

St. John's Episcopal Church

Sandwich, MA

The Sunday of the Passion

April 13th, 2025



Celebrant Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

People **Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Luke 19:28-40

After telling a parable to the crowd at Jericho, Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,

"Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest heaven!"

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

The Celebrant then says the following blessing

The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant continues

It is right to praise you, Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Celebrant Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

People **Hosanna in the highest.**



The Procession

Mister Let us go forth in peace.

People **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Children enter playing musical instruments and all waving palms.

The Processional Anthem *All glory, laud, and honor*

The Hymnal 1982, 154

Refrain

All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to thee, Re - deem - er, King!
to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.

1 Thou art the King of Is - ra - el, thou Da - vid's roy - al Son,
2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels is prais - ing thee on high;
3 The peo - ple of the He - brews with palms be - fore thee went;
4 To thee be - fore thy pas - sion they sang their hymns of praise;
5 Thou didst ac - cept their prais - es; ac - cept the prayers we bring,

Repeat Refrain

1 who in the Lord's Name com - est, the King and Bless - ed One.
2 and we with all cre - a - tion in cho - rus make re - ply.
3 our praise and prayers and an - thems be - fore thee we pre - sent.
4 to thee, now high ex - al - ted, our mel - o - dy we raise.
5 who in all good de - light - est, thou good and gra - cious King.

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Hymn of Praise *Blessed is He who comes* by Tamara M. Albrect *Children of St. John's Sunday School & Choir*

The First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens--wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore, I have not been disgraced; therefore, I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me.

It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God**

The Response, Psalm 31:9-16

In te, Domine, speravi

- 9 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; *
**my eye is consumed with sorrow,
and also my throat and my belly.**
- 10 For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with
sighing; ***my strength fails me because of
affliction, and my bones are consumed.**
- 11 I even to my neighbors, a dismay to those of my
acquaintance; ***have become a reproach to all my
enemies and when they see me in the street, they
avoid me.**

- 12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; *
I am as useless as a broken pot.
- 13 For I have heard the whispering of the crowd;
fear is all around; ***they put their heads together
against me; they plot to take my life.**
- 14 But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord. *
I have said, "You are my God.
- 15 My times are in your hand; *
**rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.**
- 16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, *
and in your loving-kindness save me.

The Second Lesson

Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God**

The Gradual Hymn *Ab Holy Jesus, how hast thou offended*

The Hymnal 1982, 158

Notes:

- ❖ The Sermon is omitted for today.
- ❖ You are invited to silently reflect upon Jesus' sacrifice for us following the first part of the Gospel reading.
- ❖ The Nicene Creed is not used in the service today.
- ❖ There is no Exchange of Peace today.
- ❖ You are invited to place your offering in the basket as you go to communion.
- ❖ Prayers for the parish will be included within the Eucharistic Prayer.
- ❖ Please be seated for the reading of the Passion. It will be read in two parts.

The Passion Gospel

Please remain seated

Narrator: *There is powerful consistency in Jesus' life. Again and again, He withdraws from the crowds to pray in solitude. Now, at this dramatic moment, Jesus again withdraws to pray—in a solitude made more intense by the fact that He has asked His disciples to pray, too, but they have fallen asleep. And in this moment of anguished emotion, Jesus mouths a prayer that resonates with His consistent message of the Kingdom. He has taught His disciples to pray, "May Your kingdom come," which is a request for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, drenched in sweat, Jesus Himself prays simply for God's will to be done, even if it means He must drink the cup of suffering that awaits Him in the hours ahead.*

We often speak of having faith in Jesus; but we seldom speak of the faith of Jesus, a faith He demonstrated consistently throughout His life and especially at its end. In a moment of agony, Jesus still trusted God, still yielded His will to God, and still approached God as "Father," placing Himself in the position of a child, in trust—profound, tested, sincere.

Once again He left the city as He had been doing during recent days, returning to Mount Olivet along with His disciples. And He came to a certain place.

Jesus: Pray for yourselves, that you will not sink into temptation.

He distanced Himself from them about a stone's throw and knelt there, praying.

Jesus: Father, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me. Yet not My will, but Your will, be done.

When He rose from prayer and returned to the disciples, He found them asleep, weighed down with sorrow. He roused them.

Jesus: Why are you sleeping? Wake up and pray that you will not sink into temptation.

Even as He said these words, the sound of a crowd could be heard in the distance, and as the crowd came into view, it was clear that Judas was leading them. He came close to Jesus and gave Jesus the traditional greeting of a kiss.

Jesus: Ah, Judas, is this how you betray the Son of Man—with a kiss?

Disciples/Peter: Lord, is this why You told us to bring the swords? Should we attack?

Before Jesus could answer, one of them had swung his sword at the high priest's slave, cutting off his right ear.

Jesus: Stop! No more of this!

Then He reached out to touch—and heal—the man's ear. Jesus turned to the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders and spoke.

Jesus: Do you think I'm some sort of violent criminal? Is that why you came with swords and clubs? I haven't been hard to find—each day I've been in the temple in broad daylight, and you never tried to seize Me there. But this is your time—night—and this is your power—the power of darkness.

They grabbed Him at this point and took Him away to the high priest's home. Peter followed—at a distance. He watched from the shadows as those who had seized Jesus made a fire in the center of the courtyard and sat down around it. Then Peter slipped in quietly and sat with them. But a young servant girl saw his face in the firelight. She stared for a while and then spoke.

Servant Girl: This fellow here was with Jesus. I recognize him.

Peter (*denying it*): Woman, I don't even know the man.

A little later, a man also recognized him.

Man: I recognize you. You're one of Jesus' followers.

Peter: Man, you're wrong. I'm not.

An hour or so passed, and then another person pointed to Peter.

Another Person: This fellow is obviously Galilean. He must be a member of Jesus' group.

Peter: Look, I have no idea what you're talking about.

And he hadn't even finished the sentence when a nearby rooster crowed. The Lord turned toward Peter, and their eyes met. Peter remembered Jesus' words about his triple denial before the rooster would crow, so he left the courtyard and wept bitter tears.

At this point, the men who were holding Jesus began to mock Him and beat Him. They put a blindfold on Him.

Men Holding Jesus: Hey, Prophet! Use Your prophetic powers to tell us who just whacked You!

They kept on with this sort of insulting, degrading treatment for quite some time. When dawn had given way to full day, the Sanhedrin council assembled, consisting of religious leaders of the Sadducean party, along with the chief priests and religious scholars. They took Him to their headquarters for interrogation.

Sanhedrin: If you are the Anointed One whom God promised us, tell us plainly.

Jesus: If I give you an answer, you won't believe it. And if I ask you a question, you won't answer it. But this I will say to you: from now on, the Son of Man will take His seat at the right hand of the power of God.

Sanhedrin: So You are the Son of God, then?

Jesus: It's as you say.

Sanhedrin: What more evidence do we need? We've heard it with our own ears from His own lips.

So the whole council got up and took Jesus to Pilate. They brought accusations against Him.

Sanhedrin: We have observed this man leading our nation astray. He even forbade us to pay our taxes to Caesar. He claims to be the Anointed One and a King Himself.

Pilate: Are You the King of the Jews?

Jesus: It's as you say.

Pilate (*to the chief priest and crowd*): I find this man guilty of no crime.

Sanhedrin (*growing more intense*): He has been stirring up discontent among the people all over Judea. He started up in Galilee, and now He's brought His brand of trouble all the way to Jerusalem!

Pilate: Just a minute. Is this man a Galilean?

When Pilate learned that Jesus was indeed Galilean—which meant He was officially under Herod's jurisdiction—Pilate sent Him over to Herod, who was currently in Jerusalem. Herod was fascinated to meet Jesus for he had heard about Him for a long time. He was hoping he might be treated to a miracle or two. He interrogated Jesus for quite a while, but Jesus remained silent, refusing to answer his questions. Meanwhile the chief priests and religious scholars had plenty to say—angrily hurling accusations at Jesus.

Eventually Herod and his soldiers began to insult Jesus, mocking and degrading Him. They put expensive clothing on Him and sent Him back to Pilate. This ended a long-standing rift between Herod and Pilate; they became friends from that day forward.

Pilate assembled the chief priests and other Jewish authorities.

Pilate: You presented this man to me as a rabble-rouser, but I examined Him in your presence and found Him not guilty of the charges you have leveled against Him.

Herod also examined Him and released Him to my custody. So He hasn't done anything deserving the death penalty. ¹⁶I'll see to it that He is properly whipped and then let Him go.

Crowd: Away with this man! Free Barabbas instead!

Crucifixion is a favorite Roman punishment for insurrectionists, slaves, and prisoners of war. Anyone daring to defy the power and authority of Caesar is executed in this public and humiliating way. Jesus indeed is a revolutionary. He doesn't come to proclaim a new religion, but a new kingdom—a new way of life. He is indeed a threat to Caesar's way of doing things, a way that co-opts the religious leaders.

Jesus' revolution is a peaceful revolution. He doesn't advocate the use of violence—in fact, when one of His disciples uses the sword to try to protect Jesus from arrest, Jesus heals the “enemy” and rebukes H

is disciple. So Jesus doesn't support the regime of Caesar or follow the usual violent path of revolution: He leads a revolutionary revolution—in a path of love, healing, justice, and reconciliation.

Jesus appropriates and transforms the symbol of their power into a symbol of His greater power. He makes the cross not the icon of violent domination, but the reverse. By hanging on the cross and speaking of forgiveness, Jesus shows that there is a greater power at work in the world than the power of domination: it's the power of God's saving and reconciling love.

Barabbas had been imprisoned after being convicted of an insurrection he had led in Jerusalem. He had also committed murder. Pilate argued with the Jewish authorities, saying he could release Jesus, but the authorities wouldn't be silenced and they continued to incite the mob.

Crowd: Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

Pilate: Why? What has He done that is so evil? I have found in Him no offense worthy of capital punishment. As I said, I will punish Him and then release Him.

But the authorities of the temple continued to incite the mob. They would not relent. The lead the people to shouted louder and louder. The Jewish authorities kept insisting Jesus should be crucified, and eventually Pilate capitulated. So he pronounced the punishment they demanded. He released the rebel and murderer Barabbas—the insurrectionist they had pleaded for in His place—and he handed Jesus over to them to do with as they desired.

On the way to the place of crucifixion, they pulled a man from the crowd—his name was Simon of Cyrene, a person from the countryside who happened to be entering the city at that moment. They put Jesus' cross on Simon's shoulders, and he followed behind Jesus. Along with Him was a huge crowd of common people, including many women shrieking and wailing in grief.

Jesus: Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me. Weep instead for yourselves and weep for your children. Days are coming when people will say, "Blessed are the infertile; blessed are the wombs that never bore a child; blessed are the breasts that never nursed an infant." People will beg the mountains, "Surround us!" They'll plead with the hills, "Cover us!"¹⁴ For if they treat Me like this when I'm like green unseasoned wood, what will they do to a nation that's ready to burn like seasoned firewood?

A period of silence is kept.

The Reflection Anthem *O come and mourn*

Hal Hopson

A period of silence is kept.

Eucharistic Prayer D

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and forever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we say,

Celebrant and People

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We recall God's acts of salvation history. The presider says the "Words of Institution" that Jesus said at the Last Supper. At the Memorial Acclamation we remember Christ's death, resurrection, and promise to return at the end of the age. During the prayer, the Holy Spirit is invoked to bless and sanctify the gifts of bread and wine.

Then the Celebrant continues

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again, you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose, he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

Celebrant and People

***We praise you; we bless you,
we give thanks to you,
and we pray to you, Lord our God.***

The Celebrant continues

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Prayers of the People

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

We remember all your people, and all those who seek your truth.

We remember all who have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone; bring them into the place of eternal joy and light.

The Celebrant continues

And grant that we may find our inheritance with [the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs, matriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with _____) and] all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

We pray together the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. The link between our daily bread and the spiritual food we receive in the Eucharist is an ancient connection.

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

***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.***

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People ***Therefore let us keep the feast.***

The Communion

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All who seek God and are drawn to Christ, are welcome at the Lord's Table.

Please hold out your hand to receive the host.

You may ask for the chalice or receive the wine in the small cups offered to you in a tray.

If you prefer not to receive the wine, please cross your arms and wait for the minister to say "The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation."

As you return to your seats, deposit your cup in the place provided in a white pedestal table.

If you prefer to receive a blessing you may cross your arms across your chest.

If you would like to remain in your seat and receive communion, please let an usher know.

The Post-communion Prayer

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Passion Gospel of Luke Conclusion

Please stand, as you are able.

Jesus wasn't the only one being crucified that day. There were two others, criminals, who were also being led to their execution. The Romans crucified Jesus there, on the "Place of the Skull" in the company of criminals, one to the right of Jesus and the other to His left.

Jesus: Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.^d

Meanwhile the Roman soldiers were drawing lots to see who would win Jesus' clothing. A gathered crowd of people stood by watching.

Temple Authorities: So He was supposed to rescue others, was He? He was supposed to be God's Anointed, the Liberating King? Let's see Him start by liberating Himself!

The Roman soldiers joined in the mockery.

Soldiers: Hey, if You're the King of the Jews, why don't You free Yourself!

One of the criminals joined in the cruel talk.

Cynical Criminal: You're supposed to be the Anointed One, right? Well—do it! Rescue Yourself and us!

But the other criminal told him to be quiet.

Believing Criminal: Don't you have any fear of God at all? You're getting the same death sentence He is! We're getting what we deserve since we've committed crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong at all! (turning to Jesus) Jesus, when You come into Your kingdom, please remember me.

Jesus: I promise you that this very day you will be with Me in paradise.

At this point, it was about noon, and a darkness fell over the whole region. The darkness persisted until about three in the afternoon, and at some point during this darkness, the curtain in the temple was torn in two.

The tearing of this heavy curtain in the temple is highly symbolic. Because this curtain separated the holiest place in the temple from the rest of the temple, some see in this act a symbol of God opening the way for unholy humans to enter into His holy presence: Jesus' death brought forgiveness and opened the way for all to come to God. Others see in the curtain's being torn the opposite meaning: God's presence can no longer be confined to any single geographical place. The suffering and death of Jesus ended one age of human history, and now a new era has begun. Now God is on the move, at large, invading the whole world. Or perhaps this graphic image means both.

Jesus: Father, I entrust My spirit into Your hands! ¹⁴

And with those words, He exhaled—and breathed no more.

The Roman Centurion²¹—one of the soldiers who performed the execution—saw all this, and he praised God.

Centurion: No doubt, this man must have been innocent.

The crowds of common people who had gathered and watched the whole ordeal through to its conclusion left for their homes, pounding on their own chests in profound grief. And all who knew Jesus personally, including the group of women who had been with Him from the beginning in Galilee, stood at a distance, watching all of these things unfold.

Meanwhile a man named Joseph had been at work. He was a member of the council, a good and fair man, from a Judean town called Arimathea. He had objected to the plans and actions of the council; he was seeking the kingdom of God. He had gone to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He removed the body from the cross and wrapped it in a shroud made of fine linen. He then laid the body in a cave-like tomb cut from solid rock, a tomb that never had been used before. It was Preparation Day—the day before the holy Sabbath—and it was about to begin at sundown. The women who had accompanied Jesus from the beginning in Galilee now came, took note of where the tomb was and how His body had been prepared, then left to prepare spices and ointments for His proper burial. They ceased their work on the Sabbath so they could rest as the Hebrew Scriptures required.

Footnotes

a. 22:43-44 Some early manuscripts omit these verses.

b. 23:17 The earliest manuscripts omit *verse 17*.

c. 23:30 Hosea 10:8

You are invited to leave the church in silence.

Please join us in the Parish Hall for Coffee Hour.

Welcome to St. John's!

Whether this is your first visit to St. John's or you are a long-time member, please know that there is a warm welcome for you here! Please feel free to participate fully in our service today and in the life of the parish. We are glad you have come and hope you leave feeling closer to God! At several points in the service, you may notice that some people are kneeling, some are standing and some are sitting. We are given this choice and you should feel free to do whichever is most appropriate for you. Please know that you are invited to fully participate in the Holy Eucharist as a Baptized Christian.

If you would like to know more about St. John's and may be interested in membership or interested in being placed on our email mailing list, please contact the church office

Saint John's Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church of Sandwich Est. 1854
159 Main St, Sandwich, MA

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We pray for those we remember in the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: **The Churches of the Charles River Deanery: All Saints Parish (Brookline), Church of Our Saviour (Brookline), St. Paul's Church (Brookline), Boston University Chaplain (Boston), The Church Home Society.**

We pray for the special needs and concerns of this congregation, this nation and this world. *Please add your prayers silently or aloud.*

We pray for those on our prayer list: Mary, Susan, Christy, Brian, Steve, Charlie, Bruce, Dave, Alannah, MaryAnn, Dave, Luke, Bruce, April, Lyn, Henry, and Steve. *Please add your prayers silently or aloud.*

Announcements

WE ARE MOVING! St. John's parish office is moving from 161 Main Street to the basement level of the church. You can access the temporary office location through the street level (not up the steps into the church) red door at the right front corner of the church and down the stairs. Please bear with us as we relocate to our new temporary spaces while the current Parish House is being renovated into housing. Office hours remain the same - Tuesday through Friday, 9am-2pm.

Easter Floral Donations are given in loving memory of, and in grateful thanksgiving for loved ones. Please call or email the office with names of those you wish to have remembered in our Easter worship bulletins. Remembrance forms are available in the Narthex. Please print, and place in the collection plate. Suggested donation is \$20.

In honor of Easter and Earth Day the Caring for Creation Team will be offering perennial potted flowers on Saturday, April 19 and Easter Sunday, April 20. The distribution will take place before the 5:00 PM Saturday service and after the 9:30 AM Easter Sunday service. There are three varieties of bird and butterfly friendly flowers: Black-eyed Susans, Purple Coneflowers, and Red Magic Day Lilies. There is a limit of 5 potted flowers per person. Donations are gratefully accepted to support the work of the Caring for Creation Committee.

Eucharistic Visitor Training is offered. Eucharistic Visitors extend the altar to include those who are homebound or in the hospital. This important pastoral and liturgical ministry is offered by adult lay members of the congregation who are certified by the diocese. In order to be certified, Eucharistic Visitors must complete Safe Church training, be nominated by their priest and attend a diocesan-approved training. Trainings are scheduled in each region of the diocese, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on: • April 26 at Grace Church in Medford; **May 3 at St. David's Church in South Yarmouth**; and • May 10 at the Church of Our Redeemer in Lexington. Please see Fr. Al for more information.

Thank you to everyone who helped celebrate Elaine Young's birthday! She is 99 years young and looking great! Congratulations Elaine!

Registration is open for Vacation Bible School at First Church Sandwich. For questions or more information, please reach out to revjennie@firstchurchsandwich.org 508-572-5564 (text & calls). This is a great program!

April 12-20, 2025

Saturday, April 12

9:30am AA, Parish Hall

5pm Palm Sunday Worship with Holy Eucharist

Sunday, April 13

9:30am Palm Sunday Worship Service with Holy Eucharist

Hospitality following worship, Parish Hall

Monday, April 14

10am Al-Anon, Parish Hall

Tuesday, April 15

12noon AA, Parish Hall

Wednesday, April 16

7pm Choir Rehearsal, Church

Thursday, April 17

12noon AA, Parish Hall

4:30pm Lasit Performing Arts, Church

7pm Maunday Thursday Service

6pm AA, Undercroft

Friday, April 18

1pm Caring for Creation, Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/892976341> (on hold for Good Friday)

12noon **Good Friday Service**

Saturday, April 19

9:30am AA, Parish Hall

5pm **Easter Vigil** Worship Service with Holy Eucharist

Sunday, April 20

9:30am **Easter Sunday** Worship with Holy Eucharist

Children's Easter Egg Hunt following service

Hospitality following Worship, Parish Hall

The Passion Gospel

Luke 22:39-23:56

Narrator 1 _____

Narrator 2 _____

Jesus _____

Peter _____

Disciples *1 line* _____

Disciples *1 line* _____

Servant Girl *1 line* _____

Man *1 line* _____

Another Person *1 line* _____

Man Holding Jesus *1 line* _____

Sanhedrin _____

Pilate _____

Soldiers *1 line* _____

Soldiers *1 line* _____

Temple Authorities *1 line* _____

Cynical Criminal *1 line* _____

Believing Criminal *1 line* _____

Centurion *1 line* _____

The Passion Gospel

Luke 22:39-23:56

Narrator 1: *There is powerful consistency in Jesus' life. Again and again, He withdraws from the crowds to pray in solitude. Now, at this dramatic moment, Jesus again withdraws to pray—in a solitude made more intense by the fact that He has asked His disciples to pray, too, but they have fallen asleep. And in this moment of anguished emotion, Jesus mouths a prayer that resonates with His consistent message of the Kingdom. He has taught His disciples to pray, "May Your kingdom come," which is a request for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, drenched in sweat, Jesus Himself prays simply for God's will to be done, even if it means He must drink the cup of suffering that awaits Him in the hours ahead.*

Narrator 2: *We often speak of having faith in Jesus; but we seldom speak of the faith of Jesus, a faith He demonstrated consistently throughout His life and especially at its end. In a moment of agony, Jesus still trusted God, still yielded His will to God, and still approached God as "Father," placing Himself in the position of a child, in trust—profound, tested, sincere.*

Once again He left the city as He had been doing during recent days, returning to Mount Olivet along with His disciples. And He came to a certain place.

Jesus: Pray for yourselves, that you will not sink into temptation.

Narrator 1: *He distanced Himself from them about a stone's throw and knelt there, praying.*

Jesus: Father, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me. Yet not My will, but Your will, be done.

Narrator 2: *When He rose from prayer and returned to the disciples, He found them asleep, weighed down with sorrow. He roused them.*

Jesus: Why are you sleeping? Wake up and pray that you will not sink into temptation.

Narrator 1: *Even as He said these words, the sound of a crowd could be heard in the distance, and as the crowd came into view, it was clear that Judas was leading them. He came close to Jesus and gave Jesus the traditional greeting of a kiss.*

Jesus: Ah, Judas, is this how you betray the Son of Man—with a kiss?

Disciples/Peter: Lord, is this why You told us to bring the swords? Should we attack?

Narrator 2: *Before Jesus could answer, one of them had swung his sword at the high priest's slave, cutting off his right ear.*

Jesus: Stop! No more of this!

Narrator 1: *Then He reached out to touch—and heal—the man’s ear. Jesus turned to the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders and spoke.*

Jesus: Do you think I’m some sort of violent criminal? Is that why you came with swords and clubs? I haven’t been hard to find—each day I’ve been in the temple in broad daylight, and you never tried to seize Me there. But this is your time—night—and this is your power—the power of darkness.

Narrator 2: *They grabbed Him at this point and took Him away to the high priest’s home. Peter followed—at a distance. He watched from the shadows as those who had seized Jesus made a fire in the center of the courtyard and sat down around it. Then Peter slipped in quietly and sat with them. But a young servant girl saw his face in the firelight. She stared for a while and then spoke.*

Servant Girl: This fellow here was with Jesus. I recognize him.

Peter (*denying it*): Woman, I don’t even know the man.

Narrator 1: *A little later, a man also recognized him.*

Man: I recognize you. You’re one of Jesus’ followers.

Peter: Man, you’re wrong. I’m not.

Narrator 2: *An hour or so passed, and then another person pointed to Peter.*

Another Person: This fellow is obviously Galilean. He must be a member of Jesus’ group.

Peter: Look, I have no idea what you’re talking about.

Narrator 1: *And he hadn’t even finished the sentence when a nearby rooster crowed. The Lord turned toward Peter, and their eyes met. Peter remembered Jesus’ words about his triple denial before the rooster would crow, so he left the courtyard and wept bitter tears.*

At this point, the men who were holding Jesus began to mock Him and beat Him. They put a blindfold on Him.

Men Holding Jesus: Hey, Prophet! Use Your prophetic powers to tell us who just whacked You!

Narrator 2: *They kept on with this sort of insulting, degrading treatment for quite some time. When dawn had given way to full day, the Sanhedrin council assembled, consisting of religious leaders of the Sadducean party, along with the chief priests and religious scholars. They took Him to their headquarters for interrogation.*

Sanhedrin: If you are the Anointed One whom God promised us, tell us plainly.

Jesus: If I give you an answer, you won’t believe it. And if I ask you a question, you won’t answer it. But this I will say to you: from now on, the Son of Man will take His seat at the right hand of the power of God.

Sanhedrin: So You are the Son of God, then?

Jesus: It's as you say.

Sanhedrin: What more evidence do we need? We've heard it with our own ears from His own lips.

Narrator 1: *So the whole council got up and took Jesus to Pilate. They brought accusations against Him.*

Sanhedrin: We have observed this man leading our nation astray. He even forbade us to pay our taxes to Caesar. He claims to be the Anointed One and a King Himself.

Pilate: Are You the King of the Jews?

Jesus: It's as you say.

Pilate *(to the chief priest and crowd):* I find this man guilty of no crime.

Sanhedrin *(growing more intense):* He has been stirring up discontent among the people all over Judea. He started up in Galilee, and now He's brought His brand of trouble all the way to Jerusalem!

Pilate: Just a minute. Is this man a Galilean?

Narrator 2: *When Pilate learned that Jesus was indeed Galilean—which meant He was officially under Herod's jurisdiction—Pilate sent Him over to Herod, who was currently in Jerusalem. Herod was fascinated to meet Jesus for he had heard about Him for a long time. He was hoping he might be treated to a miracle or two. He interrogated Jesus for quite a while, but Jesus remained silent, refusing to answer his questions. Meanwhile the chief priests and religious scholars had plenty to say—angrily hurling accusations at Jesus.*

Eventually Herod and his soldiers began to insult Jesus, mocking and degrading Him. They put expensive clothing on Him and sent Him back to Pilate. This ended a long-standing rift between Herod and Pilate; they became friends from that day forward.

Pilate assembled the chief priests and other Jewish authorities.

Pilate: You presented this man to me as a rabble-rouser, but I examined Him in your presence and found Him not guilty of the charges you have leveled against Him. Herod also examined Him and released Him to my custody. So He hasn't done anything deserving the death penalty. I'll see to it that He is properly whipped and then let Him go.

Narrator 2: *It was the custom for Pilate to set one prisoner free during the holiday festivities.][b]*

Crowd: Away with this man! Free Barabbas instead!

Narrator 2: *Crucifixion is a favorite Roman punishment for insurrectionists, slaves, and prisoners of war. Anyone daring to defy the power and authority of Caesar is executed in this public and humiliating way. Jesus indeed is a*

revolutionary. He doesn't come to proclaim a new religion, but a new kingdom—a new way of life. He is indeed a threat to Caesar's way of doing things, a way that co-opts the religious leaders.

Jesus' revolution is a peaceful revolution. He doesn't advocate the use of violence—in fact, when one of His disciples uses the sword to try to protect Jesus from arrest, Jesus heals the “enemy” and rebukes His disciple. So Jesus doesn't support the regime of Caesar or follow the usual violent path of revolution: He leads a revolutionary revolution—in a path of love, healing, justice, and reconciliation.

Narrator 1: *Jesus appropriates and transforms the symbol of their power into a symbol of His greater power. He makes the cross not the icon of violent domination, but the reverse. By hanging on the cross and speaking of forgiveness, Jesus shows that there is a greater power at work in the world than the power of domination: it's the power of God's saving and reconciling love.*

Barabbas had been imprisoned after being convicted of an insurrection he had led in Jerusalem. He had also committed murder. Pilate argued with the Jewish authorities, saying he could release Jesus, but the authorities wouldn't be silenced and they continued to incite the mob.

Crowd: Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

Pilate: Why? What has He done that is so evil? I have found in Him no offense worthy of capital punishment. As I said, I will punish Him and then release Him.

Narrator 2: *But the authorities of the temple continued to incite the mob. They would not relent. They lead the people to shout louder and louder. The Jewish authorities kept insisting Jesus should be crucified, and eventually Pilate capitulated. So he pronounced the punishment they demanded.*

He released the rebel and murderer Barabbas—the insurrectionist they had pleaded for in His place—and he handed Jesus over to them to do with as they desired.

On the way to the place of crucifixion, they pulled a man from the crowd—his name was Simon of Cyrene, a person from the countryside who happened to be entering the city at that moment. They put Jesus' cross on Simon's shoulders, and he followed behind Jesus. Along with Him was a huge crowd of common people, including many women shrieking and wailing in grief.

Jesus: Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me. Weep instead for yourselves and weep for your children. Days are coming when people will say, “Blessed are the infertile; blessed are the wombs that never bore a child; blessed are the breasts that never nursed an infant.” People will beg the mountains, “Surround us!” They'll plead with the hills, “Cover us!”^[4] For if they treat Me like this when I'm like green unseasoned wood, what will they do to a nation that's ready to burn like seasoned firewood?

Following the Postcommunion Prayer

Please stand, as you are able.

Narrator 1: *Jesus wasn't the only one being crucified that day. There were two others, criminals, who were also being led to their execution.*

Narrator 2: *The Romans crucified Jesus there, on the "Place of the Skull" in the company of criminals, one to the right of Jesus and the other to His left.*

Jesus: Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.^d

Narrator 2: *Meanwhile the Roman soldiers were drawing lots to see who would win Jesus' clothing. A gathered crowd of people stood by watching.*

Temple Authorities: So He was supposed to rescue others, was He? He was supposed to be God's Anointed, the Liberating King? Let's see Him start by liberating Himself!

Narrator 1: *The Roman soldiers joined in the mockery.*

Soldiers: Hey, if You're the King of the Jews, why don't You free Yourself!

Narrator 2: *One of the criminals joined in the cruel talk.*

Cynical Criminal: You're supposed to be the Anointed One, right? Well—do it! Rescue Yourself and us!

Narrator 1: *But the other criminal told him to be quiet.*

Believing Criminal: Don't you have any fear of God at all? You're getting the same death sentence He is! We're getting what we deserve since we've committed crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong at all! (turning to Jesus) Jesus, when You come into Your kingdom, please remember me.

Jesus: I promise you that this very day you will be with Me in paradise.

Narrator 2: *At this point, it was about noon, and a darkness fell over the whole region. The darkness persisted until about three in the afternoon, and at some point during this darkness, the curtain in the temple was torn in two.*

The tearing of this heavy curtain in the temple is highly symbolic. Because this curtain separated the holiest place in the temple from the rest of the temple, some see in this act a symbol of God opening the way for unholy humans to

enter into His holy presence: Jesus' death brought forgiveness and opened the way for all to come to God. Others see in the curtain's being torn the opposite meaning: God's presence can no longer be confined to any single geographical place. The suffering and death of Jesus ended one age of human history, and now a new era has begun. Now God is on the move, at large, invading the whole world. Or perhaps this graphic image means both.

Jesus: Father, I entrust My spirit into Your hands! ^[1]

Narrator 1: *And with those words, He exhaled—and breathed no more.*

Narrator 2: *The Roman Centurion^[2]—one of the soldiers who performed the execution—saw all this, and he praised God.*

Centurion: No doubt, this man must have been innocent.

Narrator 1: *The crowds of common people who had gathered and watched the whole ordeal through to its conclusion left for their homes, pounding on their own chests in profound grief. And all who knew Jesus personally, including the group of women who had been with Him from the beginning in Galilee, stood at a distance, watching all of these things unfold.*

Narrator 2: *Meanwhile a man named Joseph had been at work. He was a member of the council, a good and fair man, from a Judean town called Arimathea. He had objected to the plans and actions of the council; he was seeking the kingdom of God. He had gone to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He removed the body from the cross and wrapped it in a shroud made of fine linen. He then laid the body in a cave-like tomb cut from solid rock, a tomb that never had been used before.*

Narrator 1: *It was Preparation Day—the day before the holy Sabbath—and it was about to begin at sundown. The women who had accompanied Jesus from the beginning in Galilee now came, took note of where the tomb was and how His body had been prepared, then left to prepare spices and ointments for His proper burial.*

Narrator 2: *They ceased their work on the Sabbath so they could rest as the Hebrew Scriptures required.*

Footnotes

- a. 22:43-44 Some early manuscripts omit these verses.
- b. 23:17 The earliest manuscripts omit verse 17.
- c. 23:30 Hosea 10:8
- d. 23:34 The earliest manuscripts omit this portion.
- e. 23:38 Some early manuscripts omit this portion.
- f. 23:46 Psalm 31:5
- g. 23:47 A Roman military officer in charge of 100 soldiers

The people leave the Church in silence.

