



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CLEVELAND

APRIL 3, 2026
GOOD FRIDAY
12:15 PM Sanctuary Worship

* OPENING SENTENCE Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams
(As you are able please stand)

Christ Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross
so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.

Blessed is the name of the Lord.

* PRAYER FOR GOOD FRIDAY

Almighty God, look with mercy on your family,
for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed
and to be given over to the hands of sinners,
and to suffer death on the cross;
who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

* HYMN *(See Insert)*

Ah, Holy Jesus

HERZLIEBSTER JESU

* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Holy One, our strength in suffering and our hope for salvation,
lift up your Word of life and pour out your Spirit of grace
so that we may follow faithfully all the way to the cross;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

THE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture Isaiah 52:13–53:12(The Inclusive Bible)

“You will prosper, my Servant,
you will be raised up and highly exalted.

Even as the crowds were appalled after seeing you—
you were so disfigured as to no longer look human—

so will the crowds be shocked at you;
and rulers will stand speechless before you;
for they will see something never told
and witness something never heard:

Who would have believed what we have just heard?
When was the arm of YHWH revealed in you?

You grew up like a sapling before us,
like a root in parched soil!
You had no stately form or majesty to make us look at you,
there was no beauty to attract us.

You were rejected and despised by all;
you know suffering intimately, and you are acquainted with sickness.
When we saw you, we turned our faces away;
we despised you and did not value you.

Yet you bore our illnesses
and carried our suffering.
We thought you were being punished,
struck down by God, and brought low—

but it was for our offenses that you were pierced,
for our sins that you were crushed;
upon you lies a chastening that brings us wholeness,
and through your wounds we are healed.

All of us, like sheep, have gone astray;
each of us goes our own way.
But YHWH has laid upon you
the guilt of us all.

Though treated harshly, you bore it humbly
and never opened your mouth.
Like a lamb being led to the slaughter,
or a sheep before shearers,
you were silent and never opened your mouth.

Seized by force and condemned, you were taken away;
who would ever have foreseen your destiny?
You were taken from the land of the living
through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment.

You were buried with evil doers
and entombed with the rich,
though you had done no wrong,
and deceit was not found in your mouth.

But YHWH chose to crush and afflict you;
if you make yourself a reparation offering,
you will see your descendants, you will prolong your days,
and the will of YHWH will prevail through you.

Through your suffering,
you will see contentment and light.
By your knowledge, my Righteous One, my Servant,
you will justify many by taking their guilt upon yourself.

Therefore, I will grant you a reward among the great,
and you will divide the spoils with the mighty;
for you exposed yourself to death itself,
and allowed yourself to be counted among criminals,
while you bore the guilt of many,
and interceded for sinners.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 22 (Congregation joins in the response.)

My God, my God, why have you a - ban - doned me?

Capo 5: (Dm⁶) Gm⁶ (Am/C) Dm/F (Bm⁷(b⁵)) Em⁷(b⁵) (Cmaj⁷) Fmaj⁷ (Dm⁷) Gm⁷ (Em) Am (Am) Dm

All who see me scoff at me; They mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
“He relied on the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, if he loves him.”

Indeed, many dogs surround me, a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
They have pierced my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.

They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O Lord, be not far from me; O my help, hasten to aid me.

I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
“You who fear the Lord, praise him; all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!”



After Jesus had said all this, he left with the disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. There was a garden there, and Jesus and his disciples entered it. Judas, the traitor, knew the place well, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. Judas led the Roman cohort to the place, along with some Temple guards sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees. All were armed and carried lanterns and torches. Then Jesus, aware of everything that was going to take place, stepped forward and said to them, “Who are you looking for?” “Are you Jesus of Nazareth.” they asked. Jesus said, “I am.” Now Judas, the traitor, was with them. When Jesus said, “I am” they all drew back and fell to the ground. Again, Jesus asked them, “Who are you looking for?” They replied, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said, “I have already told you that I am the one you want. If I am the one you’re looking for, let the others go.”

This was to fulfill what he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me, I have not lost a single one.” Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s attendant, cutting off his right ear. The name of the attendant was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back in its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup Abba God has given me?”

Then the cohort and its captain and the Temple guards seized and bound Jesus. They took him first to Annas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Temple authorities that it was better to have one person die on behalf of the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. This disciple, who was known to the high priest, entered his courtyard with Jesus, while Peter hung back at the gate. So the disciple known to the high priest went back and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter inside. The doorkeeper said, “Aren’t you one of this guy’s followers?” But Peter answered, “No, I’m not.” Now the night was cold, so the attendants and guards had lit a charcoal fire and were warming themselves. Peter was with them as well, keeping warm.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, “I have spoken publicly to everyone; I have always taught in synagogues and in the Temple area where the whole Jewish people congregates. I have said nothing in secret. So why do you question me? Ask those who have heard me. Ask them what I said to them—they know what I said.” When Jesus said this, one of the guards standing by slapped him and said, “Is this how you answer the high priest?” “If I have said anything wrong,” Jesus replied, “point it out; but if I’m right in what I said, why do you strike me?”

Then Annas sent him, still shackled, to Caiaphas the high priest.

Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. Others asked him, “Aren’t you one of his disciples?” But Peter denied it, saying, “I am not!” One of the attendants of the high priest, a relative of the attendant whose ear Peter had severed, spoke up: “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?” Again Peter denied it. At that moment a rooster crowed.

At daybreak, they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium. The Temple authorities did not enter the Praetorium, for they would have become ritually unclean and unable to eat the Passover seder. So Pilate went out to them and asked, "What charges do you bring against this person?" They responded, "We wouldn't have brought him to you if he weren't a criminal." Pilate told them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him by your own Law." The Temple authorities replied, "We don't have the power to put anyone to death." This was to fulfill what Jesus had said about the way he was going to die.

So Pilate reentered the Praetorium and summoned Jesus. "Are you the King of the Jews?" asked Pilate. Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own accord, or have others told you about me?" Pilate replied, "Am I Jewish? It is your own people and the chief priests who hand you over to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My realm is not of this world; if it belonged to this world, my people would have fought to keep me out of the hands of the Temple authorities. No, my realm is not of this world." Pilate said, "So you are a King?" Jesus replied, "You say I'm a king. I was born and came into the world for one purpose—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who seeks the truth hears my voice." "Truth? What is truth?" asked Pilate.

With that, Pilate went outside and spoke to the people. "I find no guilt in him," he said. "But according to your custom, I always release a prisoner at the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the King of the Jews'?" They shouted, "Not him! We want Barabbas!" Barabbas was a robber.

So Pilate ordered that Jesus be flogged. Then the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe. They went up to him repeatedly and said, "All hail, the King of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face. Pilate came outside once more and said to the crowd, "Look, I'll bring him out here to make you understand that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns, and Pilate said, "Look upon the one you accuse!" When the chief priests and the Temple guards saw Jesus, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate told them, "Do it yourself. I find no reason to condemn him." "We have a law," the Temple authorities replied. "that says he ought to die because he claimed to be the Only Begotten of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. He went back into the Praetorium and asked Jesus, "Where do you come from?" Jesus didn't answer. Then Pilate said to Jesus, "You refuse to speak? Bear in mind that I have power to release you—and the power to crucify you." "You would have no authority over me," Jesus replied, "unless it had been given to you by God. Therefore the person who handed me over to you has the greater sin." Upon hearing this Pilate attempted to set Jesus free. But the crowd shouted, "If you set him free, you're no 'friend of Caesar!' Anyone who claims to be a king defies Caesar!"

Hearing these words, Pilate took Jesus outside and seated himself on the judge's seat at a place called the Pavement, "Gabbatha," in Hebrew. Now it was almost noon on Preparation Day for the Passover. Pilate said to the people "Here is your King!" "Take him away!" They shouted. "Take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate asked, "Do you want me to crucify your King?" The chief priests said, "We have no king but Caesar." Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, carrying his own cross, to what is called the Place of the Skull—in Hebrew, "Golgotha." There they crucified him, along with two others, one on either side of Jesus. Pilate wrote a notice and had it put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The notice, in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, was read by many of the people, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. The chief priests said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate replied, "I have written what I have written." After the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothing and divided it into four pieces, one piece for each soldier. They also took the seamless robe. The soldiers said to one another, "Let's not tear it. We can throw dice to see who will get it." This happened in order to fulfill the scripture,

"They divided my garments among them and,
for my clothing, they cast lots."

And this is what they did.

Standing close to Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Here is your son." Then he said to his disciple, "Here is your mother." From that moment, the disciple took her into his household.

After this, Jesus knew that now all was completed, and to fulfill scripture perfectly, he said, "I am thirsty." There was a jar of cheap wine nearby, so they put a sponge soaked in the wine on a hyssop stick and raised it to his lips. Jesus took the wine and said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was Preparation Day, the Temple authorities asked Pilate to let them break the legs of those crucified, and take their bodies from the crosses. They requested this to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross during the Sabbath, since that particular Sabbath was a solemn feast day. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of first one and then the other who had been crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they found that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced Jesus' side with a lance, and immediately blood and water poured out. This testimony has been given by an eyewitness whose word is reliable; the witness knows that this testimony is the truth, so that you will believe. These things were done to fulfill the scripture, "Not one of his bones will be broken." And again another scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus,—but a secret one, for fear of the of the Temple authorities, asked Pilate for permission to remove the body of Jesus, and Pilate granted it. So Joseph came and took it away. Nicodemus came as well—the same one who had come to Jesus by night,—and he brought about 100 pounds of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the Jewish burial custom.

There was a garden in the place where Jesus had been crucified, and in the garden was a new tomb where no one had ever been buried. Since it was the day before the Sabbath and the tomb was nearby, they buried Jesus there.

PASTOR'S REFLECTION

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

SOLO

Zerfließe, mein Herz

J.S Bach

Val Sibila, soprano

Zerfliesse, mein Herze, in Fluten der Zähren
Dem Höchsten zu Ehren!
Erzähle der Welt und dem Himmel die Not:
Dein Jesus ist tot!

Dissolve, my heart, into floods of tears
To honor the Most High!
Report to the world and to heaven the distress:
Your Jesus is dead!

THE SOLEMN INTERCESSION

Beloved people of God,
as Jesus stretched out his arms on the cross
to offer life and salvation to all,
let us pray for the world that God loves so much.

Let us pray for the church throughout the world.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,
you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ.
By your Holy Spirit, guide the church
and gather it throughout the world.
Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your name,
and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for this presbytery and congregation.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,
your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy.
Strengthen and uphold pastors and other leaders;
keep them in health and safety for the good of the church.
Help each of us to do faithfully the work to which you have called us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for those preparing for baptism.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,
you continue to bless the church with new members.
Increase the faith and understanding
of those preparing for baptism.
Give them new birth as your children.
Keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church.
Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith
and keep us united in the fellowship of love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for people of other faiths.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace
all those who call out to you under different names.
Bring an end to interreligious strife,
and make us more faithful in our witness
to the love made known to us in your Son.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for those who cannot believe.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,
you created humanity so that all might long to know you
and find peace in you.
Grant that all may recognize signs of your love and grace
in the world and in the lives of Christians,
and gladly acknowledge you as the one true God.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for God's creation.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,
you are the creator of a magnificent universe.
Hold this world in the arms of your care,
heal the damage we have done,
and bring all things to fulfillment in you.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for the leaders and people of all nations.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,
you are the champion of the poor and the oppressed.
In your goodness, give wisdom to those in authority
so that people everywhere may enjoy justice, peace, freedom,
and a share in the goodness of your creation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for all who suffer or are in need.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,
you give strength to the weary
and new courage to those who have lost heart.
Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble
that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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 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.

SOLEMN REPROACHES OF THE CROSS

This is the cross
that held the Savior of the world.

Come, let us worship God.

This is the cross
that held the Savior of the world.

Come, let us worship God.

This is the cross
that held the Savior of the world.

Come, let us worship God.

O my people, O my church,
what more could I have done for you?
Answer me!

I led you out of slavery into freedom,
and delivered you through the waters of rebirth,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

Forty years I led you through the desert,
feeding you with manna on the way;
I saved you from the time of trial
and gave you my body, the bread of heaven,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I led you on your way in a pillar of cloud and fire,
but you led me to the judgment hall of Pilate;
I guided you by the light of the Holy Spirit,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I planted you as my fairest vineyard,
but you brought forth bitter fruit;
I made you branches of the vine
and never left your side,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I poured out saving water from the rock,
but you gave me cheap wine to drink;
I poured out my life
and gave you the new covenant in my blood,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I gave you a royal scepter,
but you gave me a crown of thorns;
I gave you the Kingdom
and crowned you with eternal life,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I struck down your enemies,
but you struck my head with a reed;
I gave you my peace,
but you draw the sword in my name,
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I opened the waters
to lead you to the promised land,
but you opened my side with a spear;
I washed your feet as a sign of my love,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I lifted you up to the heights,
but you lifted me high on the cross;
I raised you from death
and prepared for you the tree of life,
but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I grafted you into my people Israel,
but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt,
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

I was hungry and you gave me no food,
thirsty and you gave me no drink,
a stranger and you did not welcome me,
naked and you did not clothe me,
sick and in prison and you did not visit me,
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.

All depart in silence.

Please join us at The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland on Easter Day,
April 5, 2026 The Day of Resurrection at 10 AM in the Sanctuary.

The Reverend Stephen C. Blonder Adams, preaching.