

Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

April 3, 2026



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING



*NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S JOURNEY YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!*

Worship Leadership

The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio

The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Eric R. Dundore

Choristers' Director: Jonneke A. Dundore

Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore

Organist: Sarah A. Myers

Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Vocalists: Eric and Jonneke Dundore

Scripture Reading:

Herb Bomberger, Kateri Grice, Pam Smith,
Sarah Dugan, Jane Leister, Jeff Whitman & Abigail Dugan

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold

Ministers

The Entire Congregation

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WELCOME to all visitors and friends – those worshipping with us for the first time and those returning. We hope you feel at home in our midst. You are also invited to the 6:30 AM Sunrise Service at the Columbarium here at St. Paul's on Sunday April 5. Wear weather appropriate clothes as we will be taking a prayer and meditation walk around the property. You are also invited to Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall which begins at 9:00 AM. Our Easter Service begins at 10:30 AM and includes the Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

SILENT MEDITATION TIMES: There are suggestions for how to engage in these prayers on the last page of this bulletin.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP

GOOD FRIDAY

April 3, 2026

“The Seven Last Words of Jesus”

**Those who are comfortable doing so are invited to stand.*

INTRODUCTIONS

THE ORGAN PRELUDE

OPENING PRAYER (Responsive)

Minister: Today, God, we remember Your pain, a crown of thorns, public disgrace, nails hammered through living flesh, blood streaming from open wounds, lungs starved of air, slow agony as life drains away.

All: At the foot of the cross, we weep for the pain we cannot stop and cannot bear.

Minister: We weep for the victims of violence, for the innocent who suffer from war and famine and disease. For the refugees and immigrants, both documented and undocumented, who have sought safety only to be met with more fear and hostility.

All: We weep for the victims of injustice, for the homeless ones who wander the streets and sleep in shop doorways, for the hopeless ones who suffer behind bars.

Minister: We weep for the victims of economic forces, for the ones who have no work and no money and have lost their self-respect.

All: We weep for the lonely, isolated people who are the targets of other people's prejudice and are defenseless in the face of taunts and mockery.

Minister: We weep for our own pain.

All: At the foot of the cross, we weep for the pain we cannot stop and cannot bear.

Minister: You have borne it, Lord, You bear it with us, and Your love is stronger than all our pain, stronger even than death.

All: We thank You for the love that bears the cross and enters into death willingly for humankind; for Your love that lives and grows in the world by Your Spirit in all who reach out to tend the wounds of others.

Minister: We thank You for the love that comes to us when we are in pain and other people's hands reach out to soothe the hurt and calm our fear...

All: At the foot of the cross, we weep for the pain we cannot stop and cannot bear and yet we know that You have borne it, Lord; You bear it with us and Your love is stronger than all our pain, stronger even than death. Amen.

HYMN No. 223 “What Wondrous Love is This” (vs 1-2)

OUR LENTEN JOURNEY (Responsive)

Minister: We began 40 days and nights ago, a day of ashes, a day where we once again began our journey to reflect, to grow in faith, and to renew our devotion to God and to the

building of God's Realm here on earth. We sought to strip away both externally and internally that which draws our focus away from our relationship with God and God's calls to us.

All: And now we are at the cross.

Minister: We recognized the temptation that we must do everything for ourselves, and Jesus' teaching that we are meant to be in community, helping one another.

All: And now we are at the cross.

Minister: We recognized the temptation that life should be easy, comfortable, and without suffering, and Jesus' teaching that we each must pick up our crosses and make sacrifices if we are to be his disciples.

All: And now we are at the cross.

Minister: We recognized the temptation of thinking that all life should function like a marketplace, and Jesus' teaching that relationships are to be marked by compassion, care, and love, lived out in covenant with each other.

All: And now we are at the cross.

Minister: We recognized the temptation of us thinking we are better than everyone else, and Jesus' teaching of the necessity for humility, empathy, a willingness to live with uncomfortableness, and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

All: And now we are at the cross.

Minister: We recognized the temptation of allowing fear to rule our lives, silencing us, and Jesus' teaching that even death is not the final word, that new life is always possible.

All: And now we are at the cross.

Minister: We recognized the temptation to minimize the threat of Christian Nationalism, of corruption by our leaders, of attempts to roll back gains toward embracing and protecting diversity, and Jesus' willingness to confront exclusionism, authority without responsibility, and his embrace of everyone equally as a beloved Child of God.

All: And now we are at the cross.

Minister: We now decide, once again, if we will give into temptations or live as Jesus taught us and showed us how to live. Amen.

THE ANTHEM "Thy Will Be Done"

Courtney

Chancel Choir

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS

THE FIRST WORD

Luke 23:33-34

When they came to the place called "The Skull," they nailed Jesus to the cross there with the two criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said "Forgive them, Father! They do not know what they are doing."

Reflection

Extinguishing the Candle

Leader: Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

People: You did not turn away from suffering and died that we might be made whole.

Silent Meditation ending with Chime.

THE SECOND WORD

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals hanging there threw insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" The other one, however, rebuked him, saying: "Don't you fear God? Here we are all under the same sentence. Ours, however, is only right, for we are getting what we deserve for what we did; but he has done no wrong." And he said to Jesus, "Remember me, Jesus, when you come as King!" Jesus said to him, "I tell you this: Today you will be in Paradise with me."

Reflection

Extinguishing the Candle

Leader: Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

People: You did not turn away from suffering and died that we might be made whole.

Silent Meditation ending with Chime.

THE THIRD WORD

John 19:25-27

Standing close to Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that time the disciple took her to live in his home.

Reflection

Extinguishing the Candle

Leader: Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

People: You did not turn away from suffering and died that we might be made whole.

Silent Meditation ending with Chime.

THE FOURTH WORD

Mark 15:33-34

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"

Reflection

Extinguishing the Candle

Leader: Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

People: You did not turn away from suffering and died that we might be made whole.

Silent Meditation ending with Chime.

THE FIFTH WORD

John 19:28

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst."

Reflection

Extinguishing the Candle

Leader: Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

People: You did not turn away from suffering and died that we might be made whole.

THE SIXTH WORD

John 19:29-30

A bowl was there, full of cheap wine mixed with vinegar, so a sponge was soaked in it, put on a stalk of hyssop, and lifted up to his lips. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished."

Reflection

Extinguishing the Candle

Leader: Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

People: You did not turn away from suffering and died that we might be made whole.

Silent Meditation ending with Chime.

THE SEVENTH WORD

Luke 23:46

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

Reflection

Extinguishing the Candle

Leader: Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

People: You did not turn away from suffering and died that we might be made whole.

Silent Meditation ending with Chime.

Hymn No. 224 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Responsive)

Minister: Lord God, You have given us everything.

All: You have not held anything back.

Minister: Help us in like manner to give of ourselves

All: Bless us in Christ's name.

Minister: Bless us and all that we think, feel, say, and do, that we, like Jesus, may be a blessing unto others,

All: We ask this and all things that we ask of You through him, saying the prayer that he taught us, 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.

SONG OF REFLECTION "Were You There?"

Eric and Jonneke Dundore

BENEDICTION

So now may we leave this place with hearts of love and peace.

May we find the grace never to sell ourselves short;

Grace to risk something big for something good;

Grace to remember that the world now is far too dangerous,

for anything but truth;
And too small,
for anything but love.
So, may Love take our minds and think through them;
May Love take our lips and speak through them;
And may Love take our hearts and grant them peace.
Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Don Hodgson

Please depart now in silence and in peace.

References:

The Opening Prayer is by Heather Pencavel, found in *let justice roll down: A Worship Resource for Lent, Holy Week and Easter*, compiled by Geoffrey Duncan, 2003, The Pilgrim Press.
Our Lenten Journey section emerged from ideas by our Creative Worship Team.
The reflections on Jesus' seven last words are from *Stages on the Way: Worship Resources for Lent, Holy Week and Easter*, by the Iona Community Wild Goose Worship Group, 2000, GIA Publication Group.
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SUGGESTIONS FOR TIMES OF SILENT PRAYER AND MEDITATION

Many of us are not used to sitting in silence. Since there are numerous times we do that during this Service, the following are ideas for how to do so. During the sharing of Jesus' seven last "words," there will be silent meditations of about two minutes each time.

Place both your feet flat on the floor. Find a comfortable spot to place your hands, resting them on a surface. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Pay attention to how your body breathes for you, without you thinking about it. Try relaxing your body as much as possible.

You can focus your attention on any number of things. Don't beat yourself up over what you end up thinking about. Gently send along thoughts that are better dealt with another time. Try focusing first on the "word" or phrase Jesus said, and its context. Recall the meditation upon that "word;" what was the point or points of the meditation. Pray for people you know. Pray for people you don't know. Pray for the whole of Creation. Ask that God will speak to you, and then really listen.

We believe it will become a little easier, each two-minute silent meditation. Perhaps by the end, you will wish they lasted a little longer.

Peace. Revs. John and Allyssa