

Tenebrae

Holy Wednesday



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026
7:00PM IN-PERSON WORSHIP

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ROYAL OAK, MI

Everyone is Welcome! Everyone Belongs!



Welcome! We are St. John's, a parish that invites you to enter the open doors of our community and warmly embraces you when you do. At St. John's, our history has taught us that accepting and embracing true diversity is challenging. As a result, we have come to claim a firm, undying commitment to inclusion. So here is our invitation to you: regardless of your cultural background, ethnicity, gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or heterosexual identity, economic status, physical or cognitive ability – you will not be labeled, singled out or excluded here. You will be

welcomed, affirmed, embraced and celebrated! We will be better because you are here. *St. John's Welcome Statement - Adopted by unanimous vote at St. John's Annual Meeting, January 31, 2016*

Wednesday in Holy Week

Tenebrae, meaning “darkness” or “shadows”, is an ancient monastic service preceding The Three Days that begin on Maundy Thursday. It is a meditation upon the events in Jesus' life between the Last Supper and the Resurrection. In the service there is the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights until only a single candle remains. Toward the end of the service this candle is hidden to signify the apparent victory of evil. At the very end, a loud noise is made - symbolizing the earthquake at the time of the resurrection; the hidden candle is restored to its place, and by its light we depart.

Holy Week Services This Week – Every evening at 7:00pm

Maundy Thursday: Thursday, April 2 - 7 pm Eucharist

On the last night Jesus spent with his friends, he gave us the ‘commandment’ to love one another. We remember this night by gathering to receive Holy Eucharist and waiting in darkness as the altar is stripped (remembering the hours of Jesus' betrayal and arrest). Following the service, the church is open for meditation until 9:00pm. Children are especially welcome!

Good Friday: Friday, April 3 - 7 pm Holy Eucharist

On Good Friday, we remember Christ's suffering and death. We receive ‘reserved sacrament’ rather than a new Eucharist meal remembering that this was the day of Jesus' crucifixion and death.

Easter Vigil: Saturday, April 4 - 7 pm Lighting of the New Fire and Holy Eucharist

Our community gathers around the altar fire to hear the stories of God's work in our world, throughout history and in the present, through the great Salvation Stories. We celebrate the first hours of Resurrection with joy. It is a service of deep mystery, beauty, and darkness which is overcome by light. Children are especially welcome! Festive reception follows – if you like, bring cookies to share.

Easter Sunday: Sunday, April 5 - 8 am, 10:15 am Holy Eucharist

Bring bells to ring!

This service with Holy Eucharist proclaims the risen Christ, the fulfillment of hope, the triumph of justice, and the immortality of love. The children in our parish will celebrate with an easter egg hunt following the 10:15am service, and the flowers that adorn the altar will be delivered to our homebound parishioners.

PRELUDE

TENEBRAE

At the ringing of a bell, the people stand

OPENING PRAYERS

Presider †Grace to you and peace from the Lord Jesus Christ.

People **Amen.**

Presider For us and for our salvation, Christ gave himself for us.

People **Blessed be the name of the Lord.**

Presider Renew and strengthen us, eternal God

People **As we prepare for resurrection.**

Merciful God, your strength and courage pour forth to sustain the witness of your faithful people: Awaken in us the humility to serve wherever creation is broken and in need, that we may follow in the way of our brother, Jesus; die as he did to all that separates us from you; and be raised, as he was, to new life.

People **Amen.**

The people are seated for the readings and reflections

I. A READING FROM JOHN

John 12: 1-3

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

A Poem Written in the 16th Century

Kafir (c. 1440-1518)

what happens to the scale
when love
holds
it.

It
stops
working.

A bell rings to begin a moment of silence

Some of the young can project themselves into a Marshall Plan future where they laugh and link arms, reminiscing about the dark times.

From every spot-lit glitz tower with armed guards around it, some huckster pronounces his fiats, self-sacralized king, about the dark times.

In a tent, in a queue, near barbed wire, in a shipping container, please remember *ya akhy*, we too know something about the dark times.

Sindbad's roc, or Ganymede's eagle, some bird of rapacious ill omen from bleak skies descends, and wraps an enveloping wing about the dark times.

You come home from your meeting, your clinic, make coffee and look in the mirror And ask yourself once more what *you* did to bring about the dark times.

A bell rings to begin a moment of silence

INVITATION TO SILENT PRAYER

During a brief silence, reflect on where you may be trying to take things into your own hands rather than waiting and trusting.

A bell rings to end the silence

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Kyrie Eleison

The Hymnal 1982, S91

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp). The lyrics are: Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

⊕ The second candle is extinguished.

Leader Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” So when Judas came to the garden, he went up to Jesus at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. Then the guards laid hands on him and arrested him.

A period of silence is kept

III. A READING FROM MARK

Mark 10: 35-40, *New Living Translation*

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to Jesus. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do us a favor.” “What is your request?” he asked. They replied, “When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left.” But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?”

“Oh yes,” they replied, “we are able!”

Then Jesus told them, “You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. Those places have been prepared for the ones God has chosen.”

When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. So Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the servant of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

A READING FROM “Still Here”

by *Langston Hughes*

I been scared and battered.

My hopes the wind done scattered.

Snow has frizzed me.

Sun has baked me.

Looks like between them they done

Tried to make me

Stop laughin’, stop lovin’, stop livin’,

But I don’t care!

I’m still here!

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Softly and Tenderly Jesus is calling

Lift Every Voice and Sing, 101



1. Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing,
2. Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing,
3. Time is now fleet - ing, the mo - ments are pass - ing,
4. Oh! For the won - der - ful love He has prom - ised,



1. Call - ing for you and for me;— See, on the por - tals He's
2. Plead - ing for you and for me?— Why should we lin - ger and
3. Pass - ing for you and for me;— Shad - ows are gath - er - ing,
4. Prom - ised for you and for me;— Though we have sinned, He has



1. wait - ing and watch - ing, Watch - ing for you and for me.——
2. heed not His mer - cies, Mer - cies for you and for me?——
3. death beds are com - ing, Com - ing for you and for me.——
4. mer - cy and par - don, Par - don for you and for me.——



Come home, come home,



Ye who are wea-ry, come home!—— Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, Call - ing, O sin - ner, come home!——

⊕ **The third candle is extinguished.**

Leader

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

A period of silence is kept

IV. A READING FROM LUKE

Luke 23: 32-43

Two criminals were led away with Jesus to Golgatha, the Place of the Skull, so that all of them may be put to death. There they crucified Jesus with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing."

They cast lots to divide his clothing, and the people stood by, watching. But the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"

There was an inscription over him that read, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence? And we indeed have been condemned justly, and are getting what we deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

A READING FROM "You, if no one else"

by *Tino Villeneuve*

Listen, you who transformed your anguish into healthy awareness, put your voice where your memory is.

You who swallowed the afternoon dust, defend everything you understand with words.

You, if no one else, will condemn with your tongue the erosion each disappointment brings.

You, who saw the images of disgust growing, will understand how time devours the destitute; you, who gave yourself your own commandments, know better than anyone why you turned your back on your town's toughest limits.

Don't hush, don't throw away the most persistent truth, as our hard-headed brethren sometimes do.

Remember well what your life was like: cloudiness, and slick mud after a drizzle; flimsy windows the wind kept rattling in winter, and that unheated slab dwelling where coldness crawled up in your clothes.

Tell how you were able to come to this point, to unbar History's doors to see your early years, your people, the others. Name the way rebellion's calm spirit has served you, and how you came to unlearn the lessons of that teacher, your land's omnipotent defiler.

Remember how, from the first emptiness, you started saving yourself, and ask yourself what, after all, these words are good for in this round hour now where your voice strikes time.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

Were You There (*a cappella*)

Debbie Smith, Vocalist

MUSICAL REFRAIN

O how he loves you and me

Lift Every Voice and Sing II, 35

1. O how He loves you and me. _____
2. Je - sus to Cal - vary did go, _____

1. O how He loves you and me;
2. His love for the worlds to show; _____

1. He gave His life, what more could He give;
2. What He did there brought hope from de - spair;

1. O how He loves you, O how He loves me,
2. O how He loves you, O how He loves me,

1. O how He loves you and me. _____
2. O how He loves you and me. _____

⊕ **The fourth candle is extinguished.**

Leader When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Solemn silence is kept in which we remember the crucifixion and death of Jesus, and what appeared to be the victory of evil.

⊕ **The last candle is hidden.**

NOISE

A loud noise is made symbolizing the earthquake at Christ's resurrection. It invites us to imagine the confusion felt by his disciples as they discovered that Jesus was not in the tomb.

V. A READING FROM JOHN

John 19: 25-27, 28-30

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

SILENT REFLECTION ON UNCERTAINTY AND SEARCHING

A bell rings to begin a moment of silence

During a brief silence, offer this prayer: Lord Jesus, sometimes I am searching without finding what I'm looking for. Guide me to trust that I will find you even when I cannot see.

A bell rings to end the silence

MUSICAL REFRAIN

Within our darkest night

Taizé, 37

With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a -
way. With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way.

⊕ A single candle is then returned to the altar table signifying that the Light of the World triumphs over death.

VI. A READING FROM “Song of the Winding Sheet

by *Jan Richardson*

We never
would have wished it
to come to this,
yet we call
these moments holy
as we hold you.

Holy the tending,
holy the winding,
holy the leaving,
as in the living.

Holy the silence,
holy the stillness,
holy the turning
and returning to earth.

Blessed is the One
who came
in the name,
blessed is the One

who laid
himself down,

blessed is the One
emptied for us,

blessed is the One
wearing the shroud.

Holy the waiting,
holy the grieving,
holy the shadows
and gathering night

Holy the darkness,
holy the hours,
holy the hope
turning toward light.

CLOSING PRAYER

The people stand and pray together

Presider Let us Pray:
 Lord, it is night.
 The night is for stillness.
 Let us be still in the presence of God.
 What has been done has been done;
 what has not been done has not been done;
 let it be.
 The night is dark.
 Let the fears in our own lives
 rest in you.

People **Amen. And Amen. And Amen.**

The people leave in silence. You are invited to visit the Lenten Prayer Station on the side of the altar to reflect on anything you have seen or heard on this night.



Tenebrae Participants

Acolyte

Kevin McLogan

Greeters during service

Mary Fairman

Steve Fairman

Lectors

Rachel Andrews

Jonatan Ascarruz-Asencios

Cathy Holcomb

Sharon Kennedy

Rosemary Spatafora

Tyler Webb

James Lewis

Musicians

Dr. Steve McGhee, *Music Director*,

Debbie Smith, *Vocalist*

Opener/Closer

Chris Moran

Great Noise

Annalise Galat

Gregg Barnett

Tech Team

Laurie McLaughlin, Chris Bosley, Barbara Jones,

Tales Lima

Interim Rector

The Rev. Dr. Maryjane Peck