

hands & feet

A monthly newsletter of the Southbridge Methodist Church

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, April 10
Palm Sunday

Thursday, April 14
Maundy Thursday
Passover Seder

Friday, April 15
Good Friday
4pm: "The Passion of the
Christ" Movie
6:30pm: Service

Sunday, April 17:
Easter!
6am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service
at the Old Sturbridge Village
10am: Easter Service

EDITORIAL



THE GLORY OF EASTER

The photo shows Pysanky, the elaborately decorated Easter Eggs of Ukraine.

Even during this war of invasion, Christian

Ukrainians will greet one another on April 24 (Orthodox Easter) with Христос Воскрес! (Krystos voskres! Christ is risen!) And the reply to this greeting will be Воїстину Воскрес! (Voistyny voskres! Truly he is risen!). This will happen everywhere – in the trenches by soldiers, among the millions of refugees in neighboring countries, and among those who have chosen to remain in the country or have no ability to flee. In the context of war with its many hardships and terrors, this Easter greeting takes on a different meaning.

What does it mean to say "Christ is risen!" in such a time? To those who are under siege or in danger, whether in Ukraine or in many other parts of the world, one could assume that it must seem empty. How can people have Easter joy if they are in danger? But the first Easter, the Resurrection of Jesus, took place in the midst of danger. The Romans had invaded and occupied the Holy Land including Jerusalem in 63 BC. Judea was a province of the Roman Empire and the Jews were a subject people, including Jesus himself.

(continued on page 2)

APRIL 2022 EDITION

"Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime." Martin Luther



EDITORIAL (continued)

Hardship was an everyday occurrence for the average Jew during the earthly life of Christ. It is still an everyday occurrence for the 3 billion people on earth who live on less than \$2.50 per day. In the United States, the world's wealthiest nation, over 11% of the population live in poverty.

Jesus himself, a carpenter's son, was poor. So, Christ's birth and resurrection occurred in the midst of poverty and strife. When Christ was born in 4 BC (yes, the Gregorian calendar got the year 1 AD wrong), the Holy Land was plagued by violence. When Jesus was crucified around 33 AD, things were just as unstable. Various Jewish revolts against Rome occurred culminating in 70 AD when the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. It would never be rebuilt and the Jewish nation was scattered.

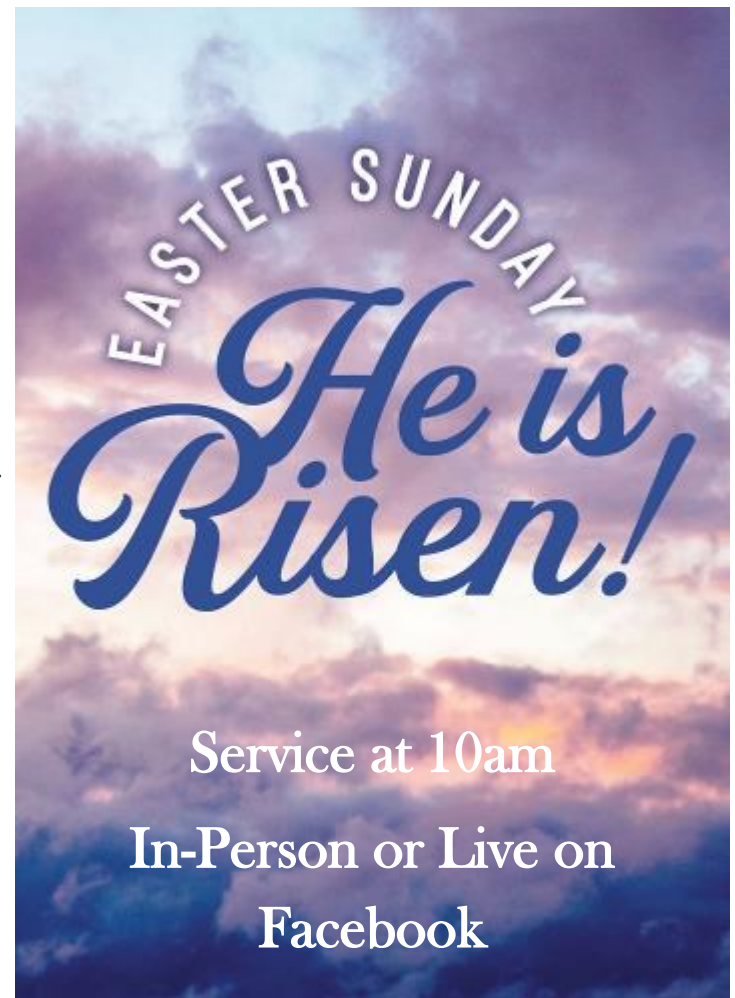
As strange as it may seem, Christ rose from the dead in a geopolitical situation not unlike Ukraine's during the current Russian invasion. The first apostles and disciples lived with great uncertainty and insecurity, yet they too proclaimed "Christ is risen" with Easter joy despite it. The early Christians knew nothing of chocolates, Easter eggs (never mind the Easter bunny—not that we know the bunny in Europe either), floral displays, Easter bonnets and Easter dresses. Theirs was strictly a spiritual Easter – the idea that Christ had burst through the tomb, defeated death itself, and rose triumphant overcoming not just the Romans but the world too. To say "Christ is Risen" is to also say Christ has conquered and that the evils of this present world are just temporary sufferings that will be defeated when Christ returns in glory. So, those in the midst of war or calamity who proclaim the Resurrection and hold onto its joy are actually doing something that the first Christians also did. It is an Easter of pure faith with no commercial comforts.

The glory of Easter then is not the lilies and the flowers, the glories of spring, sunshine, feasting, and the gorging on chocolate and treats. The Feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not related to the secular Easter rituals we all know and love. There is nothing wrong with these things and I certainly wish the Ukrainians could have just this sort of comfort-filled Easter Day. But they will not. Theirs will be an spiritual Easter, a celebration of faith, hope, and love – something that even war cannot take away. This is the true Easter glory, the glory that Paul and the early believers knew. And with his words I will close:

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)

Христос Воскрес! Christ is risen! Happy Easter to all of you and all whom you love.

Pastor Sabina



HOLY WEEK



Palm Sunday

APRIL 10

10am

Service



Maundy Thursday

APRIL 14

6:30pm

Passover Seder
Foot Washing



Good Friday

APRIL 15

4:00pm

Movie
"The Passion of
the Christ"

6:30

Tenebrae
Service
and
Prayer Vigil



Easter Sunday

APRIL 17

6am

Community
Sunrise Service
Old Sturbridge
Village

10am

Service

UKRAINE RELIEF

A warm thank you to all donated to raise money to send medical supplies to Ukraine! We collected \$750 to contribute to ship over 500 lbs of supplies!!

Thank you to:

First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury Outreach and Kathi Buzzell
South Athol UMC
Orange UMC





*Phyllis received her own
Valentine's Day basket!!*

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

EASTER PRAYER

Thank you for paying my wages

Dear Lord,
 Thank you for creating me
 Thank you for making everything around me
 Thank you for my family and my friends
 Easter is here again and we remember
 the ultimate sacrifice you made for us.
 Thank you for thinking of my salvation
 Thank you for saving me from eternal
 damnation
 Thank you for preserving my life
 Thank you for paying my wages
 Thank you for taking away my transgressions
 Help me live in truth for you
 Help me live in appreciation for what you did
 for me
 Help me love others just as you have loved me
 In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen



Verse of the Month



FOR SALE - Single owner tomb. Only used three days, and still has that 'new tomb' smell.



PASSOVER SEDER

**THURSDAY, APRIL 14,
6:30PM
(MAUNDY THURSDAY)**

**Followed by a service of foot
washing and communion**

What is Passover?

Passover, Hebrew Pesah or Pesach, in Judaism, is a holiday commemorating the Hebrews' liberation from slavery in Egypt and the "passing over" of the forces of destruction, or the sparing of the firstborn of the Israelites, when the Lord sent his last plague to Egypt (the death of the first born) on the eve of the Exodus. According to the Book of Exodus, God commands Moses to tell the Israelites to mark a lamb's blood above their doors in order that the Angel of Death will pass over them. The passage goes on to state that the passover sacrifice recalls the time when the LORD "passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt". This story is recounted at the passover meal in the form of the Haggadah, in fulfillment of the command "And thou shalt tell (Higgadata) thy son in that day, saying: It is because of that which the LORD did for me when I came forth out of Egypt."

Nowadays, in addition to the biblical prohibition of owning leavened foods for the duration of the holiday, the Passover Seder is one of the most widely observed rituals in Judaism.

It is traditional for Jewish families to gather on the first night of Passover for a special dinner called a seder (Hebrew: סדר seder – derived from the Hebrew word for "order" or "arrangement", referring to the very specific order of the ritual). The table is set with the finest china and silverware to reflect the importance of the meal. During this meal, the story of the Exodus from Egypt is retold using a special text called the Haggadah. Four cups of wine are consumed at various stages in the narrative. The Haggadah divides the night's procedure into 15 parts:

1. Kadeish/ Qadēsh: recital of Kiddush blessing and drinking of the first cup of wine
2. Urchatz/ Ūr·ḥats/ Ūr·ḥas: the washing of the hands – without blessing
3. Karpas: dipping of the karpas in salt water
4. Yachatz/ Yaḥats/ Yaḥas: breaking the middle matzo; the larger piece becomes the afikoman which is eaten later during the ritual of Tzafun
5. Maggid/ Maggiyd: retelling the Passover story, including the recital of "the four questions" and drinking of the second cup of wine
6. Rachtzah/ Raḥ·tsah/ Raḥ·ṣah: second washing of the hands – with blessing
7. Motzi/ Mōtsiy'/ Mōṣiy: traditional blessing before eating bread products
8. Matzo/ Maṣo: blessing before eating matzo
9. Maror: eating of the maror
10. Koreich/ Korēk :eating of a sandwich made of matzo and maror
11. Shulchan oreich/ Shūl·han 'ôrēkh: lit. "set table" – the serving of the holiday meal
12. Tzafun/ Tsafūn/ Ṣafūn: eating of the afikoman
13. Bareich/ Barēkh: blessing after the meal and drinking of the third cup of wine
14. Hallel: recital of the Hallel, traditionally recited on festivals; drinking of the fourth cup of wine
15. Nirtzah/ Niyr·tsah/ Niyr·ṣah: conclusion

The seder is full of questions, answers, and unusual practices to arouse the interest and curiosity of the children at the table. The children are also rewarded with nuts and candies when they ask questions and participate in the discussion of the Exodus and its aftermath. Likewise, they are encouraged to search for the afikoman, the piece of matzo which is the last thing eaten at the seder. Audience participation and interaction is the rule, and many families' seders last long into the night with animated discussions and much singing. The seder concludes with additional songs of praise and faith printed in the Haggadah.

(conclusion on page 5)

What is Passover? (Conclusion)

Elements

The lamb bone (some Jews use bones from other animals) represents the Paschal lamb whose blood was used to mark the Jewish homes which God passed over during the tenth and final plague, the slaying of the firstborn of the Egyptians. The sacrifice and eating of the lamb was central to the Passover ritual until the destruction of the second Temple in the year 70 C.E. (Common Era). Since we no longer make the Passover offering, it is traditional not to eat lamb at the seder, but to represent the lamb with a bone.

Jews eat matzah at the Passover seder to recall the haste with which the Hebrews left Egypt, baking their dough before it had a chance to rise (Exodus 12:39). Matzah also represents the bread of affliction, a reminder of the harsh servitude our ancestors experienced in Egypt. (Prior to the holiday Jews remove all bread and other products containing certain grains, replacing them with matzah and products made with matzah).

The maror (bitter herbs), usually represented by horseradish or bitter lettuce, reminds us that the Egyptians embittered the lives of the Hebrews (Exodus 1:14).

Charoset: a mixture of apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon, is a reminder of the mortar used by the Jews in the construction of buildings as slaves.

Beitzah: a roasted egg, is a symbol of life and the perpetuation of existence.

Karpas: a vegetable, preferably parsley or celery, represents hope and redemption; served with a bowl of salted water to represent the tears shed.

The other major symbol of the Passover seder is wine. Wine is a symbol of joy used to sanctify the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. On Passover, Jews drink four

cups of wine, each representing one of the promises God made to the Jewish people: "I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians [1] and deliver you from their bondage [2]. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements [3]. And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God [4]." (Exodus 6:6-7)

An additional cup of wine is placed on the Passover table, the cup of Elijah. Toward the end of the meal, we open the door, anticipating the arrival of the prophet Elijah, who according to Jewish tradition, will usher in the age of the Messiah (Christians may recall that some people thought John the Baptist was Elijah).

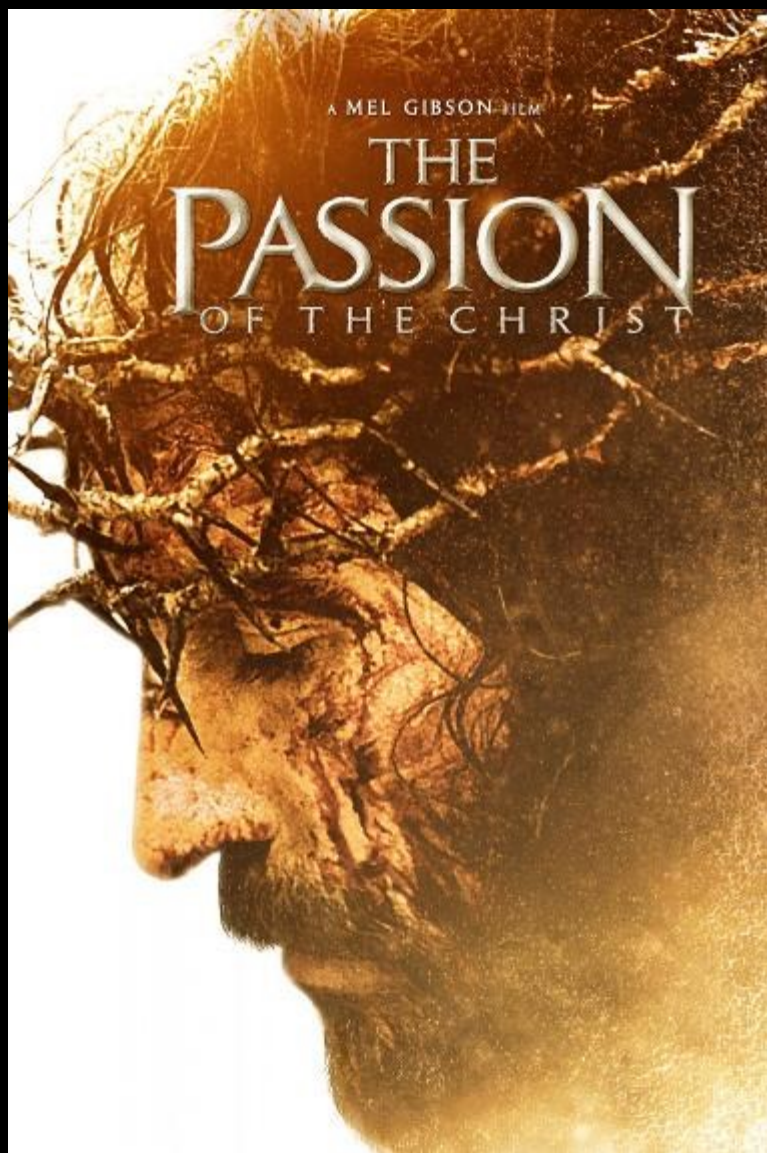
Understanding these important symbols in their context will enhance one's appreciation for the seder meal and allow Jews and Christians to share a religious ritual meaningfully.

So now, the controversy: Jesus did not eat the Passover Seder as described above. Several Jews and Christians argue that Christians should not celebrate Passover. We agree with the importance of caution in the way the sacred traditions of the Jewish faith are handled. We also agree that Jesus did not celebrate the Passover the way Jewish people commonly observe the festival in the 21st century. However, the Last Supper accounts in the Gospels record a number of themes and practices held in common with the Passover Seder. Perhaps the Last Supper should be viewed as a primitive Seder, which was used by Jesus as the backdrop for his claim to be the fulfillment of the prophecies in the Scriptures for a greater Lamb, a greater redemption from bondage to sin, and a new perspective on salvation through his blood. After all, Jesus used the unleavened Passover bread as his body and the last cup as his blood.

We are children of Abraham. Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi. It is only natural that there is a longing in the heart of Christians to rediscover the roots of our faith, to find our way back home.



**ECUMENICAL EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE
SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 6AM,
OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE MEETING HOUSE**



**Showing at
4pm on Friday, April 15**

**Followed by
A Good Friday
Tenebrae
Service
At 6:30**



What is a Tenebrae Service?

"Tenebrae" is the Latin word meaning "darkness." The service of Tenebrae as practiced in most Protestant Churches is an adaptation of medieval Roman Catholic practices for each of the days of Holy Week dating back to the ninth century. For Protestants, this single service is typically held at night on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday.

For United Methodists and some other Protestants, the story of the suffering and death of Jesus from John's gospel is divided into 16 readings. After each segment of the story is read, a candle is extinguished. After the fifteenth reading, which confirms that Jesus had died on the cross, the last of the 15 lit candles is extinguished or taken away, and a loud sound is made to convey the sense of total loss of God's presence and the effect of the death of Jesus on the universe. The final story of the burial is read in near darkness.

Worshippers leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death and await the celebration of the coming Resurrection.

This content was produced by Ask The UMC, a ministry of United Methodist Communications.



First United Methodist Church

"Come as you are, we mean it!"

449 Main Street
Southbridge, MA 01550
508-764-6501
fumcsouthbridge.org
Pastor Sabina Terrades
pastorsabinater-
rades@gmail.com



hands & feet



A monthly newsletter of the Southbridge Methodist Church

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 4-6, Fridays 4-7, or by appointment

WORSHIP: Sundays at 10, in person and live on Facebook

BIBLE STUDY: Mondays at 6:30 (free dinner at 6)

ESPRESSOUL (coffee with the Pastor): Wednesdays at 3:30

CAROL'S CLOSET (free clothing, hygiene products,...): Fridays 1-6, Saturdays 10-2

BREAD OF LIFE Food Pantry: Fridays 1-6, Saturdays 10-2

ROLSIDA'S KITCHEN (free meal): Fridays at 5

INTERNET CAFÉ (free computer, wifi and coffee) TBA

LAUNDRY LOVE (free laundry and detergent) TBA