



Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for

Tenebrae Prayer Service

Wednesday, April 16th, 2025 on Holy Week

Time: 8:00pm

Location: All Saints in Twain Harte

WHAT IT IS:

Tenebrae means “darkness” or “shadows”, and it refers to the chanting of matins/lauds of the Divine Office on the 3 days leading up to Easter Sunday: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Usually, in religious orders, this part of the office is chanted when it is still dark outside, and sung by the light of candles only. In the earliest centuries, it was chanted shortly after midnight, but starting in the middle ages, it became the common practice to chant it on the evening before in anticipation, to make it more widely accessible to clergy and laity. So following this tradition of making it available for parishioners in a parish setting, we will sing and respond in parts on Wednesday night of Holy Week.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

The choir sits in the right front pew, participants sit on separate sides. The choir chants the refrain, and we alternate reading aloud the verses of the psalms. The priest reads the lessons that separate the psalms. There is a candle “*hearse*” at the front, shaped like a triangle. As each psalm is completed, one candle is extinguished, until only the lone candle at the top is left; a powerful reminder of the apostles abandoning Christ in his darkest hour. At the end, the candle representing Christ is removed, so there is total darkness. Then, traditionally, a “loud noise/commotion” (the *strepitus*) is made, represents the convulsion of nature following the death of Christ; the chaos of the world without a savior. This is done usually by banging books on the pews for several seconds, until the “*Christ candle*” is returned to view again. Then all commotion ceases. And all depart in silence & darkness.