



GOOD

Friday

APRIL 3, 2026

12:00 P.M.

*On this most solemn of days,
Good Friday affixes our gaze on the cross at Golgotha
—marking the day of Jesus Christ's suffering, crucifixion, and death.
The Last Seven Words is an observance of the passion of Jesus Christ
through his final words from the cross.*

*At the conclusion of the service, you are asked to depart in silence
or remain in quiet devotion. The sanctuary will be kept in silence and
open for prayer until 3:00 p.m., a commemoration of
the Lord's hours on the cross.*

The Worship of God

*Please stand as you are able. The congregation speaks the text in **bold** type. Large print hymnals are available in the Narthex. Please ask a member of our Welcome Team for assistance.

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The Prelude

“Prelude” and “Allemande” from *Cello Suite in D Minor*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Offered by Karen Bergmann, cello

The Pastoral Greeting

Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

That we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

**The Processional* | Psalm 22

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

Why are you so far from helping me, from my words of groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;

and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you, the praise of Israel, are enthroned in holiness.

In you our forebears trusted; they trusted and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and were saved;

In you they trusted, and were not disappointed.

But I am a worm and not human;

scorned by others and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me,

they make mouths at me, they wag their heads;

“He committed his cause to the Lord, let the Lord deliver him;

let the Lord rescue him, for the Lord delights in him!”

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;

You kept me safe upon my mother’s breast.

Upon you I was cast from my birth,
And since my mother bore me, you have been my God.
Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is none to help.
Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
They open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.
I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
it melts away within me.
My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
You lay me in the dust of death.
Indeed, dogs surround me;
**A company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands
and feet.**
I can count all my bones;
they stare and gloat over me.
They divide my garments among them
and for my raiment, they cast lots.

**The Hymn*

UMH 288 "Were You There" | WERE YOU THERE
Verses 1-3

**The Reproaches of the Cross*

O my people, O my Church, what have I done to you, or in what have I
offended you? I led you forth from the land of Egypt and delivered you by
the waters of baptism, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

I led you through the desert forty years and fed you with manna; I brought
you through times of persecution and of renewal and gave you my body,
the bread of heaven; but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

I made you branches of my vineyard and gave you the water of salvation, but when I was thirsty you gave me vinegar and gall and pierced with a spear the side of your Savior.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

I went before you in a pillar of cloud, but you have led me to the judgment hall of Pilate. I brought you to a land of freedom and prosperity, but you have scourged, mocked, and beaten me.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

I gave you a royal scepter, and bestowed the keys to the kingdom, but you have given me a crown of thorns. I raised you on high with great power, but you have hanged me on the cross.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

My peace I gave, which the world cannot give, and washed your feet as a servant, but you draw the sword to strike in my name and seek high places in my kingdom.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

I accepted the cup of suffering and death for your sakes, but you scatter and deny and abandon me. I sent the Spirit of truth to lead you, but you close your hearts to guidance.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

I called you to go and bring forth fruit, but you cast lots for my clothing. I prayed that you all may be one, but you continue to quarrel and divide.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters. I was hungry but you gave me no food, thirsty but you gave me no drink. I was a stranger but you did not welcome me, naked but you did not clothe me, sick and in prison but you did not visit me.

Holy God, have mercy upon us.

All pray in silence.

Even in the face of betrayal and rebellion, even in the face of death and denial, even in the face of fear and despair, God's grace knows no bounds. We are forgiven, we are called back into relationship, we are set back on the path that leads to the realm of God. Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness; by Jesus' wounds we are healed and forgiven.

By Jesus' wounds we are healed and forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**The Hymn*

“Were You There” | Verse 4

Sung: **Were you there when the sun refused to shine? Were you there when the sun refused to shine? Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when the sun refused to shine?**

The Meditation | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

The Reflection

“Sarabande” from Cello Suite in D Minor | Bach

Karen Bergmann, cello

THE LAST SEVEN WORDS OF CHRIST

The First Word

Luke 23:26-34 | Rev. Montana Hamby

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.

For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then “‘they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!””

For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The Hymn

UMH 301 “Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”
NEAR THE CROSS

Sung: **Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me; help me walk from day to day with its shadow o’er me. In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever, till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.**

The Second Word

Luke 23:35-43 | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby

Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

The Choral Response

“Today, You Will Be with Me” from *The Last Seven Words*

Michael John Trotta

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir;

Ryan Ferguson, Director of Music and Worship

The Third Word

John 19:25-27 | Rev. Montana Hamby

Woman, behold your son.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, behold your son,” and to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Solo

“Behold Your Son” | Trotta

Sung by Erin Towe, soprano; Karen Bergmann, cello

The Fourth Word

Matthew 27:45-49 | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby

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

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

The Hymn

“O Lord, Hear My Prayer” | TAIZE

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

The Fifth Word

John 19:28 | Rev. Montana Hamby

I am Thirsty.

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

The Hymn

UMH 286 “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

PASSION CHORALE

Sung: **O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded with thorns, thine only crown: how pale thou art
with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn! How does that visage languish
which once was bright as morn!**

The Sixth Word

John 19:29-30 | Rev. Dr. Natalee Dukes Hamby

It is finished.

A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The Kyrie | Antonin Dvorak

Translation: *Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.*

**Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Christe, Christe eleison. Christe,
Christe eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison, eleison.**

The Seventh Word

Luke 23:44-47 | Rev. Dr. Nancy Johnson

Father, into your hands I surrender my soul.

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I surrender my soul." When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."

The Choral Response

"Into Your Hands, I Surrender My Soul" | Trotta

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir

The Extinguishing of the Christ Candle

John 1:1-5; 10-14 | Rev. Jeremy Lawson

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

All depart in silence. Kneelers at the foot of the cross are open for prayer.

The sanctuary will be kept in silence and open for prayer until 3:00 p.m., a commemoration of the Lord's hours on the cross.



EASTER

Sunday

APRIL 5 | SUNRISE AT THE STEEPLE 7:00 A.M.
SANCTUARY WORSHIP 9:30 AND 11:00 A.M.

COME AND EXPERIENCE
THE HOPE AND JOY OF EASTER
AT ATHENS FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH!

*Join us on **Easter Sunday, April 5**, as we celebrate our risen Savior with three triumphant worship services. **Our 7:00 a.m. Sunrise at the Steeple service** will take place in front of our sanctuary on North Lumpkin Street. It will feature uplifting music, an inspiring message, coffee and refreshments. **Our traditional 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. sanctuary worship services** will feature our choir, brass, and handbells. You're also invited to help us decorate our floral Easter cross located outside in front of the church. Overflow seating will be available for both services.*

**We hope you can join us as we celebrate the good news of Easter —
“He is not here. He is Risen!”**

FOLLOW UP WITH A MINISTER

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PRAYER REQUEST? | Please visit our website at athensfirstumc.org/congregationalcare and fill out a form to submit your prayer request. If you desire for the request to be shared with our Prayer Ministry team, please indicate that in your submission. Prayer requests can also be made directly via email prayer@athensfirstumc.org.

CCS #12591 • CCLI #1097880

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