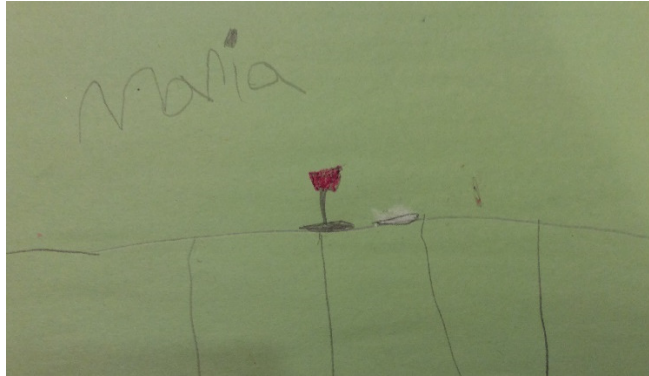


THOUGHTS ON HOLY WEEK 2020



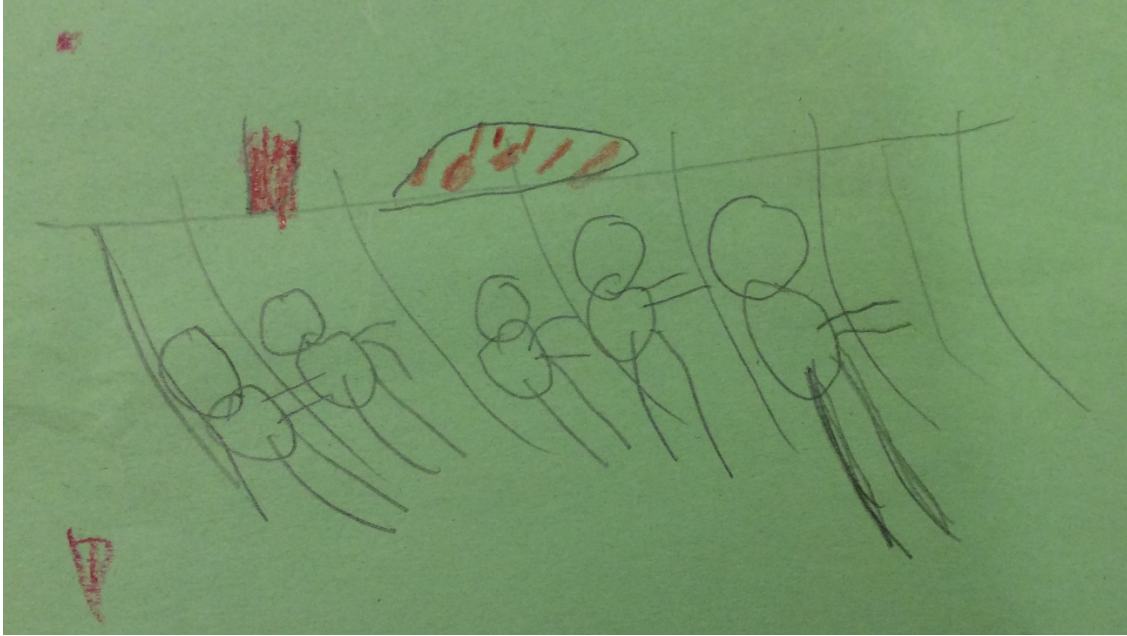
The Last Supper before the Disciples arrive – Maria C.

Over these past couple of weeks, while sheltering more-or-less in place, preparing liturgies and services in unfamiliar modes using unknown technologies, I find myself reflecting on an irony that seems keener in this week, the Great Week, Holy Week.

This is, after all, the week when the people of God, as the Prayer Book puts it, “enter with joy upon the contemplation of those might acts, whereby [God has] given us life and immortality.” This is the time when we retell the stories of faithfulness and betrayal, of death and life. The stories themselves caution us about certainty, about being right. A festive parade becomes a funeral procession; the women who bring spices to prepare a body find an empty tomb.

At the same time, this is a week brimming with well-known services and customs, of well-loved stories and hymns. We know what’s supposed to happen this week, right? We’ve done it all our lives.

The years of repetition have formed us to know exactly what to expect from, and what meaning to give to, this sacred time. But now, having been dropped into the whirlpool of a pandemic, much of what we know and love about this week has been taken from us; not least, each other. And, for many of us, the beliefs we construct from the rhythms of Holy Week have vanished as well. It feels like we’ve lost the map, and there’s not even much of a road. So, then, what to do...?



The Last Supper, Julia C.

I wonder if this radical disruption of Holy Week might allow us to let go, if just a tiny bit, of being right; to loosen our grip on the notion that we know how this week is supposed to go. In surrendering to the mystery of this holy time, I wonder what we might learn about the Way of the Cross and the Resurrection.

In accepting this invitation to let go, I wonder if we might find ourselves able to walk with Jesus differently, arriving, at last, at the empty tomb with fresh eyes and a heart broken open in new ways.

Here's a poem by the late Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai (1924-2000).

The Place Where We Are Right

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.

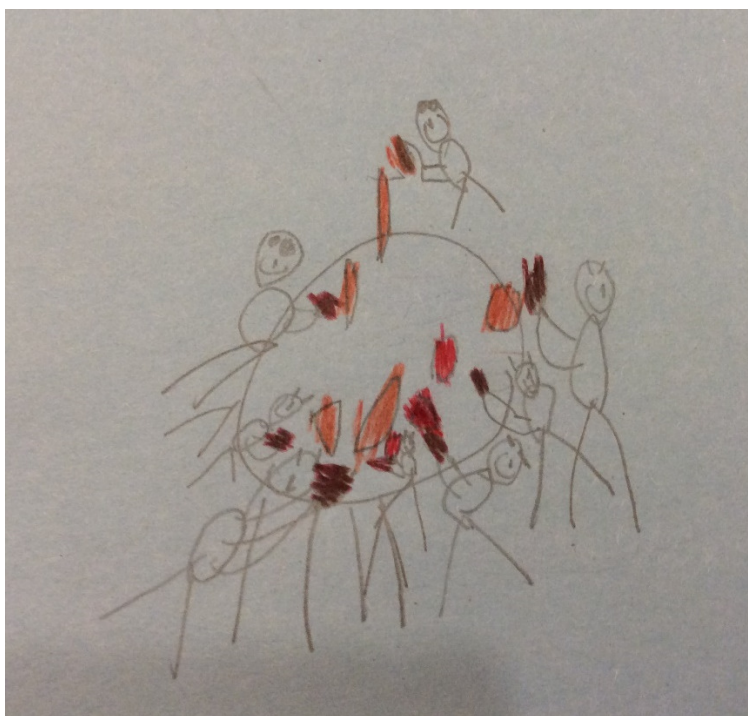
The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard.

But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plow.
And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined
House once stood.

As the world around us grows ever more fearful, may we who follow the God of Life listen for the whisper of the Spirit. Let us pray.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Rev. Paul Jacobson, PhD
Priest in Charge
Grace Episcopal Church, Trumbull, CT



The Last Supper – Michael C.