

# InSpire

## All about Holy Week, Easter, and a baptism

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Note:

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We are about to begin the most sacred week of the Christian year. I hope and pray that you will avail yourself of the opportunity to spend Holy Week with Jesus. Here's how, by:

- Walking with him on Palm Sunday as he enters Jerusalem,
- Eating with him as he celebrates the Last Supper with his disciples on Maundy Thursday,
- Standing by him as he hangs on the cross and dies,
- Waiting with him in his tomb in hope on Holy Saturday, and
- Coming to anoint his body on Easter Sunday (but experiencing him risen).

I am sure that you have discovered it very hard to properly celebrate Easter without living through the events of Holy Week. Let me tell you what's in store:

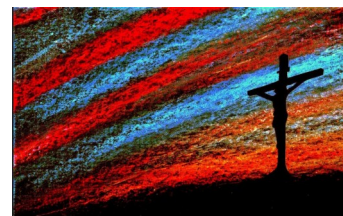


On Palm Sunday, April 13, we will wave palms at each of our services (8:00, 9:00, and 10:30 am). We will do so in remembrance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem riding a donkey. Perhaps more importantly, though, we will hear in our sermon that day what Jesus was "up to" by arriving for Passover in this way. Then, at Forum (at 11:30-ish) we will consider "why a donkey?" from several vantage points, including through art and poetry. In the past, we have very meaningfully shared the very long Passion Gospel in a variety of ways at Resurrection; look for a new way this Palm Sunday.



On Maundy Thursday, April 17, we will gather in our Upper Room (aka the nave) at 5:00 pm for a dinner Eucharist where we will enact Jesus' Last Supper. Come earlier than our 5:00 pm start time to greet others and to select your seat for dinner; come extra early

(after consulting with Betsy Faga) to help get the meal ready. Two years ago, when we last shared such a Last Supper, we experienced how the flexibility of our worship space really aided in our worship experience.



On Good Friday, April 18, our service will be at noon. This worship lets us experience the gravity and sorrow of Jesus' crucifixion. However, at Resurrection, we always include Holy Eucharist from the Reserve Sacrament because we know with certainty how the events of the week will turn out. Plus, even if we didn't know, we live in hope, always, of God's continued presence and love for us.

You may notice that none of our Holy Week services this year begin in or extend into darkness hours. This is on purpose, and is experimental this year. But, because we can only begin to officially celebrate Easter at sundown

*(Continued on page 2)*



*The Rev. Jo Belser*

*“... our intent on Holy Saturday is to wait in hope...”*

## All about Holy Week, Easter, and a baptism

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

on Holy Saturday (April 19) this year, we will not have an Easter Vigil. Instead, we will have our first ever Holy Saturday service, as prescribed on page 283 of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

penitence, almsgiving, and fasting for the coming of Easter. We will call on God the Father for healing from our despair at Jesus’ Crucifixion.

Easter Sunday is always a deeply festive day, celebrating Christ Jesus’

you will join me in remembering and thanking Rev. Susan for all the many ways her time as our Priest Associate has graced us. Then, too, there will be special coffee time after each service to share with Rev. Susan and, after the 10:30 am service, with her family members.

I cannot leave this description of our coming time together without mentioning two other events. On Saturday, April 12, at 11:00 am, we will celebrate the life of Sam Turner—Kat Turner’s husband—who died on March 3 at age 93. I know that you will join Kat and her family at Sam’s home-going celebration; if you can, please find a way to attend without parking in our small lot. I know from the 196 people who attended Nick King’s recent home-going service, there is a way, and you will find it!

Finally, Taylor and Maya Hall plan to have their baby Benny baptized at our 10:30 am service on April 27. What a joyous event this will be; our first baptism in our new building! Please plan to attend; I will be here (although I will be on vacation April 21 through April 26, and then April 28 through May 3, or May 4 if I can find a supply priest for that day).

*~ Rev. Jo*



*Andrea Mantegna, Lamentation of Christ, 1470 to 1474, public domain*

While some traditions let people experience what life would be like “in the tomb with Jesus’ body,” our intent on Holy Saturday is to wait in hope. We are precluded from Holy Eucharist but, as with our inclusion of the Eucharist on Good Friday, we find the “lifeline” of needed hope through the laying on of hands for healing for all who wish it. This seems a fitting end to Lent, the season just passed, where we prepared by

victory over death. We will celebrate at all three services, along with joyful singing at 9:00 and 10:30 am.

At each service on Easter Sunday we will end just before the dismissal with thanksgiving, prayers, and a congregational blessing for the Rev. Dr. Susan Ackley Lukens—more familiarly known to us as Rev. Susan—as she ends her time with us that day. I know that

## Rivers of mercy: divine generosity

On March 20, the Vestry and clergy received a letter from the Reverend Susan informing us of her decision to end her tenure as Priest Associate at Church of the Resurrection after Easter Sunday this year. There are so many interesting Susans, I was uncertain which I would miss most: Susan the preacher, Susan the choir member, or Susan the gardener. Given my predisposition to the joy of learning, I concluded that I would miss Rev. Susan the teacher most of all. While I learned from my conversations with her and from the content of her sermons, the Forum was her classroom.

She is especially able to convey a sense of place. This is particularly true of her ability to describe the physical conditions in the land of the Holy One. I learned that many rivers are seasonal or intermittent. The arid climate, coupled with the long dry summers, means that rivers like the Jordan and others may see significant reductions in flow, and smaller streams (called *wadis*) can dry up completely.

This makes the imagery of an ever-flowing river in scripture and hymns even more striking. It conveys a divine source of mercy and grace that is abundant, continuous, and unending—unlike the temporary and unreliable nature of physical water sources in the region.

This contrast could have made the metaphor even

more powerful for people living in arid climates, where water was precious, and its presence meant life. It emphasizes the idea of God's mercy as not just sufficient but surpassing the limitations of nature.

In a biblical sense, rivers represent the outpouring of God's abundant care and sustenance. The imagery conveys how His blessings flow continuously, nourishing and renewing both the soul and the world, much like water sustains life. It's a poetic way to express divine generosity. For example, in Genesis 2:10-14, the rivers flowing from Eden highlight God's care in supplying everything needed for life and growth. Flowing waters also symbolize the richness of God's promises. In Deuteronomy 8:7, the promised land is described as "a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs," emphasizing its abundance and fertility.

The imagery of rivers captures the boundless

nature of God's grace and generosity. Even in places where rivers physically run dry, the symbolic rivers of mercy and provision in scripture are never-ending.

Musically, I think these metaphors are bound together nicely in the hymn, "[Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#)" written by Robert Robinson in 1757. He penned it at the age of 22, shortly after his conversion to Christianity.

*Come, Thou Fount  
of every blessing,  
Tune my heart  
to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy,  
never ceasing,  
Call for songs of  
loudest praise.  
Teach me some  
melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming  
tongues above;*

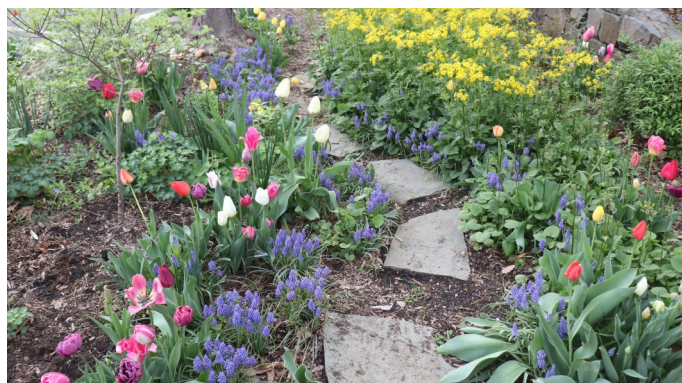
I will certainly miss Rev. Susan; she was able to teach history and geography and melodious sonnets.

~ David Ewing



David Ewing

*"I will certainly miss Rev. Susan; she was able to teach history and geography and melodious sonnets."*



*Thank you, Resurrection gardeners!*

## Remembering and recounting the stories



The Rev.  
Theresa Lewallen

*“... true remembering requires clarity if it is going to lead us to become fully who God intends for us to be: healed and whole.”*

I’ve been aware recently of the many times I’ve been asked to remember an event, a story, or a scripture passage. My preschool-age granddaughter asked me to remember things that I am surprised that she does. My extended family asked me to recount childhood events. Remembering and recounting stories is part of my family’s practice and rituals.

Stories help us process grief and loss that we hope will be remembered by the next generations. The outcome of these shared stories is never guaranteed. However, I noticed that remembering together began and continued the healing of old hurts, pain, and separation.

Remembering is important in scripture and in the liturgies that we’ll experience together in the weeks ahead. “Remember” appears over 50 times in the New Testament. We’ll hear it in readings from Acts, the Epistles, and from Jesus.

The most resonant verses for me occur after Jesus’ resurrection. That’s when the disciples remember what Jesus had taught them. Through that remembering, they gain courage and understanding about what they are to do. Their grief after Jesus’ death begins and continues to heal through their remembering and through recounting what they had seen, experienced, and heard Jesus teach.

This type of remembering and recounting the story are important for healing. The Racial Justice and Healing Team focuses some of its work on remembering and recounting the important, and sometimes unknown, stories of our ancestors in the city and the country.

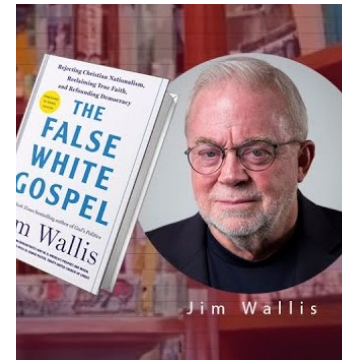
We are fortunate that the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project offers events and educational opportunities so that we can participate in the healing work that must be done alongside racial justice work. The city’s museums and markers help us to learn about and remember the history we may never have known.

Visiting museums, reading books, sharing stories, and being part of conversations all help us to discover our place as people of faith in our community. They also provide examples of courageous people who fought for justice and freedom for others. They help us to connect our own stories and history with others and to experience our own healing.

I hope that you joined (or will join) the Racial Justice and Healing Team on”

- April 9 as we had the final session of our discussion of Jim Wallis’ book, [The False White Gospel](#). This was a Lenten series of sorts, with a potluck meal at

5:00 pm before our discussion.



- April 23 at 6:30 pm to remember Joseph McCoy, a teenager who was lynched in Alexandria in 1897. [Roberts United Methodist Church](#), built in 1834 on South Washington Street, will host the remembrance. (There is nearby parking available that evening at Demaine Funeral Home on the 500 block of South Washington and Gibbon Streets.)

Like the disciples who remembered all that Jesus told them, true remembering requires clarity if it is going to lead us to become fully who God intends for us to be: healed and whole. True remembering shows us that our faith story, our community’s story, and our personal story are linked together. The Racial Justice and Healing Team invites you into the experiences that true remembering offers.

~The Rev. Theresa Lewallen

## We have a new seminarian this fall

Dear Resurrection Community,

I am so excited to be joining you this fall as your seminarian. To introduce myself, my name is Victoria Linner; I go by Torie for sort. I'm from Aurora, Illinois, which is an hour outside of Chicago and the second largest city in Illinois (after Chicago).

I was raised in a non-denominational evangelical church. In college, I explored other church options and learned about the Episcopal Church for the first time. I went to a few services and enjoyed them for their liturgy and then a few years later I moved into San Francisco and started attending Grace Cathedral. I was confirmed there in September 2022 and joined the Youth Ministry staff later that fall.

After formally joining the Episcopal Church, I was inspired by the commitment to following Jesus, the commitment of working towards a more just society, and the commitment to spiritual and beautiful (liturgical) worship. I feel called to a lifetime of ministry, especially in spiritual and pastoral care. I am studying at Virginia Theological Seminary to receive a Masters in Divinity as one of the requirements to become a board-certified Chaplain. I'm also discerning ordination to the priesthood.

I'm looking forward to living and learning with you all as I continue to grow in my spirituality, religious practice, and call to vocation.

With deep gratitude,

~ Victoria Linner



*A note from Rev. Jo:*

I am delighted that Patrick Coleman, fresh from being on Kate Mumey's lay support committee, will head Tori's committee beginning this fall. And I am also delighted that Kate Mumey plans to spend her senior year with us.

## We also have a returning seminarian this fall

You may be wondering, what seminarians do all summer. Well, that can be hard to answer because we, as a group, get up to various things over our three-month break. This summer, I am tackling a few projects. In late May, I will attend the Preaching Excellence Program put on by the Episcopal Preaching Foundation in Richmond. There, I will spend an entire week working alongside other students, under the guidance of homiletics

professors and preachers, towards enhancing and inspiring our preaching. Throughout the rest of the summer, my time will be split between three projects: engaging in an online course through Byzantine Seminary on the Problem of Evil, preparing an Independent Study to be conducted next Fall under the guidance of the Rev. Dr. Judy Fentress-Williams, and beginning to prepare for my Canonical Ordination exams. My independent study will focus

on the stories of women and supporting characters in the historical books of Samuel and Kings. This is a project that I am incredibly excited about and that I hope to bring in some part to Resurrection next spring. I will be praying for you all while I am away in the coming months, and I ask for your prayers in my absence.

In Christ's unending love,  
your 2024-2025 seminarian

~ Kate Mumey



Kate Mumey

## We worshiped in Oaxaca, Mexico

*Pronounced Wa ha ka, meaning “the place of the seed” or “the place of the trees,” from the Nahuati people of Mexico*

We vacationed in Oaxaca in February. The weather was sublime: sunny, hot, and dry, typical desert air. Did we say sunny?

We arrived in this little paradise on a Tuesday evening. The air was clean and cool but by noon the next day Margaret was singing a different tune. Margaret quickly learned carrying water was essential. We met a group of eight or so friendly Americans living in Oaxaca that first morning while we were searching for the Episcopal Church. Off we went to a nearby café for lunch. Among them was a retired USAID woman who had made a life there for eight years. Another woman with a remote-working husband wanted her children to learn Spanish.

The walking was difficult, due to unmarked potholes. But we still enjoyed discovering the city by foot. On the fourth or fifth day we were at a favorite restaurant having an afternoon soda and wondering what we wanted to do. Let’s take a bus ride, Margaret said to Betsy. “If we get lost, no problem. We’ll take a cab back to the hotel. We’ll be together. We’ll be perfectly safe. It’s 2 pm. Nothing terrible happens at 2 pm anywhere in the world.” “Sure,” Betsy replied. “Why not!”

The fare was eight pesos,

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Above: Betsy Faga and Margaret Milburn outside the Episcopal Church in Oaxaca and Below: inside



### Clergy & Staff

#### Rector

[The Rev. Jo J. Belser](#)

#### Deacon

[The Rev. Theresa Lewallen](#)

#### Priest Associate

[The Rev. Dr. Susan Ackley Lukens](#)

#### Pianist

Michael Lewallen

#### Bookkeeper

Holly Zarazinski

#### Consultant

Maryellen Tibbs

#### Parish

**Administrator**  
Angie Armwood

#### Seminarians

Kate Mumey  
Diane Kyle

#### Sexton

Beltway Cleaning, Inc.

## Celebrate and thank Rev. Susan on her last day here: April 20

I remember those two days like they happened yesterday. My cell phone buzzed. "You need to give Jo Belser a call right away. She's expecting you..." the Very Rev. Ian Markham (Dean and President of Virginia Theological Seminary) explained.

Twenty-four hours later, nervous with my resumé tucked into my briefcase, masked, and social distanced, sitting across from one another, after just fifteen minutes or so, the interview stopped. *Rev. Jo handed me a preaching schedule pointing out my name highlighted in pink!*

Those two days were in November 2020, and thus began my journey with you, my beloveds in Christ: You have:

- Taught me how community cares for each other in life and in death;
- Taught me that discipleship is praying, embracing, and sharing with one another our worries and our joys;
- Shown me how pulling up weeds and planting tulips can transform a tired dry hillside to a lush sacred garden;
- Shown me how evening candlelight transforms our nave into the Upper Room for a Maundy Thursday meal together or Easter Vigil; and
- Shown me that when a few are gathered we can

still sing boldly for Christ.

There is just so much more that you have taught me about how a community walks together with Christ. Where do I begin?

Words fail me. There are just not enough ways to express my deepest heartfelt gratitude for the privilege of walking with you and Rev. Jo, finding Jesus in each other. Indeed, it has been a holy privilege.

Now, these many years later, I have decided that it is time for me to step away so that I can spend more time with my family. As many of you know, my family lives from coast to coast: as close as New York and North Carolina but as far away as Honolulu and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. My mother is 94 and lives in Rio; I need to be accessible for her as she rapidly declines. I also need to spend days with my newest grandchild, Forest, who lives in Hawaii, is starting to walk, and is already melting my heart when he calls me "Nannie." (With a British accent ???)

So alas, before my final day on Easter Sunday, please always stay the way you are Church of the Resurrection. March on. Shine the light of God's grace out into the world, feeding at the food bank, preparing hearty meals at the city's family shelter, collecting diapers for babies and hygiene products for all. But most of all,



*Rev. Susan in the Refectory at our service in the seminary refectory in December 2020*



*Rev. Susan, celebrating our Eucharist in our new church building in March 2025*

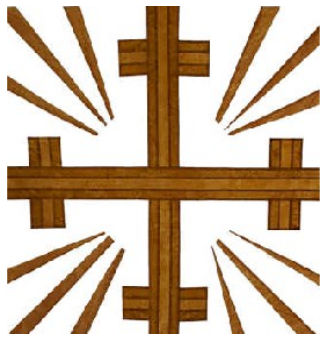


*Rev. Susan, reading the Gospel*

continue to be present for each other and the stranger, just as you welcomed me years ago.

With every blessing and love this day and always,

~ Rev. Susan



## Church of the Resurrection

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Alexandria 22311-2220

### About InSpire

*InSpire* is the monthly newsletter of the Church of the Resurrection, describing the people of our congregation and our faith journey together. The following individuals contributed to this issue of *InSpire*:

- The Rev. Jo Belser
- David Ewing
- Betsy Faga
- Lea Fowlie, editor
- Lenore Funkhouser, photos
- The Rev. Theresa Lewallen
- Victoria Linner
- Kate Mumey
- The Rev. Susan Lukens
- Margaret Riccardelli

Church of the Resurrection serves the people in the Beauregard Corridor of the City of Alexandria, home to many recent immigrants. In April 2021, Resurrection completed an eight-year mission to provide 113 units of affordable housing to its community.

## We worshiped in Oaxaca, Mexico

*(Continued from page 6)*

about 5 cents USD. We got in line at a nearby bus stop. We assured the curious local we were on an *aventura*.

An hour into our ride five or so young girls wearing stage make-up got on our bus and proceeded to touch-up their faces. Curious, we asked them where they were going and learned they were university theater students. They had written a play and planned to perform it that evening. We noted the address and took a taxi to the designated spot, a kind of alleyway in a non-descript neighborhood.

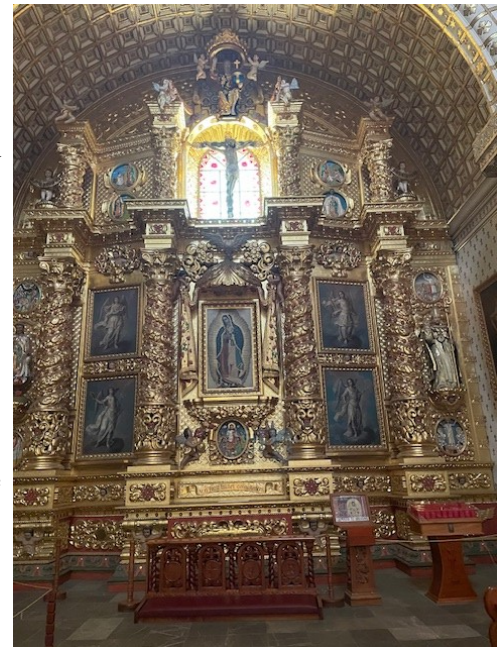
The play was about Odysseus, Penelope, and the 12 (swans) maids that Odysseus kills upon his return from war. Deep stuff. Margaret Atwood wrote a novella about it called *The Penelopiad*. The students called their play "The Forgotten Ones." Since the play was in Spanish we didn't understand a word but read all about it on Wiki when we returned to the hotel. It was heartwarming; the girls were so happy we made the effort to attend. An important fact; there are no mosquitos in Oaxaca.

We had such a good time on the bus that day that we decided to do it again in the opposite direction. The sprawling suburbs around

Oaxaca looked a bit chaotic and somewhat shabby, but it was lovely to see the area.

There were, of course, Catholic cathedrals everywhere. In the city center is the Cathedral de Oaxaca. However, the most popular is Templo de Santo Domingo. Every inch inside is

ornamental and gilded, as you can see from the picture. We were amused at the contrast with Holy Trinity Episcopal Church that we attended on Sunday. As mentioned, we had scoped it out earlier in the week which was also an adventure. With the address and Google map in hand, we walked to the location looking for a small church. When we saw none, we asked a young man who also looked and looked. He was the one who finally helped us identify a bright red door amongst all the other homes on the street. Indeed, church was held in the open-air



*Interior of the most popular Catholic cathedral Templo de Santa Doming*

courtyard of a typical home. There were about 15 people in attendance with the service officiated by a Bishop from Canada. Coffee hour afterwards provided more rich conversation with the American community living there full or part time.

How blessed we were to enjoy God's beauty all week long and to be able to feel a part of the culture of our neighboring country.

~ Betsy Faga,  
Margaret Riccardelli