



*Good Friday
Seven Last Words
March 29, 2024*



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Cover Image

Our cover art today was drawn by Jeff Tokarz, a member of the Bethlehem community. Jeff resumed drawing four years ago and recently created this image of Christ as he reflected on the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. We are grateful for Jeff's openness to sharing this image for our reflection this Good Friday.

About Worship this Evening

The story of Jesus' crucifixion is the central to each of the gospel accounts, though each one records particular details and presents Jesus speaking different words or phrases from cross as he died. Since the 16th century these sayings, the Seven Last Words, have been widely used on Good Friday worship in various Christian traditions.

Our service this evening is an adaptation of the ancient Tenebrae Service dating from the eighth century. It is a service commemorating the suffering and death of Christ and was originally celebrated on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week. The literal translation of the Latin word Tenebrae is "shadows" or "darkness."

The darkness of the chancel caused by the extinguished candles and diminishing light reminds us of the darkness that Jesus himself descended into on Good Friday that we might receive eternal light.

Friday, March 29, 2024 ~ Good Friday

PRELUDE

Vorspiel auf das Lied Ich ruff zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV Anh. 73
(Prelude on the song “I Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ”)

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

We gather in solemn devotion as we listen and reflect on the seven last words of Christ from the cross. Through word and music we ponder Christ’s suffering and death; always remembering the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life. We depart silently, anticipating the promised resurrection to come.

HYMN

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now

ELW 345

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

~ SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST FROM THE CROSS ~

THE FIRST WORD

“Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.”

READING: Luke 23:32-38

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!’ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’

PRAYER

Candle is extinguished

THE SECOND WORD

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

READING: Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, ‘Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!’ But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’

PRAYER

Candle is extinguished

MUSICAL REFLECTION

At the Foot of the Cross

words, Susan Naus Dengler
music, Lee Dengler

The Chancel Choir

THE THIRD WORD

“Woman, behold your son! Behold your mother!”

READING: John 19:23-27

²³When 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. ²⁴So they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.’ This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

‘They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.’

²⁵And 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. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

PRAYER

Candle is extinguished

MUSICAL REFLECTION

The Crucifixion

from *Hermit Songs*, op. 29, no. 5

text, *The Speckled Book*, 12th cent.

tr. Howard Mumford Jones

music, Samuel Barber

THE FOURTH WORD

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

READING: Matthew 27:45-49

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.'

PRAYER

Candle is extinguished

HYMN	Ah, Holy Jesus	ELW 349
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Sts. 1, 3, 5: All

2, 4: Choir

THE FIFTH WORD

“I thirst.”

READING: John 19:28-29

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), ‘I am thirsty.’ 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.

PRAYER

Candle is extinguished

MUSICAL REFLECTION

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

16th-cent. German melody
adapt. Hans Leo Hassler / harm. J. S. Bach
arr. Ric Flauding

THE SIXTH WORD

“It is finished.”

READING: John 19:30-37

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

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. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, ‘None of his bones shall be broken.’ And again another passage of scripture says, ‘They will look on the one whom they have pierced.’

PRAYER

Candle is extinguished

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Saw Ye My Savior?

words, anonymous, alt.
music, *Church Harmony*, 1834
arr. David N. Johnson

Vocal Octet

THE SEVENTH WORD

“Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.”

READING: Luke 23:44-49

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent.’ And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

PRAYER

Candle is extinguished

HYMN

Were You There

ELW 353

Sts. 1 – 4 : All

5 : Cantor

CLOSING PRAYER:

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.

May God be merciful and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.
Let your way be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Worship ends in silence.

You may remain in the sanctuary until you are ready to leave.

*Blessings to all as you prepare for the celebration
of Christ's resurrection on the third day.*

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Participating Musicians

The Chancel Choir

John Chiazza, tenor

Chrisanne Gates, music director/collaborative keyboard

Sue Cardinal, flute

Dr. Jim Jefferis, cantor

Vocal Octet: Pr. Amy Walter-Peterson, Katherine Jefferis, Nancy Price,
Katrina Grbesic, Hans Walter-Peterson, John Chiazza,
Dave Wideman, Dr. Jim Jefferis

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Easter Sunday Schedule

The tomb is empty! We celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Share in worship with Bethlehem this Holy Week either in person or through Livestream.

March 31, Easter Sunday

8:55 am (in person and livestream)

11 am (in person only)

Easter Breakfast served 9:45 – 10:45 am

Find Strength and Hope in the Cross

It is difficult as we kneel before the cross to hear the voice of the gospel. We might imagine that it waits for us at Eastertide, that tonight the law says its peace and come Sunday the gospel will finally win the day, but that is not so. The gospel spells freedom for those held captive to sin. The resurrection only matters for those who know they are dead.

We, who are both saints and sinners, kneel before the cross today or tonight and hear it speaking to us as both verdict and promise. It is true: each of us is guilty of our participation in the world's suffering. We, each bearing the image and likeness of God in our very skin, do not respect that image in one another, much less the world we inhabit, God's good garden.

We do not respect God's creations—one another, or the world we live in. We put one another on the crosses at which Jesus now joins us. We must admit this or there is no need for the salvation Christ brings. We must admit we are in bondage to these patterns of human violence and environmental degradation before we can be liberated from them.

This is the promise of Good Friday: we will be liberated from these crosses—the ones we hang on and the ones on which we hang one another. These crosses, at once symbols of the divisions between us and a symbol of the end to all divisions, promise that God will not abandon us in our suffering. God comes to us just like this, just as we are, but God does not leave us this way. This is the cross—evidence of our sin, and sign of God's love.