

## Family Ministry

— David Hirsch

Father Ellsworth encouraged the parish to eat, pray and learn together more often, and the Family Ministry wants to lead that charge. To that end, several new programs are beginning along with a push for more parish involvement in the wonderful things St Stephen's already does. There should be a place for any member of the parish to become involved. If you are curious about where to plug in, please read through the offerings below and contact david@ststephenschurch.org for more information.

### Parish Retreat: 21st – 23rd April

St Stephen's Parish will hold a retreat at the Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg from April 21-23. Registration has begun and there are a limited number of spaces. Download a registration form from the St Stephen's website homepage link (bottom right of home page) and send it with your total fee by March 19th.

### Potluck Dinners and Teaching: 28th February, 6:15pm

Monthly potluck dinners with contemporary worship and facilitated discussions will begin with the Shrove Tuesday potluck on February 28th at 6:15. We will eat, sing and learn around the dinner table. Topics will vary each month. All are welcome.

### Student Ministry Small Group: Beginning 2nd March, Thursdays, 6:15 – 7:30pm

From March 2nd through May 18th students in grades 6 - 12 are invited to spend Thursday evenings together. We will start with some pizza and games followed by a 30 minute discussion. This is a chance to grow together as a group and deepen our faith through food, fun study and prayer.

### Camp Create, 17th – 21st July

This year we hope to involve the Parish more in the wonderful ministry of Camp Create. The week offers opportunities for serving, learning and fellowship for all ages. We would like parish children to attend the program, older kids to come as counselors and students to be a part of the work crew. Adults are needed in a variety of roles throughout the week. Please contact David if you would like to be involved.

### Other Events

There will be many opportunities for fun together. We will be offering several events over the next few months to spend time together, from drive-in movies and skiing to camping trips and mission opportunities. If there is something you already like to do, that others would enjoy, please bring it to the attention of David Hirsch and we will get the word out to have others join

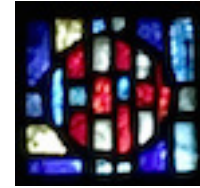


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TOUCHSTONE

3 Bayview Avenue  
Belvedere, CA 94920



# TOUCHSTONE

News of the ministry of St Stephen's Church, Belvedere, CA. 23rd February 2017, The Feast of Polycarp.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Shrove Tuesday, 28th February, 6:15 pm** | Pancake Supper and the Burning of the Palms for Ash Wednesday

**Ash Wednesday Services, 1st March, noon and 7:00 pm** | Holy Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes.

**Thursdays in Lent, with supper, 2nd March, 6:15 pm** | The Rector's Lenten Seminar: *Being Christian*, the Becker Room; Student Ministry *Small Group*, Youth Room

**Rector's Installation, Saturday, 4th March, 6:00 pm** | Bishop Andrus, Presiding. The Rev'd Bill Tully, Preaching. The St Stephen's Choir. Reception to follow.

**The 1st Sunday in Lent, 5th March** | Solemn Eucharist with the Great Litany in Procession; New Member Welcome at 10:00 am; Bill Tully at the Adult Forum.

**Sung Compline by Candlelight**  
Thursday, 9th March, 7:40 pm.

**Salisbury Cathedral Choir Concert**  
24th March, 7:30 pm, in the Church.

**American Bach Soloists** | Bach's *Motets for Double Chorus*, 31st March, 8:00 pm.

**Palm Sunday, 9th April, 8 and 10 am** | Solemn Eucharist with Procession.

## THE SACRED TRIDUUM

**Maundy Thursday, 13th April, 7:00 pm**, Holy Eucharist, Foot Washing, Stripping of the Altar | **Good Friday, 14th April, noon to 3:00 pm**, The Three Hour Service, with meditations on the Seven Words From the Cross | **Holy Saturday, 15th April**, The Holy Saturday Office, 9:15 am; **The Great Vigil of Easter, 7:00 pm**.

**Easter Day, 16th April, 9:00 and 11:00 am**.  
Festal Choral Holy Eucharist

**Parish Retreat, 21st – 23rd April**, The Bishop's Ranch, Healdsburg. Register now.

**American Bach Soloists** | G. F. Handel's *La Resurrezione*, 5th May, 8:00 pm.

## Listen to your life

**T**he *Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame, is a book about a group of small, vocal animals who lived once upon a time on the banks of the stripling Thames in Oxfordshire. There is one rather famous chapter in the book called "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn." The way the chapter begins is roughly this. A family of otters discovers that a small, fat, otter child named Portly is missing. Rat, who is a water rat, and Mole, who is a mole, decide to go search for him in Rat's boat, and off they go one morning just before daybreak.

Strange things begin to happen. Rat suddenly hears a scrap of music such as he has never heard before, and then before he knows it, it's gone. "So beautiful and strange and new," Rat sings, and since these are British animals you have to imagine the British accent. Rat has a rather flowery way of expressing himself. "Since it was to end so soon, I almost wish I had never heard it. For it has roused a longing in me that is pain, and nothing seems worth while but just to hear that sound once more and go on listening to it forever." At first his friend Mole can't hear anything — "only the wind playing in the weeds and rushes," he says — but when it comes again, he does hear it; and then, as Grahame writes, "breathless and transfixed, he stopped rowing as the liquid run of that glad piping broke on him like a wave, caught him up, and possessed him utterly. He saw the tears on Rat's cheeks, and bowed his head and understood."

**R**eligion is listening the way Rat and Mole listened, which is listening with more than just your ears. It's listening with your heart, with your intuition, with whatever is that part of you that longs, like a castaway, to hear news from across the seas. Worship is a *response* to that news, hearing it even in the ancient words of our forbears who themselves were listeners, who heard, then spoke of what they heard — *Shema 'Yisrael, adonai Elohenu, adonai ehad . . . Ecce agnus Dei qui tollit peccatum mundi*.

Maybe it's misleading to speak of religion as listening to something, maybe listening *through* would be more accurate — listening through the silence, through the prayer, through the music, through the sound of the wind in the rushes or through the sound of your own life, for whatever is to be heard beneath these things. It is listening the way a child listens or the way an animal listens for all I know, without any presuppositions about what you are going to hear or what you are not going to hear.

When you hear something like what Rat and Mole heard, what do you call it? Rat called it music that struck him dumb with joy and at the same time sent tears running down his cheeks. As for me, I would call it the sense that not the world certainly, not existence, but whatever it is that existence itself comes from, the power and ground out of which our lives spring, wishes us well, you and me, wishes to restore us to itself and to each other. It is the power that ultimately all theology is about, the power that stirs inside us at those rare moments when we make the effort of real speech with each other, and with it.

— Father Ellsworth

## HOLY WEEK, THE SACRED TRIDUUM, AND EASTER

What follows I have adapted for St Stephen's from descriptions of Holy Week services by my friend Fr Allan Warren, Rector of The Church of the Advent, Boston. It is reproduced with his permission. Observe Holy Week. Listen to it. If you do, I promise you, your Easter will be all the sweeter.

— Fr Ellsworth

### The Collect for Holy Week

Assist us mercifully with thy help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby thou hast given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Palm Sunday/The Sunday of the Passion

The beginning of the Liturgy commemorates the entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem. The Entrance Rite is altered and elaborated to re-enact this and to signal our own entrance into Holy Week. The Acolytes, Choir, and Clergy enter the short way and stop at the bottom of the Chancel. The Collect above is sung to mark the beginning of Holy Week. The story of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem is intoned, and the palms which we have been given are blessed. After this, acolytes, clergy, and choir, joined by the congregation, process out the short way doors, going through the Memorial Garden and back into the church through the Bayview doors, singing *All Glory, Laud, and Honor* which recalls Christ's triumphant reception into the city. The liturgical color for this first part of the Palm Sunday Liturgy is red, a sign of that triumph.

As we re-enter the church, however, there is an abrupt change in the mood of the service. Our Lord was acclaimed as he arrived in Jerusalem, but quickly the powers that be conspired to do away with him. Triumph became betrayal and death. And so it is the story of the Passion which is the Gospel for this Service. It is sung in parts to make us aware of the great drama that is beginning to unfold. During the last hymn the organ is turned off verse by verse until we are singing *a capella*. It will not sound again until the Great Vigil of Easter. The congregation leaves in silence.

### Maundy Thursday

The Liturgy on this day differs from that of an ordinary Mass in two respects: a ceremony, unique to the day, following the sermon, and another at the conclusion of the Liturgy. The Gospel appointed is St John's account of the last supper of Jesus and his disciples. In this account Jesus gives his followers a new commandment — "Love one another" — and to show what this means He humbles Himself and washes their feet. This Gospel is proclaimed, a sermon is preached, and Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet is re-enacted. Parishioners representing the twelve Apostles come to the Chancel, and the ministers wash their feet as the choir sings the words of Jesus' commandment of love and servanthood. Each is given a coin as a symbolic reversal of the betrayal which is to come. The Liturgy then proceeds as usual until after the Communion. The stripping of the altar then takes place: all candles

are extinguished and the sanctuary and nave are stripped of all ornamentation. The bare Altar is washed. The Tabernacle is left open and empty. The choir intones Psalm 22 — "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me" — to remind us of the desolation of Gethsemane and the Cross.

### Good Friday

We have commemorated our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem and His institution of the Eucharist. On Good Friday the Liturgy focuses our attention upon His death. Appropriately, the ceremonial is stark, direct, and powerful. Its meaning is unmistakable.

The night before the Church has been liturgically destroyed. Everything which pertains to its life — even the Blessed Sacrament — has been removed and the building is empty and lifeless — no longer, in a liturgical sense, a church. This day speaks to us only of death. Consequently, the Mass or Eucharist, which proclaims resurrection and life, is not celebrated on Good Friday.

The Clergy enter the Church in silence. At the foot of the *Christus Rex* they prostrate themselves. Upon rising, the Celebrant sings in monotone the Collect of the day. The Liturgy of the Word begins. Today it is different from any other occasion in its simplicity. The Old Testament Lesson and the Epistle are read without the usual ceremonial. St. John's account of the Passion and Crucifixion is sung by members of the Choir.

After meditations, the Clergy gather at the foot of the *Christus* for the Solemn Collects of Good Friday, the intercession for this day's Rite. These are a series of very ancient prayers for the whole world, "all sorts and conditions of men," which are traditionally associated with the day on which Christ suffered for all humanity. The person appointed bids us pray silently for various aspects of the life of the world, and the Celebrant sums up or "collects" our prayers with the appropriate Collect.

At this point the Clergy go to the rear of the Church and there take up a large veiled cross. They then process down the aisle by stages solemnly unveiling and displaying the cross to the congregation. "Behold the wood of the Cross whereon was hung the world's salvation! O come, let us worship!" When they have reached the Altar, the cross is set up to be venerated by those who wish to do so. This ceremony began in the fourth century Church in Jerusalem when what was believed to be a relic of the true Cross was displayed on Good Friday. When the veneration has been completed, a concluding prayer is said, the Liturgy is ended and the Clergy, Acolytes and Choir leave the short way in silence.

### The Paschal Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter

The Liturgy begins with the Church in darkness, expectant, seemingly just as it was when we left on Good Friday. The Resurrection of Christ is the act of God which brings the Church into being, and during this first Liturgy of the Resurrection the Church will ritually and, indeed, literally come into being again. It will be "re-built" liturgically in order to become what it was before the desolation and death

of Good Friday. Light will enter the Church and the lamps will be rekindled. Persons will be baptized into the household of God. The Eucharist will be celebrated once again and the Blessed Sacrament — Christ's risen presence among us — will be returned to the Tabernacle. In this Liturgy the Church becomes alive again and whole through the power of Christ's rising, no longer broken, desolate and empty as it was the day before.

The Congregation in the nave, the Choir, Acolytes, and Clergy enter the rear of the church in silence and in the dark. A fire is kindled and blessed and the Paschal Candle, a symbol of the Resurrection, is lit. A priest takes the candle and leads us into the Church by stages. In a reversal of the procession of the veiled cross on Good Friday, she stops three times. This night, however, she exclaims "The Light of Christ," and at each exclamation the light spreads from the Paschal Candle first to the Clergy, then to the Choir, and finally to the Congregation. Having entered, we all fill the Church with the light of the Resurrection. The Paschal Candle is put in place. The *Exsultet*, an ancient hymn extolling the joy of Easter, is sung by a cantor.

Then follows the Vigil — a period of anticipation which awaits the solemn proclamation of Easter. Five lessons from the Old Testament are read which in the early Church were understood to be prefigurings or "types" of God's action in the Resurrection of Jesus. Silence follows each lesson. A psalm is chanted and the Celebrant prays an appropriate collect.

After the last of these collects, the Vigil itself is ended, and we proceed to the Administration of Baptism, Easter being a traditional and most appropriate time to initiate new members into the Church. The Priest takes the Paschal Candle from its holder and leads a procession of Clergy and Acolytes to the Font, the congregation joining them. The Celebrant questions the baptizands, parents, and godparents and hears their vows. We reaffirm our own vows with them. He then sings the Blessing of the Baptismal Water during which the Paschal Candle is plunged three times into the font, as if it were inseminating the water with the power of the Resurrection. Baptism is administered, and afterwards we all are sprinkled with water from the font to remind us of our own Baptisms. The procession returns to the Altar.

At this point the Celebrant proclaims the news we have all been waiting for, "Alleluia! Christ is risen!" and all respond, "The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!" The *Gloria in excelsis* is sung for the first time since we began Lent; the Collect for Easter and the Liturgy of the Word begins. Before the proclamation of the Gospel, the Great Alleluia is sung by a cantor. This wonderful word, itself a joyful exclamation, has been suppressed during Lent. As if delighting in it, the cantor and congregation sing it three times, each time on a higher note.

After the sermon the Liturgy then proceeds as usual. Bread and Wine are brought to the altar and the First Eucharist of Easter is sung. The tabernacle, previously open and empty, is now replenished with the risen, sacramental presence of Christ. Easter has once again given birth to the Church. The Deacon dismisses us, "Depart in peace," and adds, "Alleluia, Alleluia!" We all respond, "Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!" ♦



### Music for Lent

— John Hirten

My ears were burning on Sunday just before a couple of parishioners came up to me and said they were talking about me in the Adult Education session. The question came up that, perhaps, I should present one of the classes on what "Lenten" music is, and what it means to me. In case I don't get a chance to do that, here are some of my thoughts.

Traditionally, during Lent, there were prohibitions related to music in church. One was that no instruments, other than the human voice, were permitted to sound: no organ, no bells, no strings, harps or lyres. Nada. When the church had considerably more sway in society than it does now, many governments even prohibited secular music of any kind from being performed in concert halls (hence the rise of the so-called oratorios, the most famous of all being Handel's *Messiah*). Lent was more or less forced down people's throats. In Church, this meant that most Lenten music had a kind of stoic style reminiscent of being in the fifth circle of Hell.

Growing up Roman Catholic, I became familiar with that ethos and it wasn't always an easy cross to bear (being forced into Lenten discipline, like giving up chocolate, didn't help). But today, we can approach Lent in a more simplified way. First off, it's a conscious choice to observe Lent, and the music can help serve that purpose. For instance, the weekly music for the *Sanctus* is an unaccompanied setting using an old Russian chant, simple and repetitive. On the other hand, music for the Offertory on 5th March (Lent I) is a setting of the Middle English text "Adam lay ybounden," an elaborate setting featuring "divided" choir. Several Sundays in Lent will feature beautiful settings of African-American spirituals, which really lend themselves to the season because of their emphasis on the "journey" to a promised land. Most importantly, the music for Lent represents a slight departure from what we usually experience on Sundays.

The painting, "The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch is well known and justly popular for its fantastic depiction of Hell. But that is only one panel of the triptych. The central panel, for which the work is named, is the garden itself. It features scores of (mostly naked) people cavorting happily in a lush, green environment. Everyone looks happy until one realizes that the central feature of the panel shows a grand procession going around in an eternal circle. Even in a place like that, the circle needs to be broken.

The third panel? It represents a man and a woman in conversation with Christ. Is this an enlightened pair? ♦