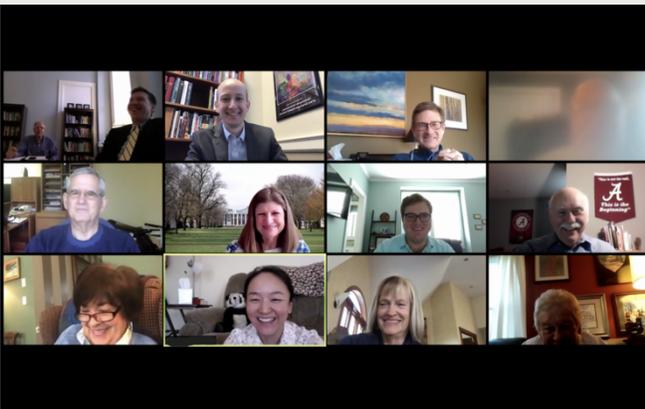


Sanctuary Choir

Although time delays make it impractical to rehearse music, seeing each other's faces and sharing updates on life is a joy!

Youth Group

Even though we can't get together in person, we can still catch up and play some games online. (Hard to do "capture the flag" or "hide and seek" on Zoom, though!)



Church Council

Our lay leaders continue their diligent oversight of the administrative aspects of church life, thinking creatively about ways to maintain and increase our ministry during these strange times.

Children

Our UBC kids had a fun time on Zoom, sharing about what they've been doing, hearing a children's book from Erin, and even doing a scavenger in their houses!



RENEWAL
 University Baptist Church
 1223 W Main St, Charlottesville, VA

ALL WELCOME!

Please join us for Holy Week via LIVE STREAM
 April 5th - 12th
 Spy Wednesday, at 12 PM
 Maundy Thursday, at 6 PM
 Good Friday, at 12 PM
 Easter Sunday, at 11 AM

All services are available to watch live online
 Bible Study on Sundays at 9:45am
 Live Stream at universitybaptist.org/live

universitybaptist.org

We seek to be an authentic community of Christians who love and care for each other as a family, and openly welcome and include all people regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or background.

Sunday Mornings Online

Even though we are not gathering in person, we are still joining together each Sunday morning for worship and Bible study. We hope you will join us!

Bible Study

At 9:45 am, we begin an interactive Bible Study that is broadcast via [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com). To download the handout ahead of time, visit universitybaptist.org/live

Worship

Our Sunday morning worship service will begin, as usual, at 11:00 am. We encourage everyone in the congregation to join us from home. As always, you can listen by radio on WINA (1070 AM and 98.9 FM), or you can join us online for our live broadcast. To view the live video broadcast, visit our [Facebook page](#) or click [this link](#) to watch on YouTube.

Cloth Face Masks

Because the CDC now recommends that everyone wear cloth masks if they must leave their homes to perform necessary tasks, we are presented with a unique opportunity for ministry.

There are many in our congregation with the skills required to sew masks, and some of you have already been working on these projects. At the same time, there are many in our congregation who do not have a mask and will need one. Community organizations are collecting masks and helping distribute them to first responders, medical professionals, and residents in need. This is a great opportunity for us to serve.



NEEDED:

- someone to organize this effort
- people to make masks
 - (note: these are homemade, cloth masks for ordinary use; the manufactured medical-grade masks should be reserved for those in high-risk situations, such as healthcare workers)

Call or email Will Brown at wbrown@universitybaptist.org if you can help or are willing to coordinate this effort.

Need Groceries or Meals?

If you need groceries, meals, or medicines and don't want to go out shopping, let the church office know. Healthy volunteers with a lower risk of serious infection are willing to bring the needed items to your door. A few people have already volunteered to help with this, but please also let us know if you're willing to be added to the list of healthy shoppers. You can contact the office or email pbrown@universitybaptist.org

An Update from the Office

While much of the church building is quiet during this time, there is office staff available Monday-Thursday to continue to address your needs. Many activities continue as normal in the areas of worship planning and adapting to livestream-only services, financial tracking and administration, and ministry. Marcus Stanley has done an excellent job preparing videos for Sunday morning worship, and Lexi Woodson has quickly and enthusiastically moved into her role in our office.

We have worked to conserve funds by turning off non-essential equipment, such as some refrigerators and hot water heaters, and adjusted thermostats for minimal energy usage. Thomas has shifted his custodial responsibilities to do additional cleaning of touch surfaces and catch up on many cleaning tasks that are not part of his normal weekly routine. Construction of the benches for the UniBap park is underway. Starting next week, a contractor will begin a long planned pressure washing and painting of the exterior of our building.

Memorial Gifts for Easter

With the unusual circumstances this year, we are planning something different in place of our usual Easter Lilies. As it appears increasingly unlikely that the congregation will be able to gather in the sanctuary for Easter morning, we will not be purchasing lilies to decorate the space and then go home with members of the congregation. However, we know that dedicating these lilies to our loved ones is a cherished tradition for many of us.



This year, we invite you to make a contribution to the church in honor or memory of a loved one, and we will compile a list of these dedications as we traditionally do. To make this special Easter contribution, please contact Lexi at lwoodson@universitybaptist.org or call the church office to let her know the wording that you would like to appear in the Easter bulletin. Even without the tangible flowers in front of us, the love and memory of family and friends brightens our spirits this Easter season.

Lenten Series: Reminders of Faith

This year, our theme for Lent is "Reminders of Faith." What reminds us of our faith? Some coins? A few stones? A bucket? A pair of eyeglasses? Some bones? A palm branch? A towel? Each of these items will appear during our Lenten worship services. Each one connects to one of the central scripture passages of Lent. These common items can serve as a prompt for us to start seeing reminders of our faith in Christ daily. Then, the Lenten journey can continue beyond Easter. Reminders from everyday items can become a significant part of our faith journey.



Mission Moment

Each Spring UBC has participated in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's National Missions Offering. This emphasis helps support our missionaries right here in the US. For many years, our offering has gone directly to Paula Settle in Nada, Kentucky. With Paula's December 2019 retirement looming, our Missions Council reached out to another CBF field missionary in a county in southeastern Kentucky, Scarlette Jasper. She is enthusiastic and excited to create a partnership with our church. First, a bit about Scarlette. . . . she was commissioned as a field missionary by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 2014, through **Together for Hope**. She currently serves in areas of persistent poverty in McCreary County, one of the poorest counties in the United States.

She is married, the mother of three children and two grandchildren. She is also a student at Baptist Seminary of Kentucky pursuing her Master of Divinity with a concentration in Pastoral Care and Counseling.

Scarlette is the Director of Olive Branch Ministries, Inc. (olivebranchministriesky.org) Some of the many needs that Scarlette helps address are: working with the homeless, coordinating children's literacy projects, allocating funds for rent and utility deposits, assisting with transportation costs when families must travel for appointments to distant medical centers, providing heaters or propane in the winter, supporting local schools with clothing, school supplies, food, hygiene items, and helping veterans get needed services. She maintains a small mission house that serves as an emergency shelter and place for pastoral counseling. Like the majority of our field missionaries, Scarlette must raise her own program and project support.

Now that you know a little more about Scarlette's work, won't you prayerfully consider being a part of our National Missions offering that will go directly to Scarlette's numerous community needs? Please use one of the envelopes in the pew racks **to donate** with cash or by check, designated " National Missions". You can also mail your missions offering to the church office along with your regular offering, or make a contribution online.

DID YOU KNOW?

Online and Automatic Giving

Online giving simplifies contributing by allowing for a specific dollar amount to be sent to University Baptist Church on a specific date, thus decreasing the number of checks you have to write. You can set this up to happen automatically from your bank account, or make a single contribution on our website or Facebook page. For more information, visit universitybaptist.org/give or call our church office.

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Connect with us

