

*st. peter's chelsea*



**Good Friday: Stations of the Cross**

April 3, 2026

7:00pm

## Good Friday and the Way of the Cross

*Since the earliest days of the Church, Christians have commemorated Jesus's Crucifixion with special devotion. Good Friday is the day the Church stands at the foot of the cross. Tonight we gather not to explain away suffering, but to behold and bear witness to the crucified Christ, to listen again to the story of his passion, and to bring before God the burdens, griefs and violence of our world.*

*At the conclusion of our liturgy, we invite you to walk the Stations of the Cross throughout the sanctuary. This ancient Christian practice of keeping vigil with Jesus invites us to immerse ourselves in his path to Calvary, moving prayerfully through a series of moments from his passion. They remind us, then and now, to consider the realities of a broken world, joining our own prayers to his, and drawing near to the mystery of the cross.*

*There will be no formal dismissal at the end and you are welcome to remain in the sanctuary for prayerful reflection. May God's blessing be upon you as we enter together into this holy mystery.*

*On this day the ministers enter in silence.*

*All remain seated in silent prayer, after which the Officiant stands and begins the liturgy.*

Officiant: Blessed be our God.

**All: For ever and ever. Amen.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

**All: 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.**

*The assembly is seated during the lessons and the Gospel.*

### Scripture Reading: Isaiah 52:13—53:12

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*Said responsively, by whole verse.*

### Responsive Psalm: Psalm 22

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

and are so far from my cry

and from the words of my distress?

**O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer;**

**by night as well, but I find no rest.**

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

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

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

**But as for me, I am a worm and not human,  
scorned by all and despised by the people.**

All who see me laugh me to scorn;  
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,  
**“They trusted in the Lord; let him deliver them;  
let him rescue them, if he delights in them.”**

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

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

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

**Many young bulls encircle me;  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.**

They open wide their jaws at me,  
like a ravening and a roaring lion.

**I am poured out like water;  
all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart within my breast is melting wax.**

My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd;  
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.

**Packs of dogs close me in,  
and gangs of evildoers circle around me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet;  
I can count all my bones.**

They stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my garments among them;  
they cast lots for my clothing.

**Be not far away, O Lord;  
you are my strength; hasten to help me.**

Save me from the sword,  
my life from the power of the dog.

**Save me from the lion’s mouth,  
my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.**

I will declare your Name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

**Praise the Lord, you that fear him;  
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel;  
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.**

For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;  
neither does he hide his face from them;  
but when they cry to him he hears them.

**My praise is of him in the great assembly;  
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.**

The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the Lord shall praise him:  
“May your heart live for ever!”

**All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.**

For kingship belongs to the Lord;  
he rules over the nations.

**To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship;  
all who go down to the dust fall before him.**

My soul shall live for him;  
my descendants shall serve him;  
they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

**They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn  
the saving deeds that he has done.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

**Gradual Song**      *Jesus Remember Me*

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

MUSIC: Jacques Berthier

# The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

*\*Note: This translation of John's gospel highlights the regional tensions between Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee and Judean leadership centered in Jerusalem.*

## GOSPEL | John 18: 1-24

### *Were You There?*

1. Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_ Were you  
there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? O! \_\_\_\_\_  
Some-times it caus - es me to trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble!  
\_\_\_\_\_ Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

WORDS/MUSIC: *African American Spiritual, Public Domain*

## GOSPEL | John 18: 25-40

*Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree  
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree  
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble  
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree*

## GOSPEL | John 19: 1-16

*Were you there when they pierced Him in the side  
Were you there when they pierced Him in the side  
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble  
Were you there when they pierced Him in the side*

## GOSPEL | John 19: 17-37

*Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb  
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb  
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble  
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb  
  
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

## **THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS | A NOTE ON THIS JOURNEY**

The Stations of the Cross invite us to immerse ourselves in the final hours of Jesus' life, not as observers at a safe remove, but as witnesses. People for whom this story is not finished.

These stations are drawn from the work of Allan Rohan Crite, a Boston artist, devout Episcopalian, and "artist-storyteller" whose work revealed the sacred in the everyday lives of Black communities.

Created around 1947, his stations place the Passion in the world we know: city streets, ordinary people, real bodies in real light, the suffering carried in human life. In doing so, they reflect a Black sacred imagination that helps us see Christ not as distant from the pain of the world, but present within it. We are reminded that the cross is never far from the life of this world.

Take your post as a witness. Let the stations speak. Let them make you feel.

God's response to death is life. God wastes nothing. But we are not yet at Sunday. We begin here, with the full weight of what love costs.

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

1 O sa - cred head, now wound - ed, with grief and shame weighed down,  
2 My Lord, what you did suf - fer was all for sin - ners' gain;  
3 What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank you, dear - est Friend,

now scorn - ful - ly sur - round - ed with thorns, your on - ly crown.  
mine, mine was the trans - gres - sion, but yours the dead - ly pain.  
for this, your dy - ing sor - row, your mer - cy with - out end?

O sa - cred head, what glo - ry and bless - ing you have known!  
So here I kneel, my Sav - ior, for I de - serve your place;  
Lord, make me yours for - ev - er, a loy - al ser - vant true,

Yet, though de - spised and gor - y, I claim you as my own.  
look on me with your fa - vor and save me by your grace.  
and let me nev - er, nev - er out - live my love for you.

Words: Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676); sts. 1-3, 5, tr. Robert Seymour Bridges (1844-1930); st. 4, tr. James Waddell Alexander (1804-1859), alt. Music: *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* [Passion Chorale], Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612); adapt. And harm. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

## STATION ONE: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

### *Foyer*

*Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!"  
So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand be granted.*

***Luke 23:20,24***

Draw in close enough to hear. Jesus will die. The victim of a public, state-sanctioned execution, carried out not with hatred but with procedure. Not with violence but with paperwork. In John's account, Pilate finds no fault in Jesus and hands him over anyway. He was tired of wrestling with the truth. Tired of the soul-work of justice. We know this tiredness. We have felt it in ourselves.

Crite places this scene in a civic space: city buildings, hard lines, the cold machinery of ordinary life carrying out extraordinary harm. The condemnation of Jesus is not hidden in some distant religious past. It happens in public, under the cover of law and respectability. Too much of the cross is married, in our minds, to the lynching tree. We flinch from that connection. But we must not. Both tell the condemned: you do not matter here.

Many of us know condemning voices, from systems, from others, from deep within ourselves. The voice that says not enough. Jesus stands before his accusers fully himself, undimmed, and is condemned anyway. He stands with all who have ever been there.

### **PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*Where do condemning voices live in your own life, from others, from the world, from deep within yourself?*

*Where in our common life is someone being judged and discarded under the cover of procedure and order?*

*When have you grown too tired to refuse what you knew was wrong? Pray for courage in yourself and in those who hold power over others.*

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

## STATION TWO: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

### *Left rear of sanctuary by main doors*

*"And carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull."*

***John 19:17***

To take up one's cross demands we carry, with courage, burdens not of our choosing. The burden is not abstract. It is heavy. Public. Inescapable. The cross is the suffering of anyone who has ever told the truth to power and paid for it, who has named what the crowd would rather leave unnamed, and been handed over for it.

There is something the body knows before the mind can understand it. The weight is real. The wood is real. No amount of prayer dissolves it into something lighter. Jesus does not float above his suffering. He enters it, in his body, step by step. He remains present to himself even under

unbearable pressure. This is the portal of suffering that leads to victory, but we cannot know that yet.

There are burdens we carry by choice. There are those chosen for us. There are those we carry by call. The road of surrender and acceptance, in this moment, is his alone. This is true for us as well. Jesus is a constant companion. But that first yes begins with you. And still, Christ walks forward.

**PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*What burden are you carrying right now that you did not choose?*

*Where in our city, our nation, or our world do you see people crushed under weight they should never have had to bear?*

*Ask God for grace not to turn away, from your own pain, or from the pain of others.*

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

**STATION THREE: SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS**

*Left rear of sanctuary*

*“As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.”*

**Luke 23:26**

Simon was on his way somewhere else entirely when the cross was laid upon him. He did not volunteer. He was compelled. And in that compulsion - something holy. The divine meets us not in our prepared spaces but in the detour. Simon came from Cyrene, a city on the North African coast, a man of African descent, seized by Roman soldiers and forced to carry the cross of a condemned man. That this man becomes the one who helps bear the weight of salvation is not incidental. The gospel testifies that the cross has always been carried, in part, by those the empire considered expendable.

And Jesus? In utter exhaustion, he accepts this help. They walk together. This is the way of the cross: it is not solitary. Sometimes love looks like helping carry what is not yours to begin with. Sometimes discipleship means being interrupted, inconvenienced, drawn into another person's suffering. Love without service isn't love.

We all know what it is to need a Simon, and to be one. The burdens we carry alone that were never meant to be carried alone. The moments we walked past someone who needed our shoulders. Community is not formed in convenience. It is formed in the moment one person's suffering becomes another's responsibility.

**PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*Who has been your Simon, the unexpected person who showed up and helped carry what you could not carry alone?*

*Is there someone in your life, or in your community, whose burden you have walked past?  
Are there burdens you have been carrying alone, afraid to ask for help? Pray for the courage to let someone in.  
Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

## **STATION FOUR: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM** *Left front side chapel*

*“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”*

**Luke 23:28**

He is on his way to die, and he stops to comfort them, turning toward the grief of others. These women are not spectators. They are witnesses with a history, women who walked with Jesus, funded his ministry, stayed when the disciples scattered. Some New Testament scholars argue that Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed woman who anoints Jesus are one composite figure whose leadership was fragmented across the tradition. Whether one woman or many, what the gospels will not let us forget is this: they were leaders, disciples of standing, women whose participation was given the stamp of approval by Jesus himself.

Jesus turns to them on the road to Calvary and honors their grief, then deepens it. Do not weep only for me, he says. Weep for what violence does to a city, to a generation, to a future. He teaches them how to endure the kind of suffering that marks only the beginning of a long journey ahead.

Our mourning, our grief – it is a sacrament. We all carry it: broken relationships, health fears, losses that haven’t been given permission to be named. Lamentation is not weakness. It is the appropriate response. We mourn to endure. We lament to press on in hope.

### **PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*What grief are you carrying right now that has not yet been given permission to be named?*

*What suffering - in your city, your nation, your world - have you grown numb to because it costs too much to keep feeling it?*

*Bring both griefs before God. Let the personal and the collective be one prayer.*

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

## **STATION FIVE: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS** *Left side of main altar*

*“After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him.  
Then they led him away to crucify him.”*

**Matthew 27:31**

Consider what Jesus had already done the night before: he stood at the table, removed his outer robe, tied a towel around himself, and bent low to wash his disciples' feet. He had already chosen vulnerability. He knew what it was to strip away the garments of status and kneel in service. Now that stripping is forced upon him, designed to produce shame, to render his body the site of humiliation.

And yet, the body is a bearer of the sacred, not in spite of its vulnerability, but through it. There is something in Jesus that the stripping cannot touch. There is an inward place that oppression cannot fully colonize. You cannot be named out of your own dignity. You can be harmed. You cannot be erased.

Many of us know this station intimately. The loss of a job, a relationship, a diagnosis, a role we'd built our identity around, a lifelong hidden struggle. The moment we are seen in our weakness and fear what that means. This station holds all of it. Help us to maintain our dignity, Lord – a truth that stands when we have nothing left to lose.

### **PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*Where do you feel exposed, ashamed, vulnerable, or stripped of something you depended on?*

*Who in our world is being stripped of dignity, safety, or shelter by systems that were designed to do exactly that?*

*What remains in you when everything else is taken? Sit with that question.*

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

## **STATION SIX: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

### ***Right side of main altar***

*“There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.”*

***John 19:18***

This is the moment when we want to look away. And we must not. The body of Jesus is pinned, exposed, wounded. The violence is not metaphorical. It is bodily – nerve and bone and blood. The cross is a tool of empire, designed to terrorize and control – to make public spectacle of what happens to those who resist. It is not different in kind from the lynching tree. Both say to the crowd: see what power does. Both say to the condemned: you do not matter here. This station draws near to all who know what it is to have their body treated as a site of punishment.

And yet. The cross is also the personal and political use of love. Jesus enters the wound rather than standing outside it. He absorbs the full violence of empire and does not become empire. He is nailed to the tree of cruelty and turns it, in his body, into the tree of life. That is the terrible beauty of the cross.

We come to this station carrying our own bodily knowledge – illness, exhaustion, the places where we feel pinned down with no apparent exit. Jesus meets us there. Not to explain it. To enter it with us.

## **PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*Where in your own body or life do you feel pinned down, with no apparent exit?*

*Where do you see bodies treated as sites of punishment in our world today?*

*Pray for yourself in your place of confinement. Pray for those whose confinement was chosen for them by someone else.*

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

## **STATION SEVEN: JESUS DIES**

***Front right corner of sanctuary***

*“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last.*

***Luke 23:46***

Were you there when he hung his head and died? O’ sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

The world did not stop. That is the hardest part. In Crite’s rendering, the city remains. The buildings hold their shape. The ordinary machinery of living keeps turning. And yet everything has changed. The curtain tears. The centurion turns. Something has broken open that cannot be sealed again. Jesus sends his spirit to its home, the final free act of a man no empire could ultimately claim.

We, the community, his community, have come to lament. He loved us until the end. No productivity, no optimism, no religious language can rescue us here. We stay at the foot of the cross, in the silence after the last breath, with everything we cannot fix, in our own lives and in the life of the world. God’s response to death is life. But we are not there yet.

## **PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*What in your own life needs to be released, surrendered, or buried before something new can come?*

*What in our common life is death-dealing and must be named truthfully before God?*

*Pray for all who are dying. Pray for all who are keeping vigil, beside a body, beside a dream, beside a way of life that is ending.*

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

## **STATION EIGHT: JESUS’ BODY IS PLACED IN THE ARMS OF MARY**

***Right rear corner of sanctuary***

*“And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”*

***Luke 2:35***

From the beginning, Simeon told her: a sword will pierce your own soul too. She said yes to the angel not knowing what yes would cost. She said yes anyway. And now she holds what yes has brought her – the body of her child, in her arms. Mary’s call is to the cross. It has been from the very beginning. At the cross, she radically and powerfully gives us Jesus. She is the singing line that connects us to his love.

She does not collapse. She holds. What stays in the presence of death, what refuses to leave even when there is nothing left to do – it is the most radical thing there is. Mary becomes the image of all who hold unbearable loss, every mother who has buried a child taken too soon, every family handed a body and told to be grateful they got it back at all.

Many of us are holding losses we have not had permission to name, grief tucked away because life kept moving, because others needed us, because we didn’t know how to begin. This station gives us permission. Help us, Lord, to hold what must be held.

### **PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*What loss are you holding that has not had space or permission to be grieved?*

*Who in your community, or in the wider world, is holding unbearable loss right now with no one beside them?*

*Sit with Mary. Ask God to hold what you cannot. Ask God to hold what they cannot.*

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

## **STATION NINE: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB**

### ***Right rear of sanctuary***

*“Then he took the body down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid.”*

***Luke 23:53***

Christ’s final stillness does not resolve the sorrow – it deepens it. The body of Jesus is wrapped, carried, and laid in the earth. Joseph of Arimathea asks for the body. Nicodemus brings spices. The women follow, watch, see where he is laid. These acts of care are liturgy – the quiet, unglamorous work of love when there is nothing left to do but tend what remains. No one is watching. And still they come.

The tomb is the place where all our activity ends – where words run out, where we cannot fix what has happened. Holy Saturday begins in the discipline of not turning away. We stay with Christ in silence. We stay with all that feels buried, unresolved, and beyond repair – in our own lives, and in the life of the world we share.

Death does not get the final word. God’s response to death is life. God wastes nothing. Today we choose to have faith in that. But it is not yet morning. We depart in silence and pray for the work of restoration to begin.

**PRAY AND REFLECT:**

*What grief or fear in your own life have you not yet allowed yourself to face?*

*What in our common life feels buried — unresolved, beyond repair, beyond hope?*

*Entrust both to God. Sit in silence. Remain here as long as you need.*

*Silence.*

God's response to death is life.

God wastes nothing.

We depart in silence and pray for the work of restoration to begin.

*Images from the work of Allan Rohan Crite  
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The Episcopal Church of All Saints and Ascension  
St. Peter's Chelsea – Holy Week 2026*

## WELCOME TO ST. PETER'S CHELSEA!

We're so glad that you joined us today! Please sign up for our email newsletter at [www.stpeterschelsea.org](http://www.stpeterschelsea.org), follow us on Instagram and Facebook @stpeterschelsea and find out more ways to get connected.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE & POTLUCK BRUNCH, Sunday, April 5.** All are welcome for our Easter service at 10 am as we gather as a community and celebrate the joy of the resurrection. After the worship service, there will be an egg decorating party for the children, and a potluck brunch in the rectory. It's not too late to join us for brunch. Email [rsvp@stpeterschelsea.org](mailto:rsvp@stpeterschelsea.org) and let us know what dish you'll bring to share!

**Family Table, Next Sunday, April 12.** Please join us for our next Family Table. Immediately after the worship service on April 12, we will gather as a community to check-in and Christine will share updates about our church finances and capital campaign.

**Thinking Faithfully: A Field Guide for Real Life, taught by the Rev. Dr. Michael DeLashmutt, Sundays, April 19, April 26, from 11:30-12:30 pm in the Rectory.** *Thinking Faithfully* is a multi-week class that makes Christian theology accessible, practical, and deeply connected to everyday life. We'll explore theology not as abstract theory for specialists, but as the language Christians already use to name what we know of God through prayer, worship, Scripture, and shared life.

**Celebration of a New Season, Friday, April 24 at 7 pm.** Join us as we gather to celebrate a new season in the life of St. Peter's with the institution of Christine as Rector and the appointment of Lisha as Associate Rector. In the Episcopal Church, the transition to a rectorate signals that a congregation has reached a new level of maturity and permanence, becoming more fully the church God is calling us to be with clearer identity, stronger leadership, and a deepening sense of shared mission. Bishop Matthew Heyd and Bishop Allen Shin will celebrate with us and commission the entire congregation for the season ahead. All are welcome. Please RSVP to [rsvp@stpeterschelsea.org](mailto:rsvp@stpeterschelsea.org) by April 19.

**Lord of the Rings Marathon at St. Peter's, May 1-2.** You are cordially invited to join the Fellowship on a two-day sojourn through Middle Earth! Hobbit-themed food will be provided, so just bring a lawn chair or blanket and get ready for the ultimate cinematic adventure. Stay for the whole journey from the Shire and back again, or come and go like Gandalf as you attend to other matters. The adventure awaits! RSVP to [gandalf@stpeterschelsea.org](mailto:gandalf@stpeterschelsea.org).

Movie Times: Friday, May 1 at 5:30 pm, *The Fellowship of the Ring* | Saturday, May 2 at 9 am, *The Two Towers* | Saturday, May 2 at 2 pm, *The Return of the King*

**Confirmation and Reception at the Cathedral, Saturday, June 6.** Are you interested in being confirmed or received in the Episcopal Church at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine? If so, please email Christine at [cee@stpeterschelsea.org](mailto:cee@stpeterschelsea.org) for more information.

**Please visit our website for a full list of our events and weekly gatherings:  
[www.stpeterschelsea.org/connect](http://www.stpeterschelsea.org/connect)**

Cover art is "Good Friday" by Brittany Fan

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The Reverend Christine Lee, *Priest-in-Charge* | The Reverend Lisha Epperson, *Assistant Priest*  
For more info, contact [office@stpeterschelsea.org](mailto:office@stpeterschelsea.org) or visit [www.stpeterschelsea.org](http://www.stpeterschelsea.org) | Contact our Vestry at [vestry@stpeterschelsea.org](mailto:vestry@stpeterschelsea.org)