



# COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS HOLY WEEK EDITION



The monthly newsletter of Countryside Community Church



## Living an Easter Faith in a Good Friday World

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Good Friday and Easter Sunday are woven together, inextricable from one another, and we're often surprised to come to terms with that inseparable relationship. One cannot be fully understood without the other. Both are impossible to know fully without the other.

A friend I've known through college and seminary and on to our lives in ministry is now teaching at Boston University in the arena of public faith exploring the realms of power where government and faith communities can hold real dialogue with one another in exploring the common good.

Not now preaching regularly, he wrote me this week and summarized the complexities of the day.[1] He raised key issues: "These events don't make sense, individually or collectively. Hatred, terrorism. Psychiatric problems. Guns, knives, bombs. On top of this, internationally there is Putin in Ukraine, al-Assad in Syria, and the Central African Republic."

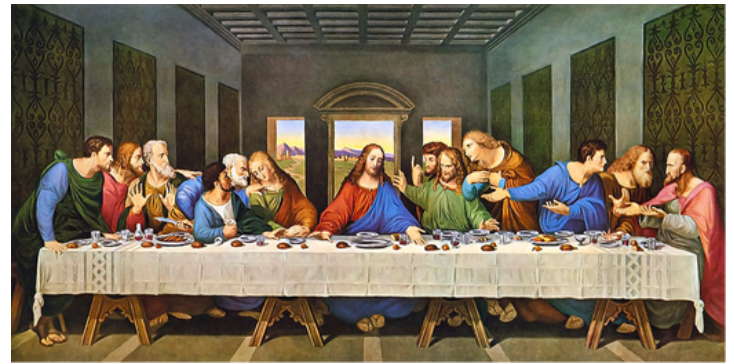
Where does one stop? What do we think about Easter when this kind of violence is occurring in our midst?

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# April

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## Maundy Thursday

### *The Living Last Supper*

Countryside is proud to present *The Living Last Supper* on Maundy Thursday, April 6, at 7 p.m. This powerful performance will re-enact the moment of the Passover Meal when Jesus announces: "one of you will betray me." The production explores how each of the disciples reacts to this startling statement - do they question each other? Do they question themselves?

Through the background portrayals in this dramatic presentation, the audience learns about each of the disciples; how they met Jesus, and what happened to them after Jesus was crucified. They gain a deeper understanding of the historical and spiritual significance of the Last Supper.

The entire cast of *The Living Last Supper* are members of the Countryside congregation and have been working hard to bring this production to life. Through their dedication and hard work, they hope to create a powerful and thought-provoking experience for all those in attendance.

As we approach Easter and reflect on the events leading up to the crucifixion, *The Living Last Supper* provides a unique and compelling way to engage with this important story. So come join us on Maundy Thursday, April 6th, at 7 p.m. for what promises to be an unforgettable evening of theatre and spiritual reflection.

## Palm Sunday Breakfast to Dish up Fellowship – and Food!

The Board of Life Ministries will host a special breakfast on Palm Sunday, April 2, before the 10 a.m. service. This breakfast is a wonderful opportunity for members to come together and enjoy a delicious meal before coming together in worship.

The free-will breakfast will take place in Marys' Hall from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and will include breakfast egg casseroles, pancakes with toppings, fruit and beverages. Something for everyone, whether they prefer a savory or sweet breakfast!

Attending the breakfast is a great way to start off Palm Sunday and connect with friends, family and new members. too. Plus, a delicious breakfast is always a great way to start the day.

Palm Sunday breakfast, April 2, will be a wonderful way to kick off a meaningful Holy Week at Countryside. Don't miss out on this chance to start off the day on a high note!

# Good Friday Service

## *A Blues Backdrop for Tenor Justin Payne*

American Blues and Gospel provide a powerful backdrop to tell the story of the Passion for this year's Good Friday service.



These musical genres embody the raw emotions of struggle, pain and redemption central to the story, and will help bring the story to life and connect the the audience with the emotional and spiritual aspects of the narrative. These musical styes also have roots in the African American spiritual tradition, which has a long history of expressing the struggle, pain and redemption associated with the Passion narrative.

Justin Payne, a talented classically-trained tenor, composer, and playwright from Omaha, returns to Countryside as the featured Good Friday vocalist.

An accomplished music director and composer, Payne holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Nebraska—Omaha, and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Nebraska—Omaha, and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Michigan State University. He has performed on stages across the globe, including Germany, Austria, Italy, and China.

Justin sang at Countryside's August 2021 Spirituals, Psalms, and Songs for Social Change. Readers can listen to that performance on Countryside's YouTube channel, <https://youtu.be/eSSYMJwXH4k>.

Join us on Good Friday to experience Justin's incredible vocal talent as we explore the blues and reflect on the power of redemption. We look forward to seeing you!

## You're Invited! Easter Sunday Services

Please join us for Easter service this year!

Easter is an opportunity for you to step back from your daily routine and take a breath. To reflect on the significance of Easter and the love of God that knows no bounds. It is a time to rejoice in the hope and renewal that the resurrection brings to our lives.

We're an inclusive community and welcome ALL to an open and affirming family of faith. We celebrate and rejoice in a God who loves us all beyond our wildest imaginations!

Countryside's Easter service is a great opportunity to connect with a welcoming community of faith. So come join us this Easter and celebrate the love and joy this holiday brings.

Palm Sunday Service, April 2, 10 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7 p.m.

*The Living Last Supper*

Good Friday Service, April 7, 7 p.m.

Easter Sunday Services, April 9

Sunrise Service, 7 a.m.

Additional Services, 9 & 11 a.m.





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Archbishop Rowan Williams wrote, "You only get anywhere near the truth when all the easy things to say about God are dismantled, so your image of God is no longer just a big projection of your own self-centered wish-fulfillment fantasies."

My good friend Pastor Marcus reminded me of a Good Friday sermon preached years ago by peace activist William Sloane Coffin. It was a sermon preached in the face of just these kinds of questions. In that good word, he claimed our

challenge is to live an Easter faith in a Good Friday world. Good Friday needs no explanation because this is the nature of complexity and confusion. Good Friday needs no proving. It is self-evident and shockingly true. Acts of violence and use of coercive force are never in short supply to illustrate what Good Friday is about.

Just a few hours after worship had come to an end on Palm Sunday, violent hate took the lives of three innocents in a place called Shalom.

## Common Grounds Running Trial Open Hours

Some exciting things are happening at Common Grounds. In 2023, for the first time, the coffee house will not be accepting any financial support from the church budget but will be completely self-funding. The "suggested donation" amounts on the signs will now reflect our actual cost to replace that product.

On Tuesdays, April 4 through May 9, the coffee house will be open and providing full service from 8-10 a.m. Kindernook parents are already gathering there and the Kiwanis groups have been requesting coffee service. We hope those of you meeting for coffee and conversation on Tuesdays may choose Common Grounds as your destination. Attendance during this trial period will determine possible new hours moving forward.

Common Grounds is a community-building ministry and we're looking for individuals interested in volunteering there during the week. There are so many opportunities for Common Grounds to help bring people together. If you have any interest, please contact Diane Scott at: [dianes@countrysideucc.org](mailto:dianes@countrysideucc.org) or text 402-707-1556.



The Tuesdays trial run may open the coffee house for more, set open hours.

**Join us!**

New member orientation classes start soon!

April 11, 6-8 p.m.  
April 18, 6-8 p.m.

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