

First Presbyterian Church

Palm/Passion Sunday

March 24, 2024 • 10:30 a.m.



Embodying Christ's inclusive love through heart, mind, and service

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Oak Ridge, Tennessee
A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
March 24, 2024 • Palm/Passion Sunday

**Please stand in body or in spirit.*

You are invited to lay your palm branches in the center aisle as you are seated.

Prelude

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Evangelist: Jesus had finished teaching in parables and began the ascent to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called Olivet, he sent two of his disciples with these instructions:

Jesus: Go to the village opposite; as you enter it, you will find tethered there a colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks why you are untying it, say, "Our Master has need of it."

Evangelist: The two went on their errand and found it as Jesus had told them. While they were untying the colt, its owners asked:

Congregation: ***Why are you untying that colt?***

Evangelist: They answered as Jesus had told them. Afterward, they brought the colt to Jesus. Then they threw their cloaks on the colt, for Jesus to mount, and they carpeted the road with them as he went on his way. The whole company of disciples in their joy began to sing aloud the praises of God for all the great things they had seen:

Congregation: ***Behold, our King comes to us, bringing salvation and peace.
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!***

***Processional Hymn 196** *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*

Welcome

Call to Confession

Litany of Confession *(adapted from Psalm 51)*

We confess that we have sinned, O God, and done what is evil in your sight.

We know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.

Deliver us, O God. *(silence)*

We have been unfaithful to you and unwilling to stand with those in distress.

Deliver us, O God. *(silence)*

Our lips have remained sealed when called to share your word of justice and peace.

Deliver us, O God. *(silence)*

Have mercy on us, according to your steadfast love.

Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

***Restore to us the joy of your salvation and sustain in us a willing spirit;
through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.***

Assurance of Grace

***The Peace of Christ**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

***Sung Response** *(sing twice)*

We are forgiven. We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ

(continued)

Evangelist: When Jesus came in sight of Jerusalem, he wept over it and said:

Jesus: If only you had known, on this great day, the way that leads to peace. But no, it is hidden from your sight. For a time will come upon you when your enemies will set up siege-works against you, because you did not recognize God's moment when it came.

(silence)

Evangelist: Day by day, Jesus taught in the temple. And the chief priests and lawyers were bent on making an end of him, with the support of the leading citizens, but found they were helpless, because the people all hung upon his words.

One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and telling them the good news, the priests and lawyers came upon him and accosted him.

Congregation: *Tell us by what authority you are acting like this. Who gave you this authority?*

Jesus: I have a question to ask you, too: Tell me, was the baptism of John from God or from humans?

Congregation: *If we say, "From God," he will say, "Why did you not believe him?" If we say, "From humans," the people will stone us, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.*

Evangelist: So they replied that they could not tell. And Jesus said to them:

Jesus: Then neither will I tell you by what authority I act.

(silence)

Evangelist: Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, known as Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the doctors of the law were trying to devise some means of doing away with Jesus, for they were afraid of the people.

Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the Twelve. Judas went to the chief priests to discuss ways and means of putting Jesus into their power. They were greatly pleased and undertook to pay him a sum of money. He agreed, and began to look out for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

(silence)

Evangelist: Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover victim had to be slaughtered. Jesus sent Peter and John with these instructions:

Jesus: Go and prepare for our Passover supper.

Peter and John: Where would you like us to make the preparations?

Jesus: As soon as you set foot in the city, a man will meet you carrying a jar of water. Follow him into the house he enters. The householder will show you a large room upstairs. Make the preparations there.

Evangelist: They went and found everything as he had said. When the time came, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them:

Jesus: How I have longed to eat this Passover with you before my death! For I tell you, never again will I eat it until the time when it finds its fulfillment in the kingdom of God.

Evangelist: Then Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. He gave it to them with the words:

Jesus: This is my body.

Evangelist: He took a cup, and after giving thanks he said:

Jesus: Take this and share it among yourselves, for I tell you, from this moment I shall drink from the fruit of the vine no more until the time when the kingdom of God comes.

(silence)

Hymn 500

Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread
(first verse, choir; second verse, all)

Evangelist: Then Jesus went out and made his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, accompanied by his disciples. When he reached the place, he said to them:

Jesus: Pray that you may be spared the hour of testing.

Evangelist: He himself withdrew from them and began to pray:

Jesus: Father, if it be your will, take this cup from me. Yet not my will but yours be done.

Evangelist: And now there appeared to him an angel from heaven bringing him strength, and in anguish of spirit he prayed the more urgently. His sweat was like clots of blood falling to the ground.

Call to Prayer *(sing twice)*

***O Lord, hear my prayer. O lord, hear my prayer. When I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.***

Prayers of the People with The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Evangelist: When Jesus rose from prayer and came to his disciples, he found them asleep, worn out by grief.

Jesus: Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may be spared the test.

Evangelist: While he was still speaking, a crowd appeared with the man called Judas. He came up to Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said:

Jesus: Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

Evangelist: When his followers saw what was coming, they said:

Congregation: Lord, shall we use our swords?

Evangelist: And one of them struck at the High Priest's servant, cutting off his right ear.
But Jesus answered:

Jesus: Let them have their way.

Evangelist: Then Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him. Turning to the chief priest, he said:

Jesus: Do you take me for a bandit, that you have come out with swords and cudgels to arrest me? Day after day when I was in the temple with you, you kept your hands off me. But this is your moment – the hour when darkness reigns.

(silence)

Evangelist: They arrested Jesus and led him away. They brought him to the High Priest's house. Peter followed at a distance. They lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it. Peter sat among them. A serving maid stared at him and said:

Serving Maid: This man was with him, too.

Peter: Woman, I do not know him.

Evangelist: A little later, someone else noticed him and said:

Someone Else: You also are one of them.

Peter: No, I am not.

Evangelist: About an hour passed and another spoke more strongly still:

Another: Of course this fellow was with him. He must have been because he is a Galilean.

Peter: I am telling you. I do not know what you are talking about!

Evangelist: At that moment, a cock crowed. Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Peter remembered the words of Jesus, "Tonight, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times."

(silence)

Evangelist: When day broke, the elders of the nation, chief priests, and the doctors of the law assembled. Jesus was brought before the council. They said:

Congregation: Tell us, are you the Messiah?

Jesus: If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I ask you questions, you will not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of Almighty God.

Congregation: Are you the Son of God, then?

Jesus: It is you who say I am.

Congregation: Need we call further witnesses? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.

Evangelist: They brought Jesus before Pilate. Pilate asked him:

Pilate: Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus: The words are yours.

Evangelist: Pilate then said to the chief priests and the crowd:

Pilate: I find no cause for this man to answer.

Evangelist: But they insisted:

Congregation: His teaching is causing disaffection among the people all through Judea. It started from Galilee and has spread as far as this city.

Evangelist: Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased. He had long been wanting to see him, and had been hoping to see some miracle performed by him. He questioned Jesus at some length without getting any reply. Then Herod and his troops treated him with contempt and ridicule. They sent him back to Pilate, dressed in a gorgeous robe.

(silence)

Evangelist: Pilate now called together the chief priests, councilors, and people, and said to them:

Pilate: You brought this man before me on a charge of subversion. But, as you see, I have myself examined him in your presence and found nothing in him to support your charges. Clearly he has done nothing to deserve death. I therefore propose to let him off with a flogging.

Evangelist: And there was a general outcry:

Congregation: *Away with him! Give us Barabbas!*

Evangelist: Pilate addressed them again, in his desire to release Jesus, but they shouted back:

Congregation: *Crucify him! Crucify him!*

Evangelist: For the third time he spoke to them:

Pilate: Why? What wrong has he done? I have not found him guilty of any capital offense. I will therefore let him off with a flogging.

Evangelist: But they insisted on their demand. Their shouts prevailed and Pilate decided that they should have their way. He released Barabbas, and gave Jesus up to their will.

(silence)

Anthem

O Sacred Head

Leaf

Evangelist: As they led him away to execution, they seized upon a man called Simon, from Cyrene, put the cross on his back, and made him walk behind Jesus carrying it.

Two others were with Jesus, criminals who were being led away to execution. When they reached the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus there, and the criminals with him, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said:

Jesus: Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.

Evangelist: They divided his clothes among them by casting lots. The people stood looking on, and their rulers jeered at him:

Congregation: *He saved others; now let him save himself if this is God's Messiah, God's chosen.*

Evangelist: The soldiers joined in the mockery and came forward offering him their sour wine.

Choir: If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!

Evangelist: There was an inscription above his head that said: "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who hung there with Jesus taunted him:

Criminal #1: Are not you the Messiah? Save yourself, and us!

Evangelist: But the other rebuked the first:

Criminal #2: Have you no fear of God? You are under the same sentence as he. For us it is plain justice; but this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus, remember me when you come to your throne.

Jesus: I tell you this: Today you shall be with me in paradise.

Hymn 227

***Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.***

(silence)

Evangelist: By now it was midday. A darkness fell over the whole land, which lasted until three in the afternoon. The sun's light failed. The curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus gave a loud cry and said:

Jesus: Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Evangelist: And with these words, he died. The centurion saw it all, and gave praise to God:

Centurion: Truly, this was the Son of God.

Evangelist: The crowd that had assembled for the spectacle, when they saw what happened, went home beating their breasts.

(silence)

Stripping of the Chancel

*There is no benediction or postlude offered today as we begin Holy Week.
The service continues with Communion on Maundy Thursday.*



The flowers today are given by Roger Ryburn to the glory of God and in memory of his wife.



Announcements

—Thank you to Mimi Tilley for serving as our liturgist, and to the readers of the Passion Narrative. The narrative, which depicts the events of the last week of Jesus’ life, comes from selected chapters from the Gospels According to Mark and Luke (New English Bible).

—Our monthly Conversation on Loss, a group for anyone experiencing loss of any kind, meets in the parlor at 11:50 a.m. today for a potluck lunch (come even if you don’t have a dish to share; there’s always plenty). Topic: comfort during grief.

—The inaugural gathering of the Youth and Parents Lunch Bunch kicks off today at Panera Bread at 11:45 a.m.

—Coffee Chat gathers tomorrow, 9:30 a.m., in room 6 (adjacent to the sanctuary).

Our Holy Week Schedule:

—**Maundy Thursday, Mar. 28, 6:30 p.m.**—Communion service in the fellowship hall.

—**Good Friday, Mar. 29, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.**—self-guided prayer stations in the sanctuary and at the new labyrinth (weather permitting).

—**Easter Sunday, Mar. 31, 10:30 a.m.**—Worship will include brass, the Flowering of the Cross (please bring cut flowers, if possible), and Handel’s “Hallelujah” chorus. Our annual Easter egg hunt for the children will follow worship (having your own basket will be helpful).

—We will receive the **One Great Hour of Sharing** special offering on Easter. One of four annual special offerings of the PC(USA), the offering supports programs that provide food, clean water, disaster relief, and self-improvement tools to those who need it most around the world. You can give in person, mail a contribution to the church with “OGHS” on the memo line, or use the QR code below to give online. Thank you!

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church!

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here. We hope you feel the love that is present and our joy in having you with us. If you’d like to know more about First Presbyterian Church, let’s talk! Please speak with Sharon or any of the ushers after the service.

First Presbyterian Church—A PC(USA) Congregation

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❖ fpcor.org ❖ on Facebook at First Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, TN

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Sharon Youngs, Pastor Anna Thomas, Director of Music

Peggy Hinkle, Organist Madison Green, Office Manager

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