



with
Holy Communion
and
The Office of Tenebrae
March 28, 2024

Our worship service this evening is offered by:

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Shalom Community Church of Ann Arbor
The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor

The Ministry of Meditation and Preparation

Prelude "O Welt, ich muss dich lassen" Johannes Brahms
Timothy Huth, organ

Welcome

*** Call to Worship** Ministers

One: This is a day to remember.

All: We remember the Passover Jesus shared with his disciples. We remember his new covenant of broken bread and cup.

One: We remember his night alone in the garden in prayer.

All: We remember his arrest, his trial, his suffering, the denial of his friend. We remember this day and thank God for Jesus' presence with us then and with us now.

One: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

All: "Anyone who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

One: If I say, "Let the darkness cover me, and the light around me turn to night."

All: "Even the darkness is not dark to you, O God. The night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike."

One: Let us join with one voice in prayer.

*** Prayer of Invocation**
(In Unison) Everlasting God, who was, who is, and who is to come, we are grateful that you have invited us here as witnesses to your holy love. Inspire our singing and our praying, our words of devotion and our time of reflection, so that your presence may come alive in us once again. Let our worship this night bring the stories and passions of scripture to new life for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*** Hymn** "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" NCH #224

Gospel Reading Mark 14:12-16

Litany of Remembrance and Love

(The responses will be sung to the tune "Beneath the Cross of Jesus.")

Minister	We have gathered, O God, in answer to your mandate that we love one another as you have loved us in Jesus of Nazareth. We gather as disciples awaiting a word of assurance and promise. Grant us your loving kindness and tender mercies, and heal us with your holy presence.
People (sing)	Before your cross, O Jesus, our lives are judged today; the meaning of our eager strife is tested by your way. Across our restless living the light streams from your cross, and by its clear, revealing beams we measure gain and loss.
Minister	We long to love as we have been loved, to serve as Christ has served among us, to live lives of thanksgiving that fulfill our vows to you and to one another. We pray in Jesus' name.
People (sing)	The hopes that lead us onward, the fears that hold us back, our will to dare great things for God, the courage that we lack. The faith we keep in goodness, our love, as low or pure, on all, the judgment of the cross falls steady, clear, and sure.
Minister	Loving God, help us to recognize one another as sisters and brothers united in the body of Christ for service in the world. As you love us into wholeness and joy, enable us to love others in ways that evoke their response to your love.
People (sing)	Yet humbly, in our striving, we rise to face its test. We crave the power to do your will as once you did it best. On us let now the healing of your great Spirit fall, and make us brave and full of joy to answer to your call.

The Community of the Upper Room

The Communion Invitation	Mark 14:22–26	
Hymn of Approach	"Let Us Break Bread Together"	NCH #330
Prayer of Consecration		
Sharing of the Elements		
Prayer of Thanksgiving		

The Office of Tenebrae

8 Readers

The Darkness of Betrayal
The Darkness of Desertion
The Agony of the Spirit
The Unshared Vigil
Father, The Hour is Come
That They May Be One
The Arrest at the Gate
The Shadow of the Cross

Solo

“The Eighth Station of the Cross: Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem” Marcel Dupré
Timothy Huth, organ

Silent Prayers

Prayers from the Darkness

Solo

“Were You There?” American Spiritual
Maitri White, soprano

Lord’s Prayer

(In Unison)

Our Father (God), who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

(The candle that is relighted on the communion table represents the eternal light of God which death can never extinguish.)

Benediction

Following the Benediction, the ministers, readers, and the congregation are asked to leave the sanctuary in silence. We encourage you to stay and listen to the Postlude. Please remain silent as you leave the sanctuary.

Postlude

“Adagio” Tomaso Albinoni
Timothy Huth, organ

Our Vigil of Maundy Thursday...

Commemorates the last week of Jesus' life on earth, using darkness to symbolize the somber nature of Passion Week. The service is based on the fourth century Office of Tenebrae (darkness or shadows). The rule of silence is observed, without conversation or greetings, other than silent recognition of friends.

Included in the vigil is the scriptural account of God's redemptive work in Jesus, which is read in candlelight by eight readers, with one candle being extinguished after each section is read, symbolizing the impending death of Jesus. Prayers, a solo from the darkness, and the congregation leaving the sanctuary in silence, enhance the theme.

"Maundy" is Latin for "commandment," recalling Jesus' command to "love one another," given, according to the gospel of John, at the Last Supper.

As Christians, we live under the burden of a sad and violent history of anti-Semitism, in the sobering shadow of the Shoah (Holocaust). It is critical for us to be clear about what our sacred texts mean when they make reference to "the Jews," especially during Holy Week, when we contemplate Jesus' death. When the crucifixion narratives speak of "the chief priests and leaders of the people," they are referring to officials who collaborated closely with the Roman systems of oppression and were viewed with contempt by much of the Jewish community in their time. They should not be identified with the Jewish people of the past, and certainly not with Jews in the present. It may be helpful to recall the cultural context of our Christian scriptures, emerging as they did from a small, originally Jewish community of believers in Jesus as the Messiah. All of the Gospels originated from Jewish communities. Jesus himself, was born, lived, and was crucified, a Jew. Any criticism of Jews from Gospel writers should be understood as the expression of differences of opinion among or about their fellow Jews. The gospels' use of the term "the Jews" therefore, should not be read as a criticism of the Jewish religion, and especially not as a condemnation of an entire people, either then, or now. It is one of the bitter ironies of history that our sacred texts have been used to justify the persecution of the covenant people, from whom our Savior came, and who are created, as we all are, in the precious image of God.

-Rev. Mary Luti

Clergy in Today's Service

Rev. Dawn Christenson, Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Rev. Diane White, Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Rev. Jodie Boyer Hatlem, Shalom Community Church

Rev. Trevor Bechtel, Shalom Community Church

Rev. Dr. Darcy Crain, The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor

Rev. Eric Hausman, The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor

Rev. Lily Tinker Fortel, The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

224

Isaac Watts, 1707; alt.

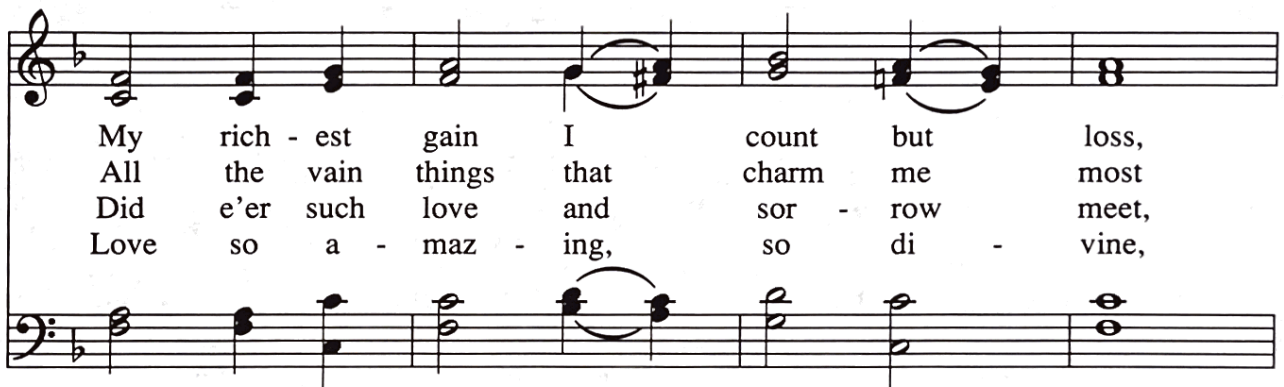
Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:7-8



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross,
2 For - bid it, then, that I should boast,
3 From sa - cred head, from hands, and feet,
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine,



on which the Christ of glo - ry died,
save in the death of Christ, my God;
sor - row and love flow min - gled down!
that were a pres - ent far too small;



My rich - est gain I count but loss,
All the vain things that charm me most
Did e'er such love and sor - row meet,
Love so a - maz - ing, so di - vine,



and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
I sac - ri - fice them to Christ's blood.
or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

Originally titled "Crucifixion to the World by the Cross of Christ," this hymn has been acclaimed as one of the finest in the English language. Isaac Watts' hymnody grew out of his dissatisfaction with the restraints of the metrical psalters.

Tune: HAMBURG L.M.
Lowell Mason, 1825

Let Us Break Bread Together

Acts 2:42

African-American spiritual



1 Let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees;
 * 2 Let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees;
 3 Let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees.
 let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees.
 let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees.

Refrain



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing sun,

* "Share the cup" may be substituted for "drink wine."

The earliest version of this spiritual probably began with the current stanza three, and was a song some of the enslaved in Virginia used when gathering for secret meetings. The communion stanzas were added some time after the Civil War.

Tune: LET US BREAK BREAD
 10.10. with refrain
 Harm. David Hurd, 1983

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HOLY COMMUNION



My God, have mer-cy on me.

We invite you to learn more about our congregations and visit us again soon!

Shalom Community Church www.shalomcc.org

Bethlehem United Church of Christ: www.bethlehem-ucc.org

The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor: www.fccannarbor.org

Good Friday Services ~ March 29, 2024

12 p.m., service at the First Baptist Church
(State and Huron)

*FCC will co-lead this joint worship service with
leaders from First Baptist & First United Methodist Church*

Community Good Friday service, 7:00 p.m., at Bethlehem
UCC, 423 2. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor, MI

*This service is being led by members and clergy of
Bethlehem UCC and Shalom Community Church.*

Holy Saturday and Sunday at FCC

Easter Eve Contemporary Worship ~ March 30, 2024

4:09 p.m. Pilgrim Hall, with special music
(Childcare is provided)

Easter Sunday ~ March 31, 2024

9:30 a.m. Easter Chapel Communion, Douglas Chapel
10:00 a.m. Easter Celebration Service, Sanctuary
11:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast, Pilgrim Hall

Our children will enjoy Easter egg hunts in FCC Kidz
during the 10 a.m. service.

