

**Lenten Boxes/Easter Cross 2014.** Each week of Lent, a Lenten box was added to the wall of the sanctuary, featuring images from the lectionary texts for that Sunday. On Maundy Thursday, the images of the boxes illustrated the stories of Holy Week. On Easter Sunday, the boxes were joined to form a towering cross, full of images that join us in proclaiming the joy of Christ's resurrection and our redemption. The following paragraphs explain the images used.



The Lenten journey began with ashes and crosses on Ash Wednesday, a reminder of our mortality. On Maundy Thursday we pictured Peter warming himself by the fire, seeing the ashes of the spent charcoal, barely believing what he'd done -- not once but three times. With the coming of Easter we see the cross redeemed from an instrument of torture and death to a symbol of forgiveness and life.

The apples and stones in this box remind us of the temptation stories -- Adam and Eve tempted to eat the fruit in the Garden, and Jesus in the wilderness, tempted to turn stones to bread. On Maundy Thursday we remember the loaf of bread that Jesus broke, and the fruit of the cup that he offered his friends. As part of our Easter cross, the apples and stones remind us of the forgiveness we know through Christ's death and resurrection.



The stars in this box remind us that Abraham was promised by God that his ancestors would be more numerous than the stars, and Nicodemus visited Jesus under the cover of night, with only stars as witnesses. On Maundy Thursday, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed under the stars. On Easter we celebrate the resurrected Christ who is our guiding star, the light of the world, and the sun of righteousness.

Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman at the well and engaged her in conversation about "living water." On Maundy Thursday he knelt in the dirt and washed the disciples' feet -- showing them the meaning of service and humility. We pour water into the baptismal font as we remember the flowing abundance of grace and forgiveness that claims us at our baptism. Since we have been redeemed by Christ's sacrifice for us, we need never feel dirty or thirst for acceptance again -- the streams of living water constantly flow to us and through us!



A blind man was healed by Jesus, who spat on the ground to make mud, applied it to his eyes, then told him to wash. On Maundy Thursday we were reminded that at his trial, blindness was a spiritual state, not a physical one, as the leaders refused to see who Jesus really was. As Easter people, we are touched by the line from the beloved hymn, "I once was blind, but now I see" as we remember the grace by which we are saved.

Ezekiel prophesied to the dried bones, and the Spirit blew through them and brought them new life. Jesus called to Lazarus and he too found new life, leaving behind the wrappings of death. On the cross, Jesus died before his legs could be broken, proof of the brutality he'd already suffered. But on Easter morning, no bones were found in the tomb -- only a shroud and facecloth were left behind when Jesus dealt death its final defeat.



The palms of Palm Sunday remind us that God may work things out differently than we expect. Disappointed and discouraged, the crowd that shouted "hosanna!" would shout, "crucify him!" soon after. On this side of Easter, we hail Jesus as the triumphant King of kings and Lord of lords, knowing that his triumph over the grave was the victory of the power of sacrifice and peace, not war and violence.

The Lenten boxes were constructed by Don Parker and decorated by the Confirmation class. The cross will remain in the sanctuary through the great fifty days of the Easter season.