

available, bring some in to decorate the spaces where your family gathers. Teach your children the traditional Easter greeting "Alleluia! Christ is risen!" and the response "The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!"

Other ideas include:

- Give up technology (TV, cell phones, Internet) for a period of time and spend that time as a family engaged in community service. (This is another way to teach children about fasting.)
- Use an age-appropriate Lenten Bible study or read Easter books.
- Plant seeds (marigold, petunia or grass seeds) in an eggshell carton

filled with dirt; sprouting seeds send a clear message to children of the power of new life.

- Check Pinterest and online blogs for Lent- and Easter-related craft ideas.
- Host an at-home foot washing ceremony on Maundy Thursday using the account of the Lord's Supper in John 13:1-11. Washing someone else's feet, especially for children to wash their parents' feet and each other's, can be a powerful experience.
- Watch the sunrise together on Easter morning (the time of day the Resurrection was discovered) before going to church.

Beyond words: Experiencing Holy Week through art

A group of United Methodist artists at West Market Street United Methodist Church in Greensboro, N.C. were asked to depict the Stations of the Cross through various mediums. As they interpreted the Scriptures of Holy Week, these United Methodists found themselves experiencing Christ's crucifixion – and their own faith -- in new ways. Watch the video.



What does your church do for Holy Week?



Are you and/or your church celebrating Holy Week in a unique way? We want to hear about it. Email us at news@unyumc.org and tell us all about it.

The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York area and the world. For more news and stories visit: www.unyumc.org



"Adults may set aside time for more intense prayer, study, and service. But what do families, especially those with younger children, do at home for Holy Week and Easter?"

Read more on page 2

What's inside

- 2 A message from Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez
- 3 Remembering Holy Week
- 4 Holy Week through art



The Upper New York Conference's vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.



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From the desk of Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez

"...this is the kind of fast I choose..." Isaiah 58:5a



Dear United Methodists of Upper New York,

Lent is a time for followers of Christ to engage in self-examination, repentance, and deepening our relationship with God.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, encouraged practices such as fasting and prayer during Lent. Wesley saw these disciplines not as mere rituals but as means to cultivate a closer connection with God. For Wesley, these disciplines, when practiced faithfully, lead us to live more aligned with the teachings and witness of Jesus.

As the Bible clarifies through the prophets Isaiah and Micah, practicing spiritual disciplines should extend beyond a set time and include genuine and permanent changes in attitudes and behaviors in our daily lives.

The world is in desperate need of the healing love of God. This great love is made visible through passionate disciples of Jesus Christ who embody love, compassion, mercy, and justice every day and everywhere.

This Lent, I encourage all United Methodists in Upper New York to:

- be open to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit,
- practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting,
- reflect on areas in our lives where our expression of faith needs to transcend from "good intentions" to concrete actions that embody God's love,
- and pray to God to make our hearts tender to one another.

In a world filled with violence, let's be peacemakers.

In a world filled with hate, let's be healers.

In a world filled with divisions, let's be unifiers.

In a world filled with exclusion, let's be includers.

In a world filled with selfishness, let's be community builders.

In a world filled with hopelessness, let's be and proclaim Christ's hope.

This Lent, and always, remember that God desires sincere actions driven by love and responsible social engagement rather than mere ritualist observance.

If you haven't yet, join me in UNY's year-long prayer pilgrimage "Together in Prayer." You can learn more about it by scanning the QR code.

Together, let's be God's acting presence in the world.

In Christ,

Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez
The United Methodist Church
Serving United Methodists of Upper New York



Remembering Holy Week, celebrating Easter at home

By Cindy Solomon

Editors note: Cindy Solomon is a marketing consultant and content writer living in Franklin, Tennessee. The following is an excerpt from an article published on UMC.org. Parts of this story were adapted from articles published earlier by Lynn Gilliam and the Rev. Joe Iovino, content writer for UMC.org. Scan the QR code to read the full article.



Holy Week and Easter traditionally provide a wealth of opportunities for remembering, meditating, and celebrating at church. Adults may set aside time for more intense prayer, study, and service. But what do families, especially those with younger children, do at home for Holy Week and Easter?

"While many families celebrate Advent in the home, it may be harder to observe Holy Week at home," acknowledged Lynn Gilliam. "After all, it's much easier to talk with our children about the baby in the manger than it is to discuss Jesus' death and the events leading up to it. But just as the observance of Advent helps us to prepare for the celebration of Christmas, observing Holy Week helps prepare us for the joyous celebration of Easter."

Gilliam, former senior editor of *Pockets*, a magazine for children published by The Upper Room, shared several ideas to help families journey toward Easter together and then to make Easter a season long, rather than one-day, celebration.



Have simpler meals. Fasting, one of the most ancient spiritual disciplines, is not appropriate for everyone, certainly not for young children. But simplifying meals can remind everyone of the solemnity of the week leading up to sunset on Holy Saturday. Simply eliminating desserts is an easy way to do this. Talk to your children about how giving up something we enjoy can remind us of Jesus' giving up his life for us.

Read together about the events of the last weeks of Jesus' life in your Bible. Children who are old enough and enjoy reading can read some of the passages to the family.

Add the events of Holy Week to your family prayers. For example, you could pray, "God, we remember today how Jesus served his friends by washing their feet. Help us to serve others, too."

On Easter Sunday, celebrate at home – as well as at church – in a big way. Make "Christ is risen!" banners to hang around the house. Have a special food. If fresh flowers – a colorful symbol of new life – are



Continued on page 4.