HAPPY EASTER from the SFDS Parish History Archives!
SFDS Flower Window Egg
DESIGN YOUR OWN EASTER EGG
WHY EASTER EGGS?

Historically, eggs and dairy were forbidden during Lent, but chickens didn’t know that, so they continued to produce, building a large surplus of eggs by Easter. At the same time, being able to eat an egg after a long prohibition was a great treat, so there was a desire to make their reappearance festive. An ancient Persian custom – which had already been adopted by Romans – of dying eggs red and other colors around the festival of Nowruz in Spring – was adopted and the red color was rationalized as representing “the blood of Christ shed at that time of his Crucifixion.”

The egg on the Jewish Seder plate could have influenced the meaning of the egg at the “Christian Passover.” According to the Jewish Chabad.org, “In Aramaic, an egg is called bey’a, which also means ‘pray’...” and is a traditional Jewish food of mourning, recalling the destruction of the Second Temple; at the same time, “the egg also symbolizes our hope and prayer for the future. When a chicken lays an egg, the egg appears to be a completed object. Yet in truth it isn't complete, and the egg is just a preparation for the live creature that will emerge from it later. So too the Exodus from Egypt, while at first appearing to be an end in itself, in truth is only a preparation for the Final Redemption...” Eggs offer a traditional symbol of anticipation and rebirth, so, for Christians, the egg came to symbolize the mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ.

A reporter from English Heritage.org notes that “The custom of the Easter egg hunt...comes from Germany. Some suggest that its origins date back to the late 16th century, when the Protestant reformer Martin Luther organised egg hunts for his congregation. The men would hide the eggs for the women and children to find. This was a nod to the story of the resurrection, in which the empty tomb was discovered by women.”

EASTER BUNNY
Did you know the American Easter Bunny came from Pennsylvania? The Pennsylvania Germans, arriving in the 1700s, brought the custom to the United States. In those days, “Anticipation ran high as the children prepared a nest for the ‘Oschter Haws,’ as they called the Easter Rabbit. They knew that if they had been good, he would come on Easter eve and lay a whole nestfull of colored eggs.”

(1926 ad from the SFDS Parish Monthly Bulletin)