WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Maundy Thursday Service of Holy Communion

17 April 2025 + 7:00 p.m.

SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Welcome

Voluntary Solemn Prelude on a Theme of Tallis — Gerald Near

***Ringing of the Bell** *The congregation rises at the ringing of the Tower Bell.*

***Call to Worship**

Leader: On this night, Christ gathered with his disciples in an upper room.

People: **On this night, Christ took a towel and washed his disciples' feet.**

Leader: On this night, Christ gave us this holy feast, that in bread and cup we may proclaim his holy sacrifice and partake in his resurrection.

People: **On this night, Christ prayed in a garden, and gave himself into the hands of those who would kill him.**

Leader: On this night, Jesus gave us a new commandment:

People: **to love one another as he loved us.**

Leader: Holding onto that love, let us walk with courage through the darkness of this night.

***Hymn 202** An Upper Room Did our Lord Prepare — *O Waly Waly*

An upper room did our Lord prepare for those he loved until the end: and his disciples still gather there to celebrate their risen friend.

A lasting gift Jesus gave his own: to share his bread, his loving cup. Whatever burdens may bow us down, he by his cross shall lift us up.

And after supper he washed their feet, for service, too, is sacrament. In Christ our joy shall be made complete: sent out to serve, as he was sent.

No end there is! We depart in peace. He loves beyond our uttermost: in every room in our Father's house Christ will be there, as Lord and Host.

***Prayer of Confession**

Loving and Merciful God, we come before you with humble hearts, acknowledging our shortcomings and failures. We confess that we have not always followed the example of your Son, Jesus Christ. We have been slow to serve others, quick to judge, and hesitant to forgive. Forgive us, O God, for turning away from opportunities to extend your grace and mercy. Help us to embody the spirit of humility and service that Christ displayed on this night so long ago – to follow in his footsteps, to wash the feet of others, and to offer ourselves in love for the sake of your kingdom. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Assurance of Pardon

Scripture Reading 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 31b-35

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. [32]If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. [33]Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' [34]I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. [35]By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Meditation Agapé Rev. Sarah A. Bishop

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Distribution of Elements *The elements are served without interruption. Partake of the bread and the cup as you receive it.*

Music at Communion Humbly, I Adore Thee — Traditional Plainsong

Prayer after Communion **God of grace, your Son Jesus Christ left us this holy meal of bread and wine in which we share his body and blood. May we, who have celebrated this sign of great love, live lives of gratitude and compassion; through Jesus Christ, whom we follow, with your grace, in death and in life. Amen.**

The Stripping of the Chancel

Organ Adagio for Strings — Samuel Barber

Candles are extinguished and removed. Chancel flowers, Communion elements, Communion cloths, and cushions are removed. The people bow their heads in silence.

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST

***Congregational Hymn 223** When I Survey the Wondrous Cross *Hamburg*

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
save in the death of Christ my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down:
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

First Word *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."***
(Luke 23:32-34)

Leader: Before you die, Jesus Christ, and the world goes into deep darkness, take from our lives, from our spirits, from our consciences all that has offended you, all that has hurt others, and the inflexibility which has made us numb to the plight of those whom we could help and heal. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Leader: On this day, at this time, irrespective of our faith or lack of it, we accept deeply in our hearts Christ's only words that can set us free. Your sins are forgiven; your sins are forgiven.

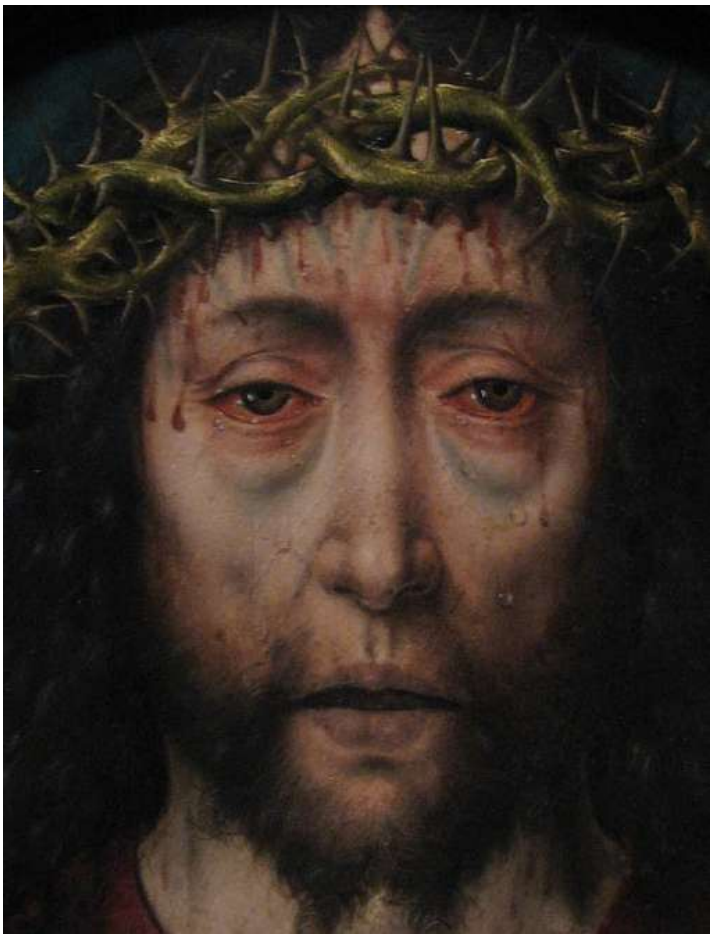
People: **Amen.**

Anthem To Mock Your Reign, O Dearest Lord — Thomas Tallis

To mock your reign, O dearest Lord, they made a crown of thorns,
set you with taunts along that road from which no one returns.
They could not know, as we do now, how glorious is that crown,
that thorns would flower upon your brow, your sorrows
heal our own.

In mock acclaim, O gracious Lord, they snatched a purple cloak,
your passion turned, for all they cared, into a soldier's joke.
They could not know, as we do now, that though we merit blame,
your will, your robe of mercy throw around our naked shame.

A sceptered reed, O patient Lord, they thrust into your hand,
and acted out their grim charade to its appointed end.
They could not know, as we do now, though empires rise and fall,
your kingdom shall not cease to grow till love embraces all.



Second Word *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."*** *(Luke 23:39-43)*

Leader: Lord Jesus, remember us when you come into your kingdom. Remember us, not for our possessions, nor for the things we have accomplished. Remember us, not for the virtues we display from time to time, or for any credit we think we deserve. Remember us, as one of the criminal community, who hung at your side, and if life will not let us be in paradise with you today, Keep a place for us.

People: **Amen.**

Anthem Jesus, Remember Me When You Come Into Your Kingdom

Third Word *Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother,* ***"Woman, here is your son."*** *Then he said to the disciple,* ***"Here is your mother."*** *And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. (John 19:25-27)*

Leader: For our families, where they are open, loving, supportive, that their joy might be kept safe,

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: For our families, where they are tense, troubled, fragmented, that they may find a way beyond the pain,

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: For ourselves, in this place of worship, surrounded by brothers and sisters whose journey we have not travelled, whose depth of faith we do not know, whose potential we cannot imagine, that we may know we belong to each other.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: And before you leave the cross and we depart from this worship experience, if there is one of your family for whom we could care more fondly, direct our gaze to them, as you turned Mary toward John.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Congregational Hymn O Sacred Head, Now Wounded Passion Chorale

O sacred head, now wounded, with grief and shame
weighed down; now scornfully surrounded with thorns,
thine only crown; O sacred head, what glory, what
bliss till now was thine! Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.

What thou, my Lord, hast suffered was all for sinners'
gain; mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the
deadly pain. Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve the
place; look on me with thy favor, and grant to me thy grace.

What language should I borrow to thank thee, dearest
friend, for this thy dying sorrow, thy pity without end?
O make me thine forever; and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to thee.

Fourth Word *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?"*** *(Matthew 27:45-46)*

Leader: Lord Jesus, by your cry of desperate honesty, rid us of superficial faith which is afraid of the dark. Not so that we might be justified pessimists, rather that we might discover profound joy. Give us, when we need it, the courage to doubt, to rage, to question, to rail against heaven until we know we are heard. We do not ask for easy answers during difficult and painful times; there are many who can offer these. We ask for a sense of your solidarity, that will be enough to let us know that we do not walk or cry alone; that will enable us to go through the dark and find light again in the morning.

People: **Amen.**

Silent Reflection

Fifth Word *After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said,* ***"I am thirsty."*** *(John 19:28)*

Leader: You have made us for yourself. We know it, even if we cannot name it. We have had these bodies and these minds long enough to learn to live with our limitations. Yet, despite this, something in us longs, yearns, thirsts for something more. Thank you for the incompleteness, thank you for the yearning, thank you for this thirst. Thank you for giving us enough of you to want more that we may sense of the fulness of eternity within the limits of time.

People: **Amen.**

Anthem What Wondrous Love is This, O My Soul

Wes Ramsey and Tim Sharp

What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, O my soul.
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse
for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

When I was sinking down,
sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous crown,
Christ laid aside his crown
for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb,
I will sing, I will sing,
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb
who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme,
I will sing, I will sing;
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

Sixth Word *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. When Jesus had received the wine, he said,* ***"It is finished."*** *Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:29-30)*

Silent Reflection

Seventh Word *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." (Luke 23:44-46)*

Anthem Lamb of God — Twila Paris

Your only Son, no sin to hide,
but you have sent him from your side
to walk upon this guilty sod
and become the Lamb of God.

Your gift of love they crucified.
They laughed and scorned him as he died.
The humble king they named a fraud
and sacrificed the Lamb of God.

O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God.
I love the holy Lamb of God.
O wash me in your precious blood,
My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

I was so lost, I should have died,
but you have brought me to your side
to be led by your staff and rod
and to be called a lamb of God.

Tolling of the Bell

Dismissal *All depart in silence.*

(*) Stand, as you are able

Worship Participants

Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer, Pastor and Head of Staff

Rev. Sarah A. Bishop, Associate Pastor for Family Ministry

Dale Rogers, Organist and Director of Music and the Arts

Westminster Choir

Eleanor VanDeventer, Soprano

Mary Ray, Communion Preparation Team

Susan Shaw made Honey Whole Wheat Bread

Brownie Anderson, Jim Dolan, Joe Fierstos, Gregg Humphrey, David Jenkins, Julie McDonough, Julie Robbs, Marilyn Rigney, Elders Serving Communion

Ben Arnold, Julie Barton, Deb Fritsch, Debra Parker, Brad Steller, and Erin Winn Deacons Stripping the Chancel

Bob Fox, Bill Deemer and Krista Steller, Videographers

MAUNDY THURSDAY, the name given to the Thursday before Easter, comes from the Latin *Dies Mandati*, the "Day of Commandment," which refers to the commandments given that night by Jesus to his disciples: to "love one another" and to "do this in remembrance of me."

Following Holy Communion, the table is stripped of all adornments to remind the Church of the catastrophe and desolation of the events of Good Friday.

Tonight's service will conclude with the "Seven Last Words of Christ" interwoven with liturgy and musical reflections as we prepare our hearts and minds for the events leading up to Easter morning.

THE HOLY WEEK ART DISPLAY AND LABYRINTH – Following worship all are invited to view the art display in Parish Hall. This exhibit brings together artistic interpretations of scenes of the events of the final week of Christ's life through the eyes of Fra Angelico, DaVinci, Dürer, Caravaggio, Dali and many others.

Westminster's Labyrinth is also located in Parish Hall for those who would like to practice this discipline of prayer.