

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Good Friday, April 3, 2026**

*Good*  
**FRIDAY**

"Wishing you a blessed Good Friday filled with reflection, gratitude, and peace"



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Order of Worship for Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Borger

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

*The Congregation may stand.*

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: On this Good Friday, we gather to remember the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amid sorrow, we seek the hope his sacrifice brings.

**People: We come with heavy hearts, yet we hold on to the hope that Christ’s love and sacrifice bring to the world.**

Pastor: Jesus said, “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.” In His death, we find the promise of new life and redemption.

**People: We look to the cross, not only as a symbol of suffering but as a beacon of hope and salvation.**

Pastor: Though we mourn today, we remember that darkness does not have the final word. Through Jesus, light and hope prevail.

**People: We stand in faith, knowing that Christ’s sacrifice opens the way to everlasting hope and life. Amen.**

HYMN OF ADORATION NO. 272.....“Go to Dark Gethsemane”

COLLECT

Pastor: God be with you.

**People: And with you also.**

Pastor: Let us pray.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Pastor: As we light the candles for our service, please join in the reading of the Phos Hilaron, which is the earliest known Christian hymn recorded outside of the Bible that is still in use today.

**All: O gracious Light, Pure brightness of the eternal Creator in heaven, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, And our eyes behold your vesper light, We sing your praises, Holy God, One in Trinity. You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Christ of God, O giver of life, And to be glorified through all the worlds.**

(Unknown author, 3rd or early 4th Century AD)

CONFESSION OF SIN

Pastor: Brothers and sisters, we are called to be children of the day and not children of the night.

**People: Let us approach the throne of grace that we may receive mercy.**

Pastor: Let us pray.

**All: Merciful God, like the disciples before us, we too have denied and betrayed you in our fear and weakness. We have failed to stand by your truth, choosing self-preservation over faithfulness. Forgive our silence in the face of injustice, our indifference to suffering, and the times we have turned away from your love. In your mercy, restore us. Help us follow Jesus’ path of sacrificial love, that we may live as people of courage and compassion. In the name of the one who loves us, we pray. Amen.**

PRAYER FOR MERCY

Pastor: Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy Immortal One,

**People: Have mercy upon us.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: While we turned away from God, silently complicit, Christ died that we may live. Through Christ, we are forgiven. This is our hope and our good news.

People: **It is good news indeed. We are forgiven, even on this night. Amen.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

**THE WORD**

READINGS AND EXTINGUISHING OF LIGHTS.....Lectors: Deb Koch and Kathy Kline

FIRST READING: "Shadow of Betrayal" Matthew 26:20-25

*Candle one is extinguished.*

SECOND READING: "Shadow of Desertion" Matthew 26:31-35

*Candle two is extinguished.*

THIRD READING: "Agony of the Soul" Luke 22:39-44

*Candle three is extinguished.*

FOURTH READING: "Unshared Vigil" Mark" 14:32-41

*Candle four is extinguished.*

SENIOR CHOIR ANTHEM....."Jesus Paid It All"

Words by Elvina M. Hall, Music by John T. Grape and Arranged by Dave Williamson

FIFTH READING: "Father, the hour is come" John 17:1-6

*Candle five is extinguished.*

SIXTH READING: "That they may all be one" John 17:15-22

*Candle six is extinguished.*

SEVENTH READING: "Arrest in the Garden" John 18:1-5

*Candle seven is extinguished.*

EIGHTH READING: "Shadow of the Cross" Mark 15:16-20

*Candle eight is extinguished.*

*The Congregation may remain seated.*

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 280....."He Never Said a Mumbalin' Word"

FINAL READING..... "The Word was God"- John 1:1-4,14,10,12; 3:19, paraphrased

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

*(The Christ Candle is relit, as a sign of hope for the Resurrection.)*

**GOING WITH THE WORD**

*(The Pastor walks to the rear of the sanctuary, and says....)*

MEDITATION ABOUT THE CROSS

Pastor: Behold the cross on which hung the salvation of the whole world.

People: **Come, let us worship the Christ, the child of God.**

Pastor: Behold the cross on which hung the salvation of the whole world.

**People: Come, let us worship the Christ, the child of God.**

Pastor: Behold the cross on which hung the salvation of the whole world.

**People: Come, let us worship the Christ, the child of God.**

*The Congregation may stand.*

CLOSING HYMN NO. 260.....“The Old Rugged Cross”

DEPARTURE

*(After the words of Departure, the Pastor will leave in silence. Feel free to remain in the darkened sanctuary as long as you'd like to finish your private meditation and prayers, then depart in silence at your leisure. The benediction and postlude are typically omitted from the Good Friday service, symbolizing the continuity of events leading to Easter morning.)*

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-The bulletins are in memory of our loved ones by Mr. and Mrs. Brian Clauser and family.

**Introduction to the Order for Good Friday and Tenebrae.....*from the UCC Book of Worship***

The Order for Good Friday is intended to rehearse the passion story of our Savior Jesus Christ.

While the mood is solemn, it is also one of hope, looking forward to the great Easter celebration.

In some traditions, a rough-hewn cross is placed in the chancel during the service.

The service offered here is taken from the ancient Christian tradition of the fourth and fifth centuries.

The structure of the prayers of intercession seeks to capture the need of the penitent to hear the story of the passion and also to pray for the whole of society.

In the ancient services, much of the time the congregation was invited to stand to help participants understand the suffering of Jesus on the cross.

Tenebrae is the Latin term for shadows. It is a service of lessons accompanied by the gradual extinguishing of lights. It is historically associated with the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week. The readings on these evenings commemorated the events of the following day. On Wednesday, they commemorated the Last Supper, the betrayal, and the arrest; on Thursday, Christ's passion, trial, and death; and on Friday, Christ's burial and the destitution of the disciples. In the service presented here, these events are combined in one ceremony.

It is recommended that twelve candles, representing the twelve disciples, and a larger candle, representing Christ, be placed where they may be seen by all. No other candles should be lighted for this service.

The service concludes in darkness, when we extinguish the final candle, symbolizing the death of Jesus.

But before we depart in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death, we will relight the Christ Candle as a symbol of hope and await the coming Resurrection.