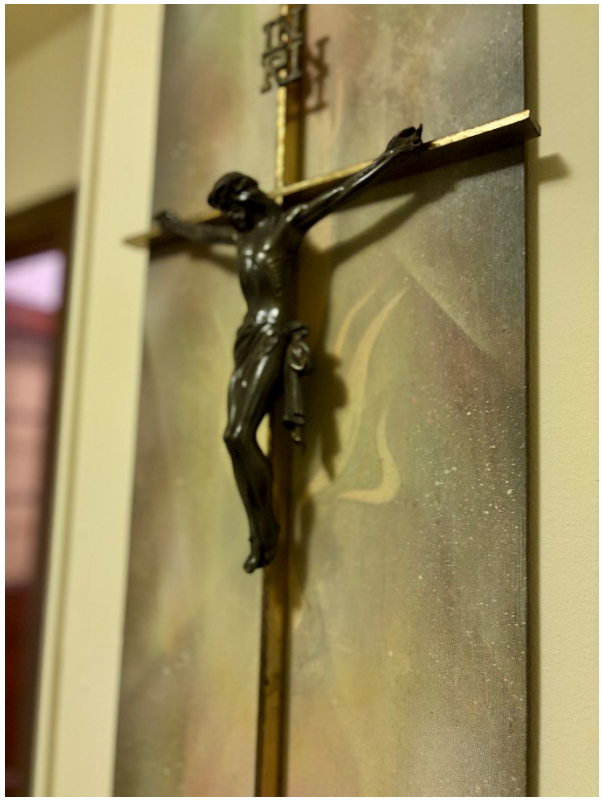
St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Crossroads United Methodist Church

Good Friday Service
Friday, April 3, 2026, 7 p.m.

425 Cleveland Ave. SW
Canton, OH 44702

Welcome and Announcements



We welcome all to St. Paul's as we gather on this most solemn day of the Church year to remember the crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus. This is a day of grief and mourning. We cannot escape the cruel reality that Jesus, the Son of God, was executed in the cruelest way the world could imagine. We cannot escape the reality of human sin that rejected Jesus and the reality that this is still the story of humanity including even those of us gathered here today. It is right that we grieve and stay here for a while in silence and sorrow and do not try to move too quickly through the pain to the Easter celebration that is coming.

Yet this is also a day of deep awe and even joy. We are called to contemplate the depth and fulness of divine love. We sit in awe and marvel at the ultimate expression of God's love for all of creation. The Son of God will die for the life of the world.

The liturgies of Good Friday were developed in the early Church as an attempt to express these two truths. The Liturgy we are celebrating today is hinted at in the diary of the pilgrim Egeria who spent Holy Week in Jerusalem in the early 4th century CE. Parts if it were probably already in written form and by the 7th or 8th century this basic service was being celebrated throughout the Western Church.

The service has 4 primary parts. First, is the Liturgy of the Word with a reading of the Passion Gospel. We begin in silence and hear the bare and ugly truth of Jesus's arrest, trial and crucifixion. We live into this truth and how it is still a reality even in our lives as we participate in the reading and join with those in Jerusalem who cried out, "Crucify Him!".

The second primary part of the service is the series of prayers known as the Solemn Collects. These prayers are the oldest part of the service perhaps dating as early as 2nd century CE. The prayers address the five major areas of life that intercessory prayer is designed to address: prayers are said seeking God's aid for the Christian church, for all the nations of the world, for those sick and in need,

for any not yet reached by the missionary efforts of the Church, and for the people who are praying, that they may act holily and live eternally.

The veneration of the cross is the next part of the service. This is an early Christian practice and Egeria notes that the Bishop of Jerusalem held the cross at the site of the crucifixion for 3 hours on Good Friday afternoon and the faithful knelt and prayed before it. We are called to contemplate and sit in awe that the symbol of humanity's deepest cruelty is also the instrument of God's redeeming love.

We will conclude our service today with the distribution of Holy Communion from the reserved Sacrament. This is the one day of the year on which we do not celebrate the Eucharist. Rather, the bread we will receive was consecrated at last night's Maundy Thursday celebration. All are invited to come to the rail to receive communion. (Gluten free wafers are available on request.) This is nourishment for our souls as we live into the sorrow and reality of this time in which we remember Jesus dead and in the grave. If you wish, you may receive a blessing rather than communion. If you wish to have communion brought to you in the pew, please let the ushers know.

The offering from today's service will go to support ministries for immigrant residents of our community.

Thank you to all who worked to put tonight's service together, the clergy of St. Paul's Episcopal and Crossroads United Methodist church, the musicians and choir, and those participating in various ways.

Prelude

On this day the ministers enter in silence. All then kneel for silent prayer, after which the Celebrant stands and begins the liturgy with the Collect of the Day.

Officiant: Blessed be our God.
People: **For ever and ever. Amen.**
Officiant: Let us pray.

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (52:13-53:12)

13 See, my servant shall prosper;
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.
14 Just as there were many who were astonished at him
—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of mortals—
15 so he shall startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which had not been told them they shall see,
and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

:1 Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
3 He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.
4 Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
5 But 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.
[6]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.
[7]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.
[8]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.
[9]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.
[10]Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.
[11]Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
[12]Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 22:1-11 *(responsively by whole verse)*

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?

2 **O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; * by night as well, but I find no rest.**

3 Yet you are the Holy One, *enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

4 **Our forefathers put their trust in you; * they trusted, and you delivered them.**

5 They cried out to you and were delivered; * they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

6 **But as for me, I am a worm and no man, * scorned by all and despised by the people.**

7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; * they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

8 **"He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; * let him rescue him, if he delights in him."**

9 Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, * and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.

10 **I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; * you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.**

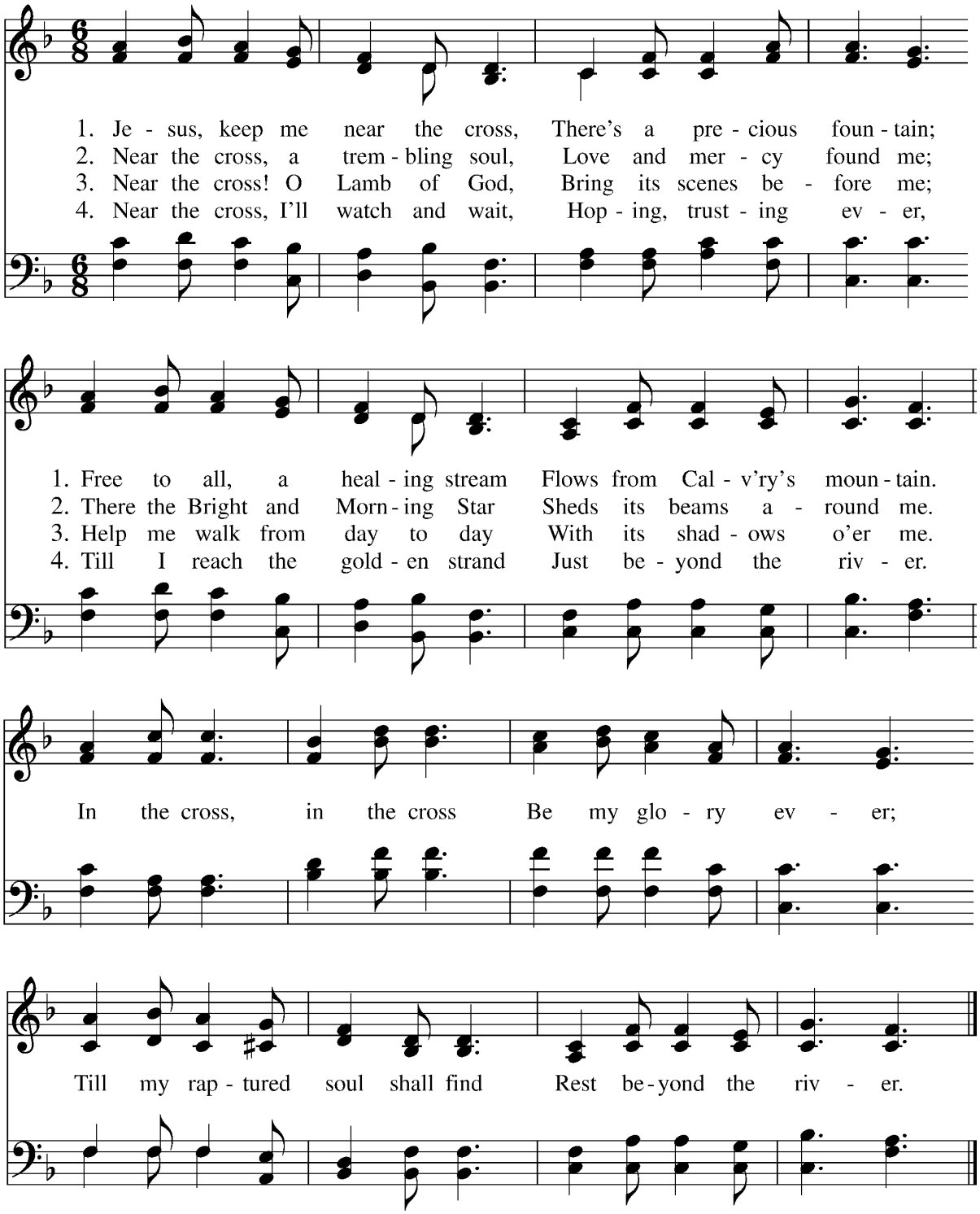
11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, * and there is none to help.

A Reading from the Epistle to the Ephesians 1:3-14

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** just as he chose us in Christ[b] before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. **5** He destined us for adoption as his children[d] through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace **8** that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight **9** he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. **11** In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance,[e] having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, **12** so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; **14** this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn: Near the Cross (LEVAS 29)



The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Read in parts.
The congregation is invited to participate by reading the parts marked for "Crowd"
All stand in body or spirit at the first mention of Golgotha

Narrator: When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them:

Jesus: "Who is it you want?"

Soldiers: "Jesus of Nazareth"

Jesus: "I am he."

Narrator: And Judas the traitor was there among with the soldiers. When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Again, Jesus asked them:

Jesus: "Who do you want?"

Soldiers: "Jesus of Nazareth"

Jesus: "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go"

Narrator: This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter.

Jesus: "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

Narrator: Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people. Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

Servant Girl: "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?"

Peter: "I am not."

Narrator: It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

Jesus: "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."

Narrator: When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face.

Official: "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded.

Jesus: "If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"

Narrator: Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. And a servant asked him,

Servant: "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?"

Peter: "I am not."

Narrator: One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him,

Servant: "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?"

Narrator: Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow. Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked,

Pilate: "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

Jewish Leaders: "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

Pilate: "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

Jewish Leaders: "But we have no right to execute anyone

Narrator: This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die. Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him,

Pilate: "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus: "Is that your own idea, or did others talk to you about me?"

Pilate: "Am I a Jew? Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?

Jesus: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

Pilate: "You are a king, then!"

Jesus: "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world was to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Pilate: "What is truth?"

Narrator: With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said,

Pilate: "I find not basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

Narrator: They shouted back,

Crowd: "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!"

Narrator: Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying,

Soldiers: "Hail, king of the Jews!"

Narrator: And they slapped him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there,

Pilate: "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

Narrator: When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them,

Pilate: "Here is the man!

Narrator: As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted,

Jewish Leaders: "Crucify! Crucify!"

Pilate: "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

Jewish Leaders: "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

Narrator: When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace and asked Jesus.

Pilate: "Where do you come from?"

Narrator: But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate: "Do you refuse to speak to me? Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

Jesus: "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

Narrator: From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting,

Jewish Leaders: "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

Narrator: When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. He said to the Jews:

Pilate: "Here is your king,"

Crowd: "Take him away! Crucify him!"

Pilate: "Shall I crucify your king?"

Crowd: "We have no king but Caesar."

Narrator: Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

ALL STAND

There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate,

Jewish Leaders: "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

Pilate: "What I have written, I have written."

Narrator: When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. They said to one another.

Soldiers: "Let's not tear it, Let's decide by lot who will get it."

Narrator: This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,
"They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."
So this is what the soldiers did. 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:

Jesus: "Woman, here is your son." "Here is your mother."

Narrator: From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said,

Jesus: "I am thirsty."

Narrator: 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,

Jesus: "It is finished."

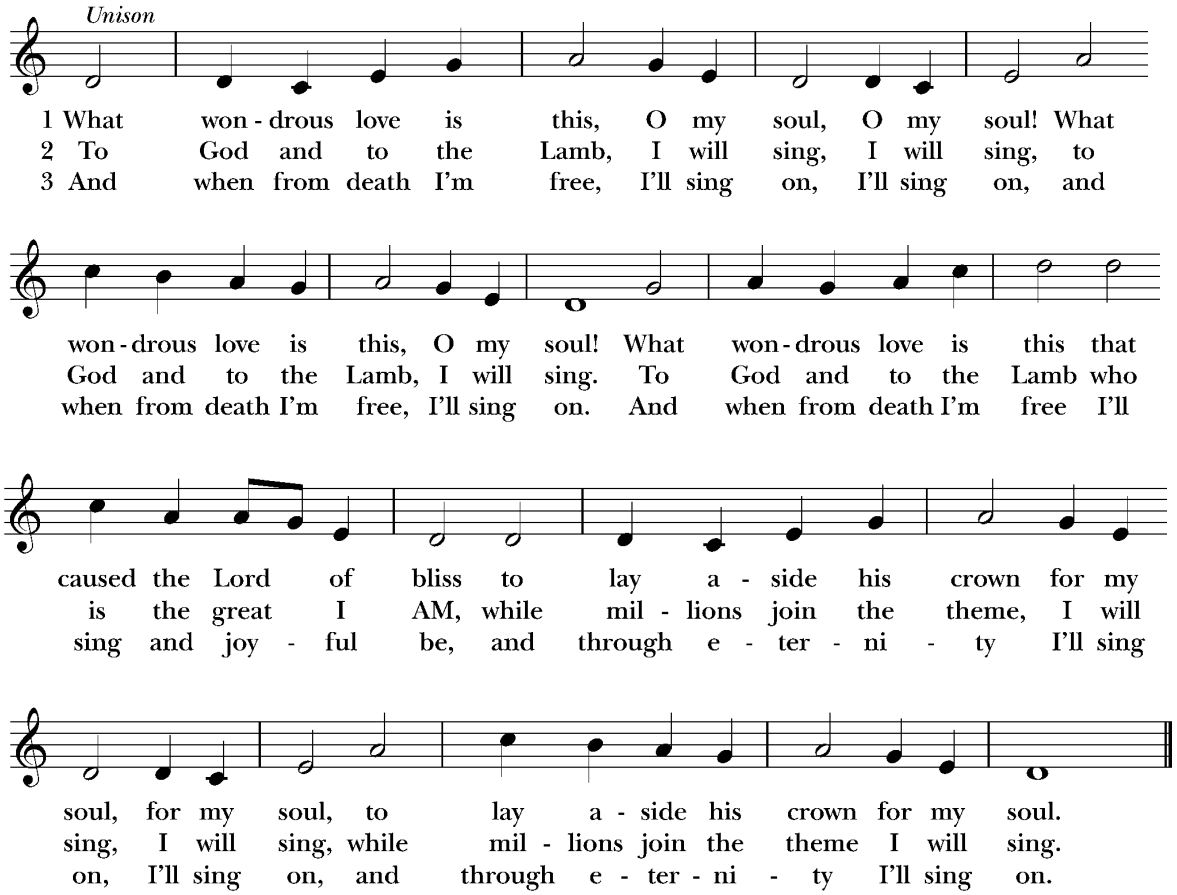
Narrator: With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

SILENCE

Narrator: Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as

another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.” Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Hymn: What Wondrous Love is this? (H439)



Solemn Collects

Dear People of God: Our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; and that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death and become heirs with him in everlasting life.

We pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs.
Let us pray for the holy Catholic Church of Christ throughout the world;
For its unity in witness and service.
For all bishops and other ministers and the people whom they serve.
For all Christians in this community.
That God will confirm his Church in faith, increase it in love, and preserve it in peace.

Silence

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen**.

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them;
For Donald, the President of the United States
For the Congress and the Supreme Court
For the Members and Representatives of the United Nations
For all who serve the common good
That by God's help they may seek justice and truth and live in peace and concord.

Silence

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility your dominion may increase, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for the Jewish people, who by the grace of their eternal covenant with God were delivered from bondage into freedom;
For their continued faithfulness
For their flourishing in peace as witnesses to God's sustaining love
For their safety from all malice and harm
For their liberation from all forms of antisemitism and hatred
For the fullness of redemption for the sake of God's Name
That unity and concord may exist between Jews and Christians, in obedience to God's will.

Silence

O God of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar, you planted your people Israel as the root and grafted all peoples as wild branches into a single olive tree of praise to you: As we come

near to the cross, we lament Christian acts of prejudice and violence against your faithful people, of whom Jesus Christ was born. Bless the children of your covenant, so that together we may attain the fullness of your blessing for the world. **Amen.**

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind;

For the hungry and the homeless, the destitute and the oppressed
For the sick, the wounded, and the crippled
For those in loneliness, fear, and anguish
For those who face temptation, doubt, and despair
For the sorrowful and bereaved
For prisoners and captives
For those who are victims of war, genocide, and trafficking; and all those in mortal danger
For those who are persecuted for the sake of Christ

That God in his mercy will comfort and relieve them, and grant them the knowledge of his love, and stir up in us the will and patience to minister to their needs.

Silence

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who have not embraced God's redemptive love.

For those who have never heard the word of salvation
For those who have lost their faith
For those hardened by sin or indifference
For the contemptuous and the scornful
For those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and persecutors of his disciples
For those who in the name of Christ have persecuted others

That God will open their hearts to the truth, and lead them to faith and obedience.

Silence

Merciful God, creator of all the peoples of the earth and lover of souls: Have compassion on all who do not know you as you are revealed in your Son Jesus Christ; let your Gospel be preached with grace and power to those who have not heard it; turn the hearts of those who resist it; and bring home to your fold those who have gone astray; that there may be one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us commit ourselves to God, and pray for the grace of a holy life, that, with all who have departed this world and have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is

known to God alone, we may be accounted worthy to enter into the fullness of the joy of our Lord, and receive the crown of life in the day of resurrection.

Silence

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Choral Anthem*: The Cross Was His to Bear,* Patti Drennan

A wooden cross is brought into the church and placed in the sight of the people.

Spoken Anthem

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and praise and glorify your holy resurrection; for by virtue of your cross joy has come to the whole world.

May God be merciful to us and bless us, show us the light of his countenance, and come to us.
Let your ways be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
We glory in your cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify your holy resurrection; for by virtue of your cross joy has come to the whole world.

Officiant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.
Silence may be kept.

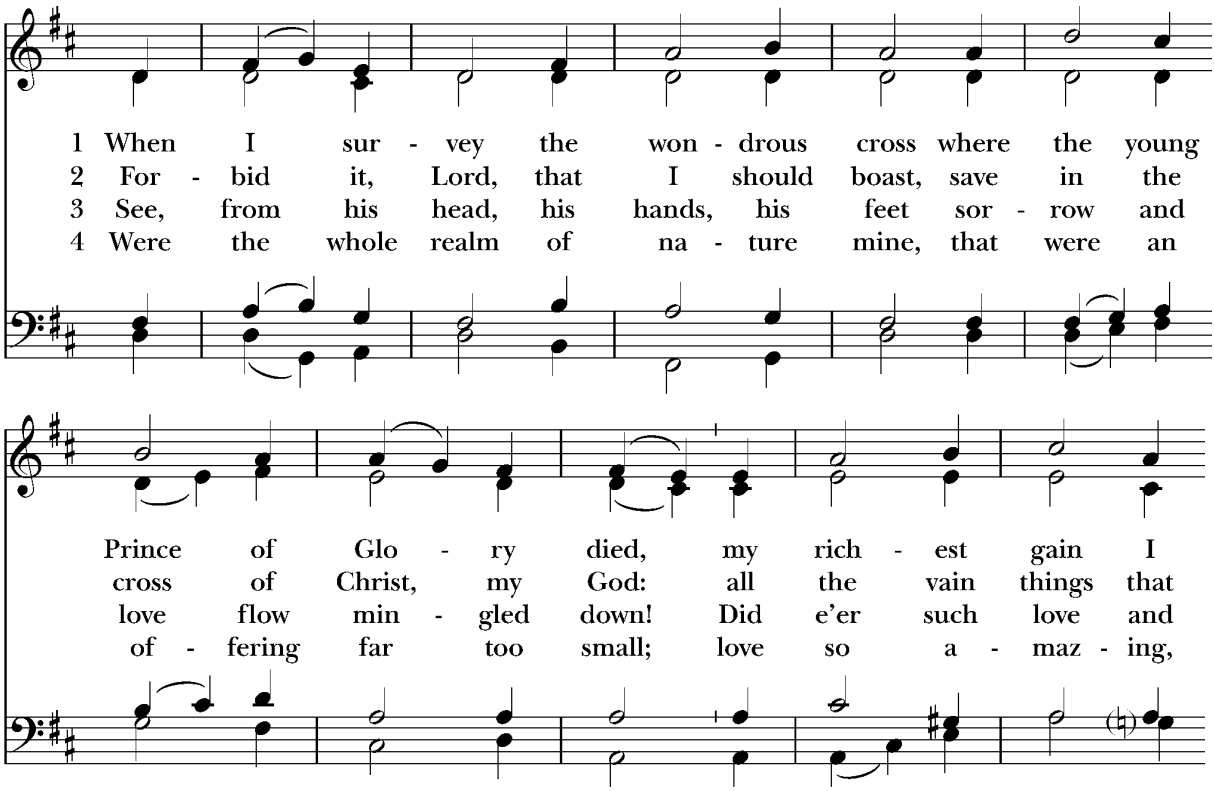
Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

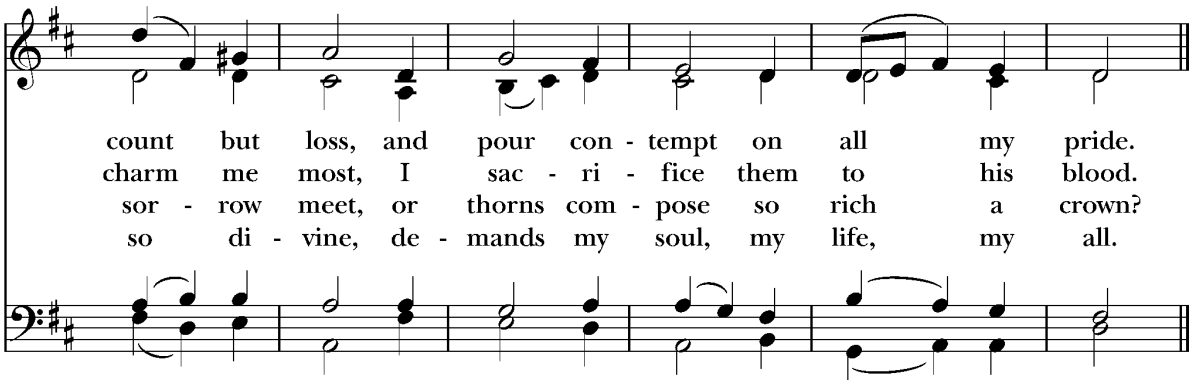
Officiant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ hath 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All are invited to come to the rail to receive Holy Communion (Communion as bread only from the reserved Sacrament)

Hymn: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (H 474)





Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross, and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

The service concludes in silence.

Participants in tonight's service

Officiants:

The Rev. Joe Ashby, St. Paul's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Kay Ashby, St. Paul's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Mary Jo Yeakel, Crossroads United Methodist Church

Musicians:

Mr. Edward Grimes, Director of Music, St. Paul's
Ms. Beth Pullen, Director of Music, Crossroads
Combined Choirs of St. Paul's and Crossroads churches

Readers for the Passion Narrative:

Narrator: Maya Pollen
Jesus: Joe Dilauro
Peter: Demetrius Carrothers
Servant Girl: Lili Brunoni
Servant 2: Jane Fleischer
Official: M.L. Schultze
Pilate: David Swope
The Choir will read the parts of the Soldiers, Jewish Leaders

The Congregation is the crowd.
Greeters: David Lewis and M.L. Schultze
Crucifer: Douglas Colmery
Torchbearers: Nancy Suba and David Rotthoff
Lector: M.L. Schultze
Video: David Lewis
Counters: Kelli Green and David Rotthoff

Good Friday service and donations

We are blessed to once again be observing Good Friday with our spiritual and literal neighbors, Crossroads United Methodist Church. Good Friday is a day of fasting and special acts of discipline and self-denial for us all. It is also an exceptional opportunity God gives us to truly look beyond ourselves.

In keeping with the spirit of the day, the collection received tonight goes to a special purpose.

This year, we're directing donations to the Immigrant Workers Project, a Canton nonprofit that helps immigrants in 29 Ohio counties in ways ranging from navigating their legal paths to learning English to reducing their isolation. Please give generously.

Also, since 1922, The Episcopal Church has designated special Good Friday offerings for the Anglican Communion Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, where they provide pastoral care, education and health care. If you would like to designate contributions toward the Middle East, please mark your contribution "Good Friday Offering."

A prayer for peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.