

St John's United Church of Christ

Service of Tenebrae

April 3, 2026

7:30p.m.

Prelude

"Come, Ye Disconsolate"

Wayne L. Wold

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Welcome

Rev. Becky Sausser

Call to Worship

One: Tonight, we gather in this time and in this place to remember the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

All: Though he was blameless, the spotless lamb, Christ bore the sin of the world, being beaten, abused, and broken for our sake.

One: "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." (Hebrews 10:14)

All: To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. (Psalm 22:29)

One: Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

All: Let us praise Christ's holy name and remember his sacrifice.

Hymn# 224 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

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

Forbid it, then, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to Christ's blood.

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.

Prayer of Confession

One: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Let us approach the throne of grace, that we might receive mercy.

All: Gracious God, my sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what my lips tremble to name, what my heart can no longer bear, and what has become for me all consuming judgment. Set me free from a past that I cannot change; open to me a future in which I can be changed; and grant me grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

Confession Response Hymn #226, Verse 2

What wondrous love is this, O my soul! O my soul!

What wondrous love is this, O My soul!

What wondrous love is this!

That Christ should come in bliss

To bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul,

To bear the heavy cross for my soul.

Assurance of God's Forgiveness

One: Receive this assurance of forgiveness, it is in Christ that we find eternal life and freedom! All who come to the cross of salvation will find grace and salvation!

All: "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

Response to words of assurance

Hymn # 218 Verse 4

Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay you,

I do adore you, and will ever pray you,

Think on your pity and your love unswerving,

Not my deserving.

Hymn #219 "Journey to Gethsemane"

Journey to Gethsemane, go and feel the tempter's power;

Your Redeemer's conflict see, Watch the anguish of this hour;

Do not hide or turn away: Learn from Jesus how to pray.

Follow then to Pilate's hall, view the Lord of life arraigned;

Crowned with thorns and mocked by all, faithfully this pain sustained;

Greater still than shame or loss, Jesus now must face the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb, see the Savior lifted high,

Mark the miracle of time, God's own Child is sacrificed;

"It is finished!" Jesus cries; Learn from Jesus how to die.

John 18:1-14

The Betrayal of Christ

Noah Dopera

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" ⁵ They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶ When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." ⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. ¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

¹² So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

One: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

One: Lord, have mercy.

Hymn response #60 Verse 5

O Spirit of God, our comfort and guide,
In life, in death, close by our side;
For this, we honor you with song,
Expressing thanks our whole life long:
O Spirit of God, our comfort and guide!

John 18:15-24

Questioning from the High Priest

Maverick Rissell

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸ Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. ¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." ²² When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³ Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

One: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

One: Lord, have mercy.

Hymn Response #40, verses 1 and 2

You are the way; through you alone, can we the true God find;
in you, O Christ, has God revealed his heart and will and mind.

You are the truth; your Word alone true wisdom can impart;
you only can inform the mind and purify the heart.



²⁸ Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰ They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." ³¹ Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." ³² (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." ³⁷ Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. ³⁹ But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰ They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

One: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

One: Lord, have mercy.

Hymn Response #218 "Ah, Holy Jesus" verses 1-3

Ah, holy Jesus, how have you offended,

that mortal judgment has on you descended?

By foes derided, by your own rejected, O most afflicted!

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon you?

It is my treason, Lord, that has slain you.

And I, dear Jesus, I it was denied you; I crucified you.

For me, kind Jesus, was your incarnation,

your mortal sorrow, and your life's oblation,

Your death of anguish and your bitter passion, for my salvation.

John 19:1-16

Christ Beaten and Ridiculed

Danny Collier

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³ They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. ⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." ⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" ⁶ When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." ⁷ The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." ⁸ Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹ He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" ¹¹ Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." ¹² From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." ¹³ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. ¹⁴ Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" ¹⁵ They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." ¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

One: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

One: Lord, have mercy.

Hymn Response #222 verses 1 and 5

My song is love unknown—
my Savior's love to me;
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?

I sing my plain belief, one song my heart outpours;
Never was pain nor grief, never was love like yours.
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise I all my days could gladly spend:
I all my days could gladly spend.

Psalm 22:1-2, 14-18

A Plea For Deliverance

Erin Dopera

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my chest; ¹⁵ my mouth is dried up like a shard of pottery, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled; ¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸ they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.

One: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

One: Lord, have mercy.

Choir response:

“Agnus Dei”

John Leavitt

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John 19:17-30

The Crucifixion of Christ

Henry Dopera

So they took Jesus; ¹⁷ and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew^[d] is called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth,^[e] the King of the Jews.” ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew,^[f] in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹ Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” ²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.” ²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. ²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

“They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

²⁵ And that is what the soldiers did.

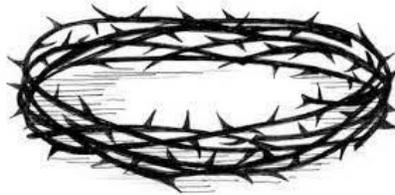
Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. ³⁰ When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

One: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

One: Lord, have mercy.



Hymn #226 Verse 2, Choir Only

What you, dear Savior, suffered was all for sinners’ gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression, but yours the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior, for I deserve your place
Look on me with your favor, O grant to me your grace.

Responsive Reading: The Servant’s Song- Isaiah 53:7-9

Hawthorn Rissell

One: He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we
are healed.

**Many: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our
own way,
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

One: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his
mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its
shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Many: By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people.

All: They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

One: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

One: Lord, have mercy.

Soloist Hymn #229

“Were you there?”

Jeff Rissell

John 19:31-42

The Burial

Pastor Becky Sausser

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵ (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows^[g] that he tells the truth.) ³⁶ These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.” ³⁷ And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

³⁸ After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body.

³⁹ Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Moment of Silence

Christ Candle Rekindled

One: The true light that enlightens everyone came into the world through Christ. Through the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. In him was life, and his life was the light of all. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

The service is ended. When you feel ready, you may leave. When leaving the church, please maintain a reverent silence in respect to our Savior's great sacrifice.

Thank you for your presence here tonight and to our readers and musicians. Please join us for our Easter Resurrection Worship, Sunday at 11am.

