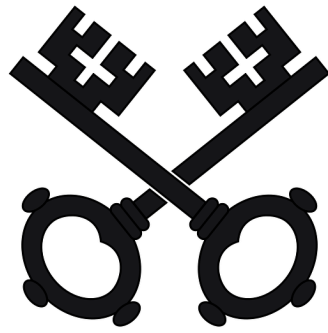


April 2019

Events

- April 10th
Men's Night
Out
- April 14th
Palm
Sunday
- April 18th
Maunday
Thursday
- April 19th
Good Friday
- April 20th
Easter Vigil
- April 21st
Easter



The Keys

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Clearfield, UT

Clergy Corner

The story of the Prodigal Son is a very well know Bible story. It tells the story of a loving God, with **OPEN ARMS** ready to receive us in loving embrace. This image is constant and unchanging. Past and future don't exist in the eternal present of God's embrace: God is always waiting; God is always willing to take us in; God does not look back to our own miserable past, but God offers us renewal and immediate love with **OPEN ARMS**.



St. Paul assures us that "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ." As both Jesus and Paul make it quite clear, it is **we** who have moved away, it is **we** who must return and be reconciled. God's arms remain open in order to embrace us when we return. These arms never push us away. Never.

In the parable of The Prodigal Son, the father never stopped loving the child who chose to go away, to live a dissolute life. To me, the most powerful sentence in the parable is - *But while he was still far off, his father saw him*—we too see the father constantly on the lookout for his lost son. And even though this formerly rich, well-nourished, and well-dressed son is now filthy, skinny, and in rags, the father recognizes him from afar and runs to meet him with **OPEN ARMS**.

The picture of the younger son who lives a life of sin and estrangement is nothing new. We recognize him all too well. He is the perfect image of selfishness—he takes what the father offers and goes away in order to waste it. We recognize human selfishness because it resides in all of us; we recognize the sin of saying "I am my own, I belong only to myself, I owe nothing to my Creator; I will do as I please."

If we allow this estrangement and seek fulfillment of all personal desires without regard to consequences, we allow ourselves to be mired in daily living where nothing is private, and nothing seems to be considered sacred.

We see the condition of our own culture as we watch the younger son in this parable lowering himself to the ultimate degradation for a Jew of his time; to live among pigs. In the eyes and ears of Jesus' Jewish listeners, nothing was dirtier than dealing with pigs.

But thanks be to God, the story does not end there. The young man looks at his condition and is first aware of the terrible needs of his body, of hunger:

Of course, this is a selfish reaction, but we are all tied to the needs of the physical self and it's an honest reaction. The young sinner acknowledges his sin and does not conceal his guilt: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

This is the beginning of repentance, of turning around, of knowing that we don't belong to ourselves alone. Our separation, our sin, is first against Heaven and then against those who love us and who have loved us. Acknowledging this state is the first step toward reconciliation.

The young son sets off to return to his father, confident that he will be received, because he knows his father's heart. And he is not wrong. The father is indeed keeping vigil, with **OPEN ARMS**, searching the horizon to see the returning son, to recognize him as his own, no matter how disfigured he now is.

When the young man left his home years before, clutching his treasure, his thought was: *I can do what I want. I am my own.* Now he returns knowing that he belongs to his father, that he is not his own. And as he is received into the **OPEN ARMS** of his loving father, he becomes the recipient of extreme generosity: excellent food, clean clothes, good footwear, and extravagant celebration—although he deserves none of it. He has repented. He enters into the new creation made possible by reconciliation.

St. Paul understood of the work of God through Christ, and we are called to also understand the full meaning of this superb story. "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

We hear this parable about God's love. A parable about us. All of us are either the Prodigal or the Older Brother. Some of us are a mix of both. The issue for us is, do we know that God's freely given, environment of lavish, unconditional love is waiting for us? Can we feel and see God's **OPEN ARMS**?

In the image Jesus paints of God, we begin to see this new creation. The father of the Prodigal Son does not ask, "*What have you done to bring yourself to this condition?*" He doesn't reprimand and say, "*I warned you that this would happen to you if you lived according to your desires.*" No, he asks nothing of the past because the "old has passed away." What comforting words these are. "The old has passed away."

Yet, reconciliation doesn't stop there. St. Paul makes it abundantly clear that now that God has taken us back into God's embrace, "reconciled us to himself through Christ," we receive a new gift: "the ministry of reconciliation." We cannot remain enclosed in this loving embrace without becoming "**AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST**."

There is so much misery in this world, so much living in both physical and spiritual hunger and in the degradation of all that is holy. The ministry of reconciliation, of spreading the good news of God's new creation in Christ, belongs to **US**. This may be daunting, even frightening, but it is there. We cannot escape it. We must continue to remember that in this new creation, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus," as St. Paul declares.

In this bitterly divided country, at a time when hatred seems to be winning over love and where hostility works against reconciliation, let us move as **TRUE ABASSADORES OF CHRIST** to spread the good news of God's embrace for all of God's creation and created beings.

"We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." St. Paul's words ring in our ears: "On behalf of Christ."

As you go about this week, try to keep the image of a loving God in your heart and before your eyes with **OPEN ARMS** ready to embrace you and every lost child of creation and remain **TRUE AMSSADORES OF CHRIST**. I will close with a prayer:

"Gracious and loving God help us to love as Jesus loved, touch as Jesus touched and embrace as Jesus embraced and seek you, waiting with **OPEN ARMS**". **AMEN**

The Rev. Patricia A. Sanchez, Med.

The Prism

As a child I was often told “no” when I asked my mother for a new toy, candy, soda, or a plethora of other things a young boy wanted. Without realizing it, I was being introduced to the concept of scarcity. You know; the fear that there is not enough to go around. So don’t ask. I carried this mind set into my adult years. At one point, my mother actually accused me of being a “tight wad.”

Fortunately, something incredible happened. While attending a noon Eucharist service in Salt Lake, I was introduced to the concept of God’s Economy by the Reverend Jack Potter. He shared during his short homily that through God’s love nothing is wasted or loss. He went on to add ‘one cannot out give God’. So why not be generous in giving to God and neighbor? I felt like I was struck by lightning. His words changed my way of thinking about sharing and giving.

Thankfully, Beth and I choose to give based on God’s Love. We have hopefully been a blessing to others. We do know God has abundantly blessed us.

Agape,

John

Men’s Night Out

This month’s Men’s Night Out will be at Mod Pizza in Layton at 6:30pm on Wednesday April 10th. Come join us!

Ladies’ Luncheon

Due to busy schedules, the next Ladies’ Luncheon will be held on Saturday, May 4th. We will be going to Zhang’s Chopstix in South Ogden. Luncheon will be at 11:30 am as always, so come along!

Potluck

Our next Potluck Sunday will be April 7th. Bring a dish to share if you are able. If not, there’s usually plenty food to go around so stay a while and enjoy the fellowship and food.

Fish N Loaves

The food pantry needs Hamburger Helper, macaroni and cheese, rice, canned meats, baby food, and diapers. The most needed sizes for diapers are NB, 1, and 3. We DO NOT need Size 2. Peanut butter is provided, but we are asked to donate jelly or jam. For information, please contact Julianne Glander and Doug Hender.

Book Club

St. Peter’s Book Club meets Tuesday afternoons at 1:00pm. Our current book is “The Shack”. All are welcome to join!

Adult Forum

We hold our Adult Forum before service on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month until the end of May 2019. Breakfast starts at 8:30 am with the lesson starting at 8:50. If anyone would like to do a presentation please contact Phil Kinchington.

Church Ministry

If you are interested in training to be a Worship Leader, Lay Eucharistic Minister, or Lay Eucharistic Visitor, please contact Rev. Jenny Tucker. Lay people take the blessed Eucharist to those who are homebound or in hospitals and care facilities. Worship leaders conduct Morning and Evening Prayer Services as well as other services.

Inquirer’s Sessions

Do you have questions about the Episcopal Church? What does it mean to be an Episcopalian? What basis is there for our beliefs? Please contact Rev. Jenny Tucker for Inquirer’s sessions. These are open to new explorers and to long time members.



HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday, April 14th - Service at regular time, 9:30 am.

Maunday Thursday, April 18th - Service at 7:00 pm followed by watch shifts through the night.

Good Friday, April 19th - Stations of the Cross at 6:30 pm, followed by service at 7:00 pm.

Easter Vigil, April 20th - Service at 8:00 pm.

Easter Sunday, April 21st - Service at regular time, 9:30 am, followed by the Easter Egg Hunt after service.

Donations of egg fillers are appreciated. We DO NOT need egg donations, we have plenty from previous years. Donations of a few baskets for any that may not have one are also appreciated.

Readings listed may not be accurate due to variations in the Lectionary.

	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
April 7, 2019	Isaiah 43:16-21	Psalm 126	Philippians 3:4b-14	John 12:1-8
Palm Sunday April 14, 2019		Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29		Luke 19:28-40
	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalm 31:9-16	Philippians 2:5-11	Luke 22:14-23:56 or <i>Luke 23:1-49</i>
Maunday Thursday April 18, 2019	Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14	Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Good Friday April 19, 2019	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	Psalm 22	Hebrews 10:16-25 or <i>Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9</i>	John 18:1-19:42
Easter Saturday April 20, 2019	Job 14:1-14 or <i>Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24</i>	Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4:1-8	Matthew 27:57-66 or <i>John 19:38-42</i>
Easter Sunday April 21, 2019	Acts 10:34-43 or <i>Isaiah 65:17-25</i>	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24	1 Corinthians 15:19-26 or <i>Acts 10:34-43</i>	John 20:1-18 or <i>Luke 24:1-12</i>
April 28, 2019	Acts 5:27-32	Psalm 118:14-29 or <i>Psalm 150</i>	Revelation 1:4-8	John 20:19-31

APRIL 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Holy Eucharist - 9:30am Potluck - afterwards	8	9 Book Club - 1:00pm	10	11	12	13
14 PALM SUNDAY Adult Forum - 8:50am Holy Eucharist - 9:30am	15	16 Book Club - 1:00pm	17	18 Maunday Thursday Service - 7:00pm	19 Stations of the Cross - 6:30pm Good Friday Service - 7:00pm	20 Easter Vigil Service - 8:00pm
21 EASTER Holy Eucharist - 9:30am 	22	23 Book Club - 1:00pm	24	25	26	27
28 Adult Forum - 8:50am Holy Eucharist - 9:30am	29	30 Book Club - 1:00pm				

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The Rev. Jennifer Tucker
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For emergencies, please call (801) 915-2775