



**HOLY WEEK:  
GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE ON  
FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2021, AT NOON**

We shall observe Holy Week with a Good Friday Service (also known as a Tenebrae Service or Service of Darkness) on Friday, April 2, 2021, at noon. This will be a somber service as we darken the Sanctuary and reflect on the Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross. We will also strip the altar as we contemplate the unimaginable: the darkness of the world if Good Friday had not been followed by Easter morning.

Keeping with our church's tradition, and as a fitting conclusion to our Lenten period of penance and sacrifice, each worshiper in attendance will have the opportunity to, literally, nail their sins to the Cross. Also, Dawn Neel and Becky Richter will sing the lovely Lenten anthem, "*Pie Jesu*."

The Bulletin and its insert for this Service are available here:  
<https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/4-2-2021-Bulletin-Good-Friday-PDF.pdf>

(Insert)

<https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Good-Friday-Insert-PDF.pdf>

### **EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2021, AT 10:30 A.M.**

We shall conclude our Holy Week observances with a joyful Easter Worship Service on Sunday, April 4, 2021, at 10:30 a.m. Even though this wretched Coronavirus prevents our having instrumentalists or a choir to help us worship, we shall nevertheless have a joyful service as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. Dawn Neel will sing our anthem, "In the End of the Sabbath," and C.F. Schneider will play for us once more.

Naturally, we will also celebrate the Lord's Supper. If you will be worshipping with us from home, please remember to have bread and juice ready for that part of the service.

Our Scripture readings are Isaiah 25:6-9 and John 20:1-18, and my sermon is entitled "The Empty Tomb." The Bulletin is available here: [https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/04-4-2021-Bulletin-Easter-PDF.pub\\_.pdf](https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/04-4-2021-Bulletin-Easter-PDF.pub_.pdf)

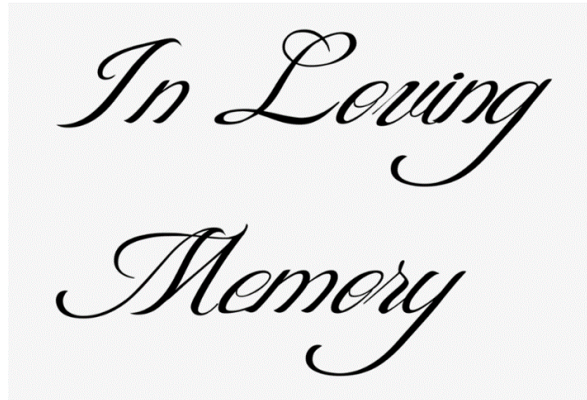
Please join us in person or via the Internet for both of these Holy Week celebrations which will be livestreamed on our Facebook page and our website. If you go to our website ([www.fpcofvictoria.org](http://www.fpcofvictoria.org)), you will also find handy links (right next to the screen) which, when clicked, will open the respective Bulletins for each of these services. This is a very handy new feature which we are able to provide as a result of recent upgrades to our website.

Best of all, for both of these worship services invite a friend to come to church with you or to watch with you in the comfort of your home. Holy Week is

meant to be shared. If you and your guests come in person, rest assured that we have appropriate public health protocols in place for worship in our Sanctuary.

The sacred celebrations of Holy Week commemorate the essential tenets of our Christian faith: the conquest of sin and death in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Let us rejoice that God has spared his people through the gift of his only begotten Son!

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**REMEMBERING AND HONORING  
LOVED ONES AND OTHERS  
NEAR AND DEAR TO OUR HEARTS**

As reported in the last Newsletter, the church has once again this year made it possible for members to honor their loved ones and friends (past and present) by purchasing one or more lilies from this year's lily cross.

As usual, the response has been overwhelming. There will be an insert in the Bulletin for our Easter Worship Service listing all those who have been honored and remembered in this manner. (A copy of the insert can also be found here: [https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Easter-Lily-2021-Memorial-Insert-PDF.pub\\_.pdf](https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Easter-Lily-2021-Memorial-Insert-PDF.pub_.pdf)). Thank you for your generosity and for your public expression of love and gratitude to those who have a special place in your heart.

Your Easter generosity also provides me with this opportunity to share with you a topic that has been under discussion at our Session retreat and our past several Session meetings. Specifically, the Elders have remarked that while our church provides many opportunities for memorial giving such as the poinsettia tree at Christmas, the lily tree at Easter, and on the occasion of a funeral, the Session has not done a good job in the past of sharing with the congregation how those

memorial gifts have been used.

Of course, some amount of those gifts supports the operating budget of the church, but at the same time, the Session endeavors to find a special use for those funds that will be a worthy tribute to those for whom the gifts were made. We regret that we may have been remiss in the past in not sharing with the congregation how such funds have been used, an oversight which we will seek to correct going forward.

As a first step, the Session would like the congregation to know that in response to the generous donations that the church received as memorials upon the passing of Frieen Tarkington and Ruth Williams, we have identified two opportunities that we believe the families of our dear, departed members might appreciate.

First, we have purchased two additional candlesticks and candles to adorn the altar in our Chancel. These adornments match the style of the other adornments in the Chancel (the cross, the Christ candle, and the processional Cross), and they will be present at all our worship services-- reminding us that our friends will always be present in our hearts.

Second, the Session is exploring an initiative with the Golden Crescent Court Appointed Special Advocates ("CASA"), a charitable organization in Victoria, Texas that advocates on behalf of children who find themselves caught up in the Texas foster care system. The dedicated volunteers in this organization seek to protect the physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare of children of all ages who find themselves otherwise without a stable family environment. For more information, see: <http://goldencrescentcasa.org/>.

The Session is working with CASA to establish an FPC-endowed scholarship that would afford free tuition to a child in CASA's care to attend the Presbyterian Day School. The source of the endowment would be the memorial gifts that we have received for recently departed members of our congregation.

Another initiative under discussion would also provide an FPC-endowed scholarship for a child selected by CASA to attend a week at John Knox Ranch. As you can imagine when the welfare of underprivileged children is involved, there are numerous details which must be sorted out to bring these initiatives to fruition. I can say, however, that we are well on our way to making these initiatives a reality.

Your Session believes that supporting children who need extra care and attention to succeed in life would be a worthy use of the memorial gifts received by our church. What are your thoughts? Please share your ideas, comments, and suggestions with your pastor or with any member of the Session.

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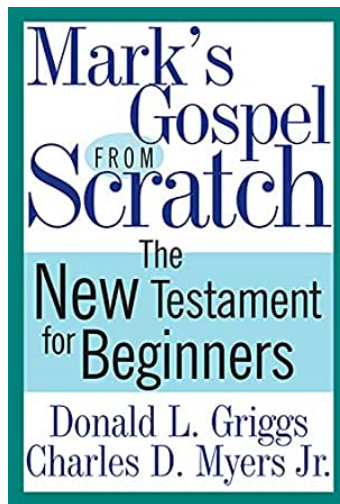
It has been a while since VCAM and Christ Kitchen have been mentioned in this Newsletter, but that does not mean that the needs of those organizations have diminished. If anything, the need for food and clothing has only increased in the midst of the current pandemic and economic downturn.

On the one hand, I want to thank once again those who are faithfully dropping contributions in our VCAM collection box as well as bringing cookies and other desserts to supplement the meals being prepared at Christ Kitchen. Thank you for your generosity and support.

On the other hand, I would also like to encourage you to continue engaging in the Christian “habit” of generosity. If you can spare some prepackaged desserts or some canned goods or dry goods to bring by the church, we will make sure they get delivered to the right place. This is truly a situation where a little goes a long way. Your ability to bring even a small amount of groceries or baked goods will go far to alleviate hunger and suffering in our community. Please prayerfully consider how you can help.

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**IS THERE ANY INTEREST  
IN A  
SHORT BIBLE-STUDY COURSE?**

Once again, I want to remind you that your pastor is asking whether there would be any interest among the congregation in participating in a short Bible-study to be offered after Easter.

I have found an excellent little study guide entitled, "Mark's Gospel from Scratch" (from the "New Testament for Beginners Series"). The book is authored by Donald L. Griggs and Charles D. Myers, Jr., prominent Christian educators and authors. A picture of the cover of their book appears above.

The book has six discrete chapters, each of which lends itself to a one-hour class and study session. I am open to suggestions as to a good time and day of the week to hold the class, but my initial suggestion would be to hold classes over the noon hour (12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.) on each of six successive Sundays (from example, beginning on Tuesday, April 14th, and ending on Tuesday, May 19th). I realize that holding this class during the noon hour would preclude participants who work during the day, but if the classes work well, perhaps we could later repeat them during evenings in the Summer or Fall.

I believe this class would work best if all participants (a) read the entirety of the Gospel According to Mark in advance (it is not too terribly long) and (b) arrived for class having read the chapter in our study guide that was assigned for that class. I also believe it would be best if, as a class, we spread out in Fellowship Hall with appropriate social distancing. Those who were reluctant to participate in person could, if they preferred, join us by Zoom, although they would miss the fellowship "feel" of the class. Of course, there would be no tests or written assignments(!), we

would just experience the joy, inspiration, and learning that would come from studying Scripture together.

Please send me your comments, suggestions, or questions at [jimdement@fpcovictoria.com](mailto:jimdement@fpcovictoria.com). I may not be able to respond to each and every one of them, but I promise you I will read and prayerfully consider all of them. In time, I will provide the congregation with more definite plans for this Bible-study if sufficient members express an interest. May the Holy Spirit bless and support us in this undertaking!

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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