



Good Friday
A SERVICE OF TENEBRAE
A Dramatic Presentation of the Crucifixion
April 3, 2026
7:00 p.m.
Yoseb Jeon, Pastor | Mitch Samu, Pianist
First United Methodist Church of Freehold

The word “Tenebrae” comes from the Latin meaning “darkness”. The Tenebrae is an ancient Christian Good Friday service that makes use of gradually diminishing light through the extinguishing of candles to symbolize the events of that week from the triumphant Palm Sunday entry through Jesus’ burial.

Prelude: “He Never Said a Mumblin’ Word” Spiritual
Ken Budka, Soloist

Greetings

*Call To Worship

Leader: We gather tonight in the shadow of the Cross.

People: Evil abounds. Jesus goes forth to suffer and die.

Leader: How we tremble with fear!

People: How we weep.

Leader: Why have we forsaken Him?

People: Why have we betrayed and run from his Passion?

Leader: Lord, have mercy upon us.

People: Christ, have mercy upon us.

*Opening Prayer (In Unison):

Lord, we come before you in the approaching darkness of our souls. We have traveled this Lenten journey, overcoming and conquering barriers that have kept us from serving you in the midst of many challenges in our lives. We gathered at the gates of joy on Palm Sunday, and feasted at the Lord's Table yesterday. But today is a different story. We witness the arrest and trial of the Innocent Savior. We watch as he is moved brutally from place to place, to be judged by people who have hardened their hearts against you. The sorrow that we feel lies heavy upon us. Lift us, Lord. Comfort us. Help us get through this time of darkness. AMEN.

*Opening Hymn: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” UMH #297

READING: Portions of Psalm 22

Rev. Yoseb Jeon

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled; I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the Dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

Choir:

“Gethsemane”

Cox & Smith

THE SEVEN CANDLES AND THE APPROACHING DARKNESS
A Dramatic Presentation of the Crucifixion

1) Mary of Bethany

Nancy Mongano

I did not have the words for what I was feeling. Others were talking, laughing, celebrating. My brother was alive again, and everyone could see the miracle. But when I looked at him, I saw something else. There was a weight in his eyes that no one else seemed to notice, as if he was already carrying something we could not yet see. I could not explain it, but I felt it. Something was coming, something heavy, something final. So I did the only thing I knew how to do. I brought what I had been saving, the most precious thing I owned. I broke it open and poured it out on his feet. I did not speak or ask for anything. I simply gave it all. Some said it was wasteful. Maybe it was. But love does not measure like that. Love does not wait for the right explanation. It draws near and gives. I could not stop what was coming, but I could be near him. And I could give everything I had. If I had to do it again, I would still kneel, still break the jar, still pour it all out. Because even then, I knew this much. He would soon be alone, and I wanted him to know that he was not.

[The 1st candle is extinguished]

2) Judas Iscariot

Ken Budka

I thought I understood him. I followed him, just like the others. I believed in the kingdom he spoke about. But over time, I began to question. He healed and taught but refused to fight. He spoke of freedom but chose surrender. What kind of Messiah does that? Maybe I was impatient. Maybe I wanted to push him into action. I told myself handing him over would force his hand, that he would finally rise up. But he did not. He simply let them take him. And when I kissed him, I saw it in his eyes, not anger, but sorrow. That broke me. I tried to give the silver back. It felt heavy in my hands, like betrayal made solid. But it was too late. He was already on his way to the cross. They say we all failed him somehow. Peter denied him. The others ran. But me, I sold him. For silver. For a mistake I can never undo. If I could go back just once, I would not ask for forgiveness. I would only ask to be near him again.

[The 2nd candle is extinguished]

*Song:

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

UMH #286

3) The Servant Girl

Jane Heulton

I was not important. No one ever asked what I thought or waited for my voice. I stood near the fire, doing what I always did, watching and listening. And that night, I saw him. Peter. He tried to stay close, but not too close, close enough to see but far enough to be safe. I had seen that look before, the look of someone who wants to belong but is afraid of being known. So I spoke. “You were with him.” I do not know why I said it. Maybe I was curious. Maybe I was afraid. Maybe I wanted to understand what was happening. But when I spoke, everything shifted. He denied it. Once, twice, three times. And I saw something break in him, not just fear but something deeper, something like loss, something like shame. I was just a servant girl. My voice did not carry weight in the world. But in that moment, even my small voice became part of his story. I did not understand it then, but I remember his face. I remember the sound of his denial. And I remember thinking that sometimes it is not the powerful who shape the moment. Sometimes it is the unnoticed.

[Extinguish the 3rd candle]

4) Barabbas

Daniel Jeon

I was ready to die. That was certain. The sentence had already been given, and I knew what the cross meant. I had seen it before. I knew how it ended. I had done what they said I had done. There was no argument to make, no defense to offer. I was guilty. And then they called my name. I thought it was time. But instead, they released me. I did not understand. Another man was standing there, and they chose me instead of him. The crowd shouted for it. I could hear it, my name, my life, given back to me. I walked out alive, my chains gone, the air different somehow. Everything was the same, and yet nothing was the same. Because I knew something. That cross was mine. That death was mine. And he took it. I did not ask him to. I did not know him. I had not followed him. And yet he stood where I should have stood. I walked away free, but I have never forgotten the man who did not.

[Extinguish the 4th candle]

*Song

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

UMH #299

5) Simon of Cyrene

Ed Curven

I was just passing by. I had come into the city like so many others. It was supposed to be another day, nothing more. I did not know him. I had not followed him. I was not part of his story. And then they grabbed me. There was no choice, no explanation, just a command. Carry it. The weight of the wood fell on my shoulders before I could think. I wanted to resist. I wanted to step back. But I could not. So I lifted it, and I walked behind him. Step after step, I followed. I saw his back, torn and bleeding. I heard the crowd, the shouting, the confusion. I felt the weight of something I did not choose. I only wanted it to be over. But something stayed with me. I cannot fully explain it. I did not choose to follow him, but for that moment, I did. I walked where he walked. I carried what he carried. And when it was over, I put the cross down. But I have never truly set it down. Because I remember what it felt like to walk behind him.

[Extinguish the 5th candle]

6) Mary, Mother of Jesus (at the Cross)

Anita Ritchie

I held him once in my arms - tiny, warm, breathing softly. I remember the weight of him as a newborn, how I rocked him to sleep, whispered prayers over him, kissed his brow. He was mine. And now... I stand beneath this cross, watching him die. They nailed him there like a criminal. My son. The one the angel promised would be great. The one who brought sight to the blind and kindness to the forgotten. What did he do to deserve this? Love too deeply? Forgive too freely? Speak too much truth? I wanted to look away, but I couldn't. I saw the pain in his eyes, and he saw mine. Even in agony, he thought of me. He gave me to John - to be cared for, to not be alone. But he is the one I want. My boy. My Jesus. I would have taken his place if I could. Any mother would. But I couldn't stop it. I could only stay. Stay at the foot of the cross. Stay through the sorrow. Stay through the silence. This is not the ending I imagined. But still, I will not leave him now. Not even in death!

[Extinguish the 6th candle]

*Song

"Were You There"

UMH #288

7) Jesus

Pastor Doby Amos

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"

"Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

"Woman, here is your son. Here is your mother"

"My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?"

"I am thirsty"

"It is finished!"

"Father, Into your hands I commend my spirit!"

[Extinguish the Christ Candle]

*Special Presentation:

"In Christ Alone"
Cello by Daniel Jeon

Getty & Townend

Act of Confession: Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely, he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

He was wounded for our transgressions and he was bruised for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole.

All we like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all.

Prayer of Dedication:

Lord God, you have given us everything. You have not held anything back, not even your only begotten son. With humble hearts we thank you. In new hope we offer to you and for the work of salvation our every gift and our very selves. Be pleased, O God, in the name of Jesus, to accept all that we offer at this time. Look upon the intentions of our hearts. Hear our prayers and in your love answer. Hear us now as we confess to you in silence.

SILENT PRAYER

(RINGING BELL FOR 33 TIMES IN REMEMBRANCE OF JESUS' LIFE ON EARTH)

*The Lord's Prayer (In Unison):

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

DEPART IN SILENCE AND DARKNESS

As you leave the sanctuary in silence, take a few moments to pause by the cross and have a moment of silent prayer.