

GOOD FRIDAY

March 29, 2024

12:15 P.M.

*On this day the ministers enter in silence.
All are invited to join in a few moments of silent prayer,
after which the leader stands and begins the liturgy.*

GATHERING PRAYER

Blessed be our God,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, look with love and mercy upon your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and to be given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross. May the sanctifying power of your grace help us to put on the likeness of this same Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

EPISTLE READING

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

PSALM 22

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

**Why are you 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;
and by night, but I find no rest.

Yet you are the Holy One,

enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted;

they trusted and you delivered them.

To you they cried and were saved;

in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

But as for me, I am a worm and not human;

scorned by others and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me;

they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

"That one trusted in God, let God deliver –

let God rescue the one in whom God delights."

Yet it was you who took me out of the womb,

and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.

Since my birth I have been entrusted to you,

even in my mother's womb you were my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near,

and there is none other to help.

GOSPEL READING

John 19:1-16

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief

priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the church of Jesus Christ throughout the world:
For its unity in witness and service;
For all its ministers and the people whom they serve;
For all Christ's people in this community and this congregation;
That God will confirm our faith, increase our love, and preserve us in peace.

Silence

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and made holy: Receive the prayers we offer before you for all the members of your Church, that in their calling and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them;

For Joseph Biden, the President of the United States;

For the Congress, for Senators Peters and Stabenow, and Representative Hillary Scholten;

For the Supreme Court, and for all those responsible for the administration of justice;

For Gretchen Whitmer, our Governor;

For our State Senators and Representatives;

For the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners;

For Ken Johnson, Mayor of Muskegon and for the City Commissioners and staff;

For all state and local officials, in our counties, townships and municipalities;

For the leaders in other nations and other places;

For all who serve the common good;

That by God's grace they may seek justice and truth, and help us to live in peace and concord.

Silence

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility your dominion may increase, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind;

For the hungry and the homeless, the destitute and the oppressed;

For the sick, the wounded, and the crippled;

For those in loneliness, fear, and anguish;

For those who face temptation, doubt and despair;

For the sorrowful and bereaved;

For prisoners and captives, and those in mortal danger;

That the mercy of God will comfort and relieve them, grant them the knowledge of God's love, and stir up within us the will and patience to minister to their needs.

Silence

Gracious God, you are the comfort of those who grieve and the strength of those who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of Christ who suffered for us. **Amen.**

Let us pray for all who have not received the Gospel of God's love;
For those who have never heard the word of salvation;
For those who have lost their faith;
For those hardened by sin or indifference;
For the contemptuous and proud;
For those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and persecutors of Christ's disciples;
For those who in the name of Christ have persecuted others;
That God will open their hearts to love, their minds to truth, and lead them to faith and obedience.

Silence

Merciful God, you have created all the peoples of the earth, and look upon each of your children with love: Have compassion on those who do not yet know that love; let your Gospel be preached with grace and power to those who have not heard it; turn the hearts of those who resist it; and bring home to your fold those who have gone astray, that there may be one flock and one shepherd; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us 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.**

Those who wish may stand

HYMN

Those who wish may stand

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were an

Prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and
of - fering far too small; love so a - maz - ing,

count but loss, and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

BENEDICTION

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace:
So clothe us in your Spirit, that, reaching forth in love, we may reflect
your love to others.

Amen.

All are invited to depart in silence.



Today's Service

Rev. Tim Vander Haar
Dr. Michael Match
John Mattson
Blake Filius

Senior Pastor
Music Director
Organist
Audio and Video

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First Congregational Church, UCC is an Open and Affirming Community

"We, the people of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Muskegon, care for the welfare of our community and welcome everyone, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey. We welcome into our community people of every age, race, nationality, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing, family structure, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. We also invite you to share in the life, leadership, worship, fellowship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our congregation as we seek to grow together in faith and love."

Adopted by congregational vote 10/17/21