

GOOD FRIDAY

April 3, 2026 7:00pm

INSTRUCTIONS: We begin with a prayer walk. There are 5 stations to view. Pause and read the scripture and reflection question. Prayerfully consider all you see and read. When you feel ready, move to the next station. Once you have finished with the final station (at the courtyard windows), silently walk into the sanctuary.

PART 1 – THE WALK WITH JESUS TO THE CROSS

STATION 1: JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN

Matthew 26:36-46

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” ³⁹And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want.” ⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?”

⁴¹Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴²Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Now the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand.”

- **In the garden, Jesus faces the most agonizing of human moments: the moment when your hope for a different outcome is dashed. Jesus asks God for the cup to pass but ultimately surrenders to God’s will. Have you faced your own “Garden of Gethsemane” moment? What might’ve given Jesus the courage and strength to pray, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done”?**

STATION 2: BETRAYAL, DESERTION, AND DENIAL. **Matthew 26:47-56**

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” ⁴⁹At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

⁵¹Suddenly one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” ⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a rebel? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

- **Betrayed. Deserted. Later denied. All by those who were closest to Jesus. Those who knew him best. Those who spent the most time with him. The emotional pain begins before the physical pain starts. Yet, Jesus still calls Judas, “Friend.” What does this reveal about Jesus and how he feels about Judas? Those who deserted and denied? About you?**

STATION 3: BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

Matthew 26:57-68

⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. ⁵⁹Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" ⁶²The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" ⁶³But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

⁶⁴Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶What do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and struck him, and some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, "Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?"

- **Does Jesus' silence surprise you? Anger you? Baffle you? If you were to place yourself in this scene, where would you be?**

STATION 4: BEFORE PILATE.

Matthew 27:2, 11-14, 24-26

²They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?"

¹⁴But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. ²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus he handed him over to be crucified.

- **Have you tried to "wash your hands" of the consequences of your actions? Did it work? Have you been swept along with the crowds cheering for things that make you shudder when you are alone?**

STATION 5: MOCKING AND BEATING.

Matthew 27:27-31

²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

- **Jesus does not defend himself or prove himself to the soldiers. There is cruelty in all that the soldiers do. The soldiers thought their gods, their king (whether Caesar, Rome, or the gods they worshiped), were the ultimate authority and power. Yet they were looking into the face of the one true God and King, and instead of worshiping they spit in his face. What does this say about our God? About the other gods and idols calling for our worship?**

After finishing your reflections on Station 5, please make the rest of the walk in silence into the sanctuary.

PART 2 – JESUS ON THE CROSS

Please remain silent and prayerful as you wait for all the other worshipers to enter.

Please stand as the cross is processed in and placed in the center.

OPENING PRAYER

Behold the wood of the Cross, on which was hung the world's Salvation.

People: O come, let us adore him.

OPENING HYMN #803 ***When I Survey the Wondrous Cross***

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the death of Christ, my God;
all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

THE CRUCIFIXION **Matthew 27:32-56** Stefanie & Jason Rowinski & Tracy Caine

SPECIAL MUSIC ***Jesus Paid It All*** SPLC Adult Choir

REFLECTION ON THE CROSS – Pastor Stefanie Rowinski

PRAYERS

In this holy hour of meditation, when in humility we contemplate how great a salvation you prepared for us in mercy, we thank you for the revelation of yourself in your Son and for the manifestation in him of your will and grace.

We thank you for the eternal words of spirit and life which he gave us; for the fulfillment in him of the law and the prophets, and for our deliverance; for his sacrificial love, and for his perfect obedience; for his mercies of healing, and for his holy example of patience in suffering; for his willingness to endure the cross, and for his submission to death.

Grant that we may see, in the darkness that attended his dying, in the shaking of the earth and the rending of the rocks, when nature itself mourned its Lord, how great an evil was done by the hands of humans, how great a life was ended, how great a death was inflicted. But in the tearing of the veil of the Temple, and in the opening of the graces of the saint, show us our entrance through the innocent blood of Jesus into the heavenly Holy of Holies.

For all that he has done, for all that he has borne, for all that he has given for us, for all that he has promised us, we thank you, O Father. From the ends of the earth, your church, which Christ loved and for which he gave himself, bows in adoration and praise. From the depths of every believing and understanding heart the prayer of gratitude rises as incense to your throne.

From the ransomed and redeemed of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, the song of thanksgiving and worship ascends to heaven:

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

Now, as we have received your mercy and seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ, grant unto us, O God, the multiplying of your grace through him who died, but who rose again and evermore reigns as King of heaven and earth. In his glorious Name we pray as he taught us to pray...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. AMEN

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.
***If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;
If we endure, we shall also reign with him.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

Ah, Holy Jesus

vs 1, 2 & 4

Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended
that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted.

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I, it was denied thee; I crucified thee.

For me, kind Jesus, was thine incarnation,
thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation;
thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion, for my salvation.

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29) (*Silence is kept.*)

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, we pray you to set your passion, Cross, and death between your judgements and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; peace and rest to the dead; to your holy Church unity and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and forever. **AMEN.**

[Reminder: Ushers will dismiss you by row. Please leave in darkness and silence.]

PART 3 – JESUS IN THE TOMB (In the Narthex as you leave.)

FINAL STATION: THE BURIAL OF JESUS.

Matthew 27:57-61

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who also was himself a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰and laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

[Go in peace.]

A Holy Saturday Guide:

Pray: O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Read: Job 14:1-14; Psalm 34:1-4, 15-16; 1 Peter 4:1-8; Matthew 27:57-66

FLOWERING CROSS - EASTER SUNDAY

Tonight, the cross is bare, a place of death and pain. Sunday, as we celebrate the resurrection transforming all things, we watch the cross burst with the new life of spring. To “flower the cross” is to celebrate the resurrecting power of God which transforms even the darkest symbol of death into the hope of eternal life. Bring your flower to add to the cross between 9-9:25am in the narthex.