





# Holy Week

Lantern Issue March-April 2022



## **Letter from the Editors**

In this Holy Week issue, we invite you to an journey through the last week of Christ's life before his resurrection. Holy Week is the culmination of Lent stretching from Palm Sunday when Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem to Holy Saturday when Jesus' death still burned in the disciples' minds and resurrection was, unknown to them, still a day away. Since much of Lent this year corresponds to Women's History Month in March, this issue showcases the work and perspective of women on the events and themes of Holy Week. We invite you to imaginatively place yourself in these events both in first century Jerusalem and to consider these events and their significance as they roll over us in our time.

Yours for lighting up the world,  
Rachel and Zach



## Sunday

H.J. Andersen

“Esther! Move out of the way!”

The brown-eyed girl felt a hand wrap around her elbow and yank her back. Her heel caught on her skirt and she tripped backward onto the girl behind her. Miriam caught them though, and kept Esther upright.

“Miriam, why is everyone carrying those big palm leaves? I saw some children pass by with baskets of bread and fruit, more than they would need. Is there some sort of festival?”

Miriam looked around her, and pulled her sister into a small alcove between the stone buildings.

“They say the King is coming today. That is why so many people have those palm leaves.”

“The King?”

“Not the current king of Jerusalem, but the eternal king. The women say that he has come to conquer and save us from the Romans.”

Esther’s eyes widened. “We have to go see him!”

Miriam didn’t have time to stop her sister before she was pulled into the streets. Esther pushed her way to the front of the crowd, watching as people lined the streets, leaving a clear path for the coming king. Two little children ran up and down the street with bundles of leaves, handing them out to people who were empty handed. Esther reached out her hand towards the little boy, and as he ran by, he practically shoved a leaf into her hands. Another woman, with graying hair and finer clothes pushed her way to the front.

“Take some of these branches. Throw them to the street when the king comes.” The woman handed the flowers to Miriam, the latter reluctantly taking them from the woman.

Miriam thanked her, and turned back to her sister. A murmur ran through the crowd, and almost immediately, people began cheering.

Esther stood on her toes, searching through the crowd, her eyes finding their way to the entrance of the city.

There! A man, followed by a dozen or so men, riding on a donkey.

“A donkey? I thought this man was supposed to be the great conqueror, riding on a beautiful stallion?” Ester tried to ask her sister, but her voice was drowned out by the roar of the crowd.

As Esther turned to stare at her sister, she saw the crowd throwing their leaves onto the pathway. Not soon after, men and women began throwing their coats onto the street. Both Esther and Miriam threw their branches, joining the others in coating the street like a carpet.

“Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna is the highest!”

Esther and Miriam’s voices joined in with the crowd. The man on the donkey rode slowly through the crowd. This was not the conquering king that many believed, Esther realized. This was a gentle king, who did not come to conquer nations like the old kings had. She had grown up, knowing that a great king would come to rescue her people, and here was the king. But he was not what had been expected.



The man passed by, and Esther could feel the gentleness radiating from the man. He reached out his hand towards the little child and smiled softly at the crowd.

“Miriam, what is the name of the man?” Esther’s voice was drowned out by the crowd, but Miriam turned to her sister with a smile that radiated across her face.

“He is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee.”

## Monday

H.J. Andersen

“Miriam! Hurry up, we’re going to be late!”

Miriam grabbed her bag and sprinted out the door after her younger sister. After seeing Jesus yesterday, he was the only thing that the girls could think or talk about. He was different from the kind of king that they had expected, and the girls couldn’t understand why. He was a king that had been made clear by the prophecies and the crowd, but when he traveled through the streets, he was gentle and did not display the power that any Roman would have.

While the sisters were doing chores this morning, some women had walked by the window, claiming that they saw Jesus headed to the temple. Esther and Miriam had immediately sprung into action.

Esther grabbed Miriam’s hand and pulled her sister through the crowds, sweat dripping down their faces from the crowded streets and the hot sun. The two girls dodged between carts and stands, between people and animals. Some people called out after them, yelling if they were pushed, or telling them to slow down.

It took only a few minutes before they arrived at the steps of the temple. Esther looked up at the entrance, eyes searching the people who were entering and leaving. As she searched, she caught sight of Jesus, just as he was entering the temple.

“I saw him! Let’s go.” Esther had caught sight of Jesus and his friends, talking and laughing as they walked into the temple.

Miriam grumbled at her sister, but still smiled at the younger one's joy. And once again, she was pulled along by her sister.

They stood outside of the doors of the temple; the roar of the merchants was deafening. Miriam tapped Esther's shoulder and pointed to their right where Jesus and his disciples were standing. The disciples were in awe, eyes wandering through the room, mouths widening, pointing things out to their friends. But Jesus looked angry. His brows knitted together in rage and his posture stiffened. On seeing his face, Esther and Miriam's were filled with confusion. How could he be angry at what was going on? People were just buying their sacrifices.

It was only after a second of the girls looking at the prophet, a second of him turning his head to look about the temple, before he turned to the closest table and flipped it over, contents spilling across the floor.

At the loud banging, a hush fell through the entire temple, and for a moment, everyone held their breath.

Jesus turned to the crowd, anger and fury radiating from his body.

"Is it not written, My House shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it into a den of robbers." He yelled, voice echoing throughout the temple, causing a visible shiver through the crowd. Both girls flinched at his voice, confusion at his anger clouding their minds. Miriam grabbed onto Esther, turning to leave when she caught sight of the pharisees. She pointed towards the temple priests and scribes, who seemed enraged at Jesus.

They stood towards the back of the crowd, and

while many around them looked on at Jesus in fear, it looked as though they were plotting against him. And the sisters feared what exactly they were thinking.

“Let’s go, Esther. Maybe we can see the prophet king tomorrow. Hopefully he will not be so angry next time.”

## Tuesday

H.J. Andersen

“I want fruit Miriam! Let’s go to the gardens and see if there are any ripe figs to pick!”

Miriam too craved the sweet fruit and agreed to go with her sister. They left the home, running through the city towards the gardens. They saw the bright colors of clothes and banners and smelled the delicious scent of food from the different stalls that lined the streets. When they approached the entrance to the gardens, they saw a group of men standing at a withered fig tree.

“Look, Miriam. That is Peter, I remember one of the men pointing him out in the crowd two days ago.” She whispered while smiling up at her older sister and pointing at the group.

“And there! Jesus is standing by the tree. Let’s get a little closer, I want to hear what they are saying.”

Once again, Esther pulled her older sister by the arm. They back tracked around one of the houses, moving closer to the wall and to the group. The girls remained hidden behind some carts and crates that were near the disciples, straining to hear the man.

“Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.”

Esther turned to her sister and whispered, “An entire mountain? How is that even possible?”

Miriam shushed her sister and turned back to listen.

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

“Miriam, what exactly is he saying?”

Miriam turned to her sister, trying to find the words. “I believe that Jesus is trying to tell his disciples that they must trust what is to happen. We must forgive and be kind to others, even if they are not kind to us, because that is what God does for us. Esther, we must love everyone and be kind to them.”

“I like what Jesus says, Miriam,” Esther said as she watched the gentle king smile at his friends.

Ester smiled softly at the group, understanding that Jesus was a gentle man, who taught love. She was still confused at how angry he had been the previous day, but like Miriam said, she would trust that what he did was right. Esther had a feeling that something amazing would happen.

Miriam smiled at her sister, turning to look one more time at the group before she pulled her sister up. They held each other’s hand, watching as the king and his friends turned back towards the city. Esther smiled one last time, hoping that one day she would see the king again, and, once again, pulled her sister home.



## **Wednesday**

H.J. Andersen

A day of rest,  
The quiet before a storm.

I remember you  
Riding on a donkey  
Humbled and gentle  
A gentle breeze  
A breath of life.  
Not a conqueror  
But a kind savior.

I remember you  
Tearing the building apart  
Crumbling it with your bare hands  
Flooding the room in anger  
Cleansing the mess  
Raging at the disarray  
At the lies that swarmed the room.

I remember you  
Resting with your friends  
Telling them “have faith”  
“Forgiveness will be yours”.  
A still moment,  
Calming us and providing shelter  
From the hurricane of life.



Now I wait  
What will happen next?  
Is this the eye of the storm?  
But you will leave  
Forsaken by the Father  
And I will wait  
For an end to this hurricane.

But you have promised eternity  
In shining clouds  
With joy and peace.  
You are the gentle breeze  
In the raging tempest  
Raising your hand  
And calming the storm.

So I will pray  
I will forgive  
I will find joy  
I will love  
And I will wait.

## **Wandering with Purpose**

Sarah Burton

Yearning,  
longing  
for my heart's content.

In the silence  
I hear it.

In the darkness  
I see it.

In being,  
I know it.

Leading me by  
candlelight or  
lighthouse beacon;  
I follow.

To life,  
to death,  
to in between.

A sacred place  
many hardly fathom.

His presence  
fills the air  
embraces the soul;

felt by masses,  
known by those.

He is everywhere  
He is everything

In the  
wood of the Cross,  
Thorn of the rose,  
Blood of the wound.

In the  
clouds of the Sky,  
Face of the neighbor  
and the foe

"Why do you forsake me?"  
Why did You leave  
You died,  
gone

Restored my faith  
my love  
my Life,  
in resurrection

Risen Lord,  
my Savior

Lead us  
through the Desert  
to the Promised land

Lord,  
May it take a lifetime;  
Amen.



## **Service for Maundy Thursday**

Rachel Huchthausen

Light streams into the holy space  
Through a window to the right  
With insulation jammed between  
Its frame and the painted cinder blocks.

A woman stands looking at  
Animal cracker crumbs and grape juice  
Stains on the white cloth  
Covering metal that rumbles.

She makes the sign of the cross  
As she turns a shirt inside out.  
She takes a striped sock and  
Plunges it under soapy water.

## **Bread of Life**

Hannah Fraser

Sun glows in the evening.  
The clock ticks as my hands fold,  
Pushing and pressing dough.

My knuckles ache, so does my back.  
Hair strands hang in my face,  
Unwashed tears stain my apron.

Breathe in, roll the dough.  
Feel it molding between my fingers.  
Breathe out, name every doubt.

My supply is running low.  
Every day I knead and bake,  
And my cup ceases to flow.

I'm always wanting, always hungry.  
I haven't seen a friend in years.  
I used to share my bread.

Now I toil every day,  
Working my back, my fingers,  
Crying into bread that only lasts hours.

The warm light of the kitchen  
Casts shadows across the counter.  
They remind me of secrets unshared.

You, who promised me bread,  
Where is it? Your hands were broken  
Yet I am left unsatisfied.

Bread of life, can you feed me?  
My spirit aches for more.  
I'm always hungry, always thirsty.

I struggle and I fold  
Beneath your scarred hands.  
Only with peace will I rise.

Break my body, break my bread  
I need something to sustain me  
Something that will keep.

You broke your body, broke the bread  
You offered a life for mine  
A life to save me.

Hear my call, Bread of Life.  
I hunger for something eternal.  
Do as you promised and sustain me.







## Friday

Hannah Fraser

They killed you before me today.

I wish I could remove the jeers and shouts from my mind.

They echo there, like the sound of your voice crying out

to God. The God who has been mindful of his servant,

but now I feel that my blessing has been torn away from

me. I think of moments before this, when your face mor-

phed into that beautiful, terrifying image of sanctity, and

you told me to take peace. Where is the peace in this?

Yahweh has been with his people, but I cannot believe he

is with us now. Generations of faithfulness precede me,

leading me to this. And yet, did he not send his angels to

guide us to refuge in Egypt? Did he not place you in my

womb while I was a virgin? Had I known the misery you

would cause me, would I have changed my answer?

I cling to the fabric of my cloak. John gives me a worried

look, but his own body bends with the weight of what

we saw. They beat you. I could do nothing to stop it. You

never looked at me, which was for the best as you would

not have found any comfort in that glance. The last time

you appeared so frail, so human was when I held you in

my arms for the first time, surrounded by matted, stale

hay and wrapped up in the stench of the animals which

lived around us. You cried, and your body squirmed,

with your eyes squeezed shut like a favorite blanket had

been torn away and my arms could not do it justice.

My body trembles. A deep, persistent ache has been

lodged in my chest, and the wailing women around me

cannot break through the silent numbness of the evening.

If only I could hold you now.

But you have left. I watched as you committed your spirit to our Lord, and I did not notice the tears streaming from my eyes until I tasted their salt on my lips. If John had not been beside me, I do not know if I could have stood. The image of you, torn, in agony, completely betrayed by the God we both serve, will never leave me. I want to wipe it away along with the tears I saw in your eyes. Why did he leave you?

You did not deserve this, although I know I did not always have faith in you. Should I be blamed for this? What mother can fully trust her son when he leads thousands, guiding them in the wake of his miraculous work, or rather, trust the thousands? I wanted you home, safe, away from the leaders who sent you stares that could turn a woman's heart to ice, away from the dangers I felt looming over us. Ever since the angel first met me, I have feared for your life. You, the son of God, are under my protection. I wanted to think I could be strong enough to bear it.

Darkness covers us, now that even the sun stopped shining. It is as though the whole world mourns your death. If you command nature and if its powers bend to your will and break in sorrow at your loss, why did they do nothing to save you? Why did the earth wait until your spirit had passed on to tear itself apart, splitting rocks and shaking the ground in rage? Only then did the centurion realize the mistake, for I heard him call you a son of God. And it breaks my heart, that I wonder if I was ever truly your mother.

You had such an air of mystery about you. Half of your words I could not comprehend, the other half filled me with such a mixture of pride, exasperation, and comfort that I hardly knew whether you were my son or my rabbi. Sometimes while we ate around our table, you would catch me staring at you, because yet again I had to wrestle with the divine knowledge God had planted in my heart. Your eyes would crinkle at the corners, like I had told an amusing joke, and I would smile back, and the moment would pass. Now we will never have another of those moments.

I ache for you to return. The most gentle, powerful, awful man I have ever met, and you are gone. Was this the plan? Every time they commanded you to save yourself, I felt that burning flicker in my chest, my own way of repeating the call. Please, if you are who you say you are, save yourself.



## Saturday

Hannah Fraser

When I woke this morning, I expected to feel more than nothing. For a moment I lay still, wondering what had caused the smooth stone of emptiness that sat heavily on my heart or the gloom outside. There was no sound, for even the tepid breezes that usually greet me in the morning have ceased. And then I remembered.

Joseph buried your body in a new tomb. I did not have a chance to see you before they lay you there. I did not wish to. When I thanked Joseph for what he did to honor you, I began to weep. I believe I made him uncomfortable. None of us had yet been able to accept the truth of your death, and I do not think we have yet.

John has not spoken to me much. I can see that he understands that I need time, and he probably does as well. How was it, that in your last moments of agony, before you were taken from us, you made sure I was taken care of? I wish I could return the favor.

The rest of your disciples I have not seen. I do not think I should call them disciples anymore. Where were they at your cross? Why did I not see them? I know you trusted them, loved them even. I never saw their appeal, those men who smelled of the burning sea, sweat, and fish. But they followed you, as I sometimes longed to. Now they hide, and even I do not know where. It was one of them who betrayed you, gave you up to be slaughtered. Did you know he would do that? Did you not know everything?

I wish I could believe the words you spoke to me now that you are not here as physical proof of God's promises, but your death contradicts it all. We thought you were the Messiah, our Savior, the one to free us from bondage and unite us in your glorious kingdom. God had finally fulfilled his promises to us through you.

I look out to the street. Quiet, listless in its morning awakening, I can see that nothing has changed, yet everything has. It is like the sky has laid its mourning veil over top of us, so we can hardly breathe air anymore and colors are distorted. This is not God's kingdom, of that I am sure.

I wonder what has happened to Israel. Where is our steadfast hope, our faith, our obedience to God if we abandon his chosen one to be crucified? The people of God, not just turning their backs on him, but scourging him as well. I think you knew. Your eyes held too much sorrow to not see what would befall you. So why did you let it?

I heard from one of our more talkative neighbors a long time ago that you said you would raise the Temple in three days. She thought it was ridiculous, but I know you. You have never spoken a meaningless word in your life. I will await your kingdom, no matter how long it takes. This mystery in my heart has buried itself deep, too deep to be uprooted. Like the prophet Anna, who waited for you at the temple, I will sit in waiting. Perhaps three days, perhaps beyond my life.

We are frightened, Jesus. Frightened of what the future holds now that you are no longer here to protect us with

your hope or encourage us with your strength. There is nowhere to go from here, especially for your disciples, for their work was your work. I do not know if you were truly the Messiah or not, but either way, no one else can save us.









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# The Lantern