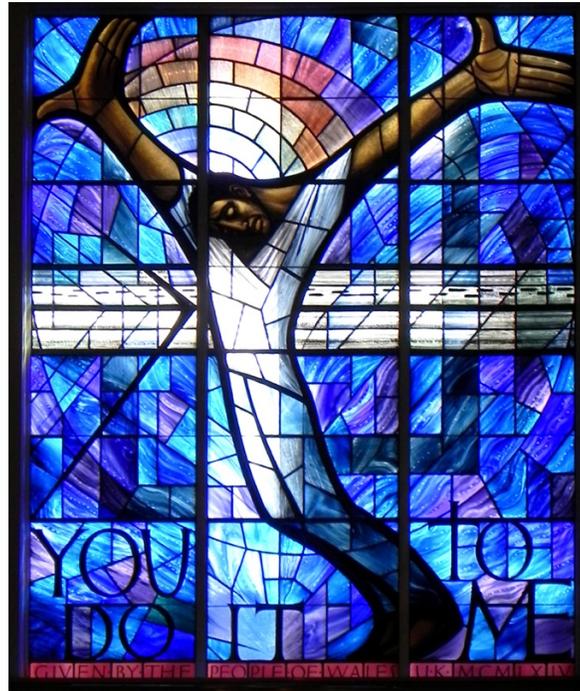


# First Presbyterian Church



Hackettstown, NJ  
April 1, 2021

## **Vision Statement of First Presbyterian Church**

Strengthening families;  
Sowing friendship;  
Serving community;  
In the name of Jesus Christ.

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**VIGIL OF DARKNESS**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Jesus said: I give you a new commandment,  
That you love one another.  
Just as Christ loved us,  
Let us love one another.

**HYMN**

*Were You There?*

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Vs. 2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Vs. 3. Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Vs. 4. Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Vs. 5. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

If we say that we have no sin the truth is not in us. So, in faith and penitence let us confess our sins together.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Eternal God, you have sent us dark days of separation,  
Separation from our community,  
Separation from our neighbor,  
Separation from our friends,  
Separation from our family,  
This has forced us to reflect in a season of reflection.  
We keep secret our innermost conflicts,

Our doubts, the seeking of pleasure, and avoiding pain.  
When we have no more distractions, we face these.  
Now is our opportunity to turn from them.  
You faced temptation in the garden,  
And facing your fears did the will of God.  
We admit our fears and now commit  
To the will of our creator.

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

You have promised that you will separate us  
From our transgressions  
As far as the East is from the West.  
Only you are judge  
And we know that in Jesus Christ  
We are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God.

## **THE SERVICE OF CANDLES**

### **The First Light- The Darkness of BETRAYAL**

#### **FIRST READING**

#### **Matthew 26:20-25**

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; while they were eating, he said, Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

## **The Second Light- The Darkness of INNER AGONY**

### **SECOND READING**

**Luke 22:40-45**

When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief...

**ORGAN:** *Go to Dark Gethsemane*

**First and Second Candles Are Extinguished**

## **The Third Light- The Darkness of LONELINESS**

### **THIRD READING**

**Matthew 26:40-45**

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

## **The Fourth Light- The Darkness of DESERTION**

### **FOURTH READING**

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him...

... At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

**ORGAN:** *Ah, Holy Jesus*

**Third and Fourth Candle are Extinguished**

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

**Words of Invitation**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**COMMUNION HYMN** *Let Us Break Bread Together*

1. Let us break bread together on our knees, (on our knees)  
Let us break bread together on our knees. (on our knees)  
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,  
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

2. Let us drink wine together on our knees, (on our knees)  
Let us drink wine together on our knees. (on our knees)  
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,  
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

## **COMMUNION**

## **THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. So guide us, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world to come; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever, Amen

## **FIFTH READING**

## **Matthew 26:5-67**

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power  
and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spat in his face and struck him...

## **The Sixth Light-The Darkness of MOCKERY**

### **SIXTH READING**

**Mark 15:9-12**

Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do<sup>[a]</sup> with the man you call the King of the Jews?"

**ORGAN:**                    *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

### **Fifth and Sixth Candles are Extinguished**

## **The Seventh Light- The Darkness of DEATH**

### **FINAL LENTEN READING**

**Luke 23:46; Mark 15:39**

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.

Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he<sup>[a]</sup>breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

### **MEDITATION AS BENEDICTION**

**Pastor Brian Merritt**

### **33 Chimes**

When all but one candle has been extinguished, the lights will be dimmed; the bell tolls 33 times for each year of Jesus' life. We will end

our service and broadcast in silence, feeling Jesus' loneliness as he faced the future.