

Welcome to the Good Friday Prayer Vigil



This guide offers suggestions for how you spend your time. Feel free to use any of them, or none of them. There is no right or wrong way to do this. Do whatever seems right **to you**.

An Overview of Holy Week

This is a timeline of Holy Week based on the Gospel of Mark. All four of the Gospels tell the story a little bit differently. Mark was the first Gospel written, and Mark deals with the last week on a day-by-day basis. (Much of this information comes from the Crossan and Borg book, *The Last Week*.) You may want to read through the story of that final week in one or more of the Gospels. Here is where to start in each of the Gospels to read the story of Holy Week: Matthew 21:1 (pg. 1009), Mark 11:1 (pg. 1042), Luke 19:29 (pg. 1088), John 12:12 (pg. 1118). (You can skip forward to the trial and crucifixion if you don't want to read the story of the entire week. Read the parts that speak to you, whether that is all of it or selected verses.) They may differ in some of the details, but all tell the Good News of Christ's triumph over death.

Palm Sunday: Jesus enters the city on a donkey that had never been ridden. The crowd spreads their cloaks and branches on the ground, and Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem with a crowd that is shouting Hosanna.

Monday: Jesus curses a fig tree that has no fruit on his way into Jerusalem. Jesus drives the various vendors out of the temple, telling them they have turned a house of prayer into a den of robbers.

Tuesday: The disciples notice that the fig tree is dead. Jesus uses the fig tree as an opportunity to talk about prayer. He enters the temple, where the religious leaders challenge his authority. Jesus engages them in ways that they find frustrating, increasing their anger. They make various attempts to trap him into saying something they can use against him, but without luck. As he is leaving the temple, he foretells the destruction of the temple and speaks of the upcoming trials the disciples will face.

Wednesday: The religious leaders are looking for a way to arrest and kill Jesus, but fear the response of the people. At Bethany, a woman anoints him with an expensive jar of nard, causing some to question. Jesus says she has anointed his body before his burial. Judas goes to the religious leaders and makes a deal to betray Jesus.

Maundy Thursday: Two disciples are sent to Jerusalem to prepare the Passover meal for Jesus and the rest of disciples in an upstairs guest room. Jesus gathers with the disciples for the Last Supper. He predicts Judas' betrayal, and institutes the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

After supper, they go to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus tells them they will all scatter. Peter insists he won't abandon Jesus, and Jesus tells him that that very night, before the rooster crows, Peter will deny him three times.

They go to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus asks Peter, James, and John to keep awake while he prays. Jesus prays for the cup to be removed, and the disciples sleep. Jesus wakes them, encouraging them to stay awake and pray. Jesus again goes off to pray. Three times Jesus goes off to pray, and three times he returns to find the disciples sleeping.

Judas arrives and betrays him, and Jesus is arrested by an armed crowd. The crowd takes him to the religious leaders, who question him, accuse him of blasphemy (insulting God), and condemn him to death.

Peter, true to his word, does not flee when Jesus is arrested, but follows. In the courtyard of the high priest's house, he is recognized as being one of the twelve. He is accused three times, and denies it three times. The rooster crows, and Peter, remembering Jesus' prediction, sobs.

Good Friday: Early in the morning the religious leaders take Jesus to Pilate (the Roman governor) to have him crucified. A crowd gathers, and encouraged by the religious leaders, demands that Jesus be crucified. Pilate offers to release Jesus, and they demand that he release Barabbas (a rebel who had committed murder during an uprising) instead. Pilate hands Jesus over to be whipped and then crucified.

The soldiers dress Jesus in a purple robe and put a crown of thorns on his head. They taunt him before leading him out to crucify him. The soldiers divide up Jesus' clothes, and the crowd walks by and taunts him. The skies darken, and Jesus cries out in pain. As Jesus dies, the curtain that separates the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple is torn in two.

Jesus' crucifixion is observed by some of the women who were followers of Jesus.

The Sabbath is approaching, so Joseph of Arimathea approaches Pilate and asks for the body. He is given the body and quickly wraps it in a linen cloth and places it in a tomb. Some of the women see it happen.

Saturday: This is the Sabbath, and no work can be done on the Sabbath. We are told nothing of what happens on this day.

Easter Sunday: The women go to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body, since there wasn't time on Friday due to the approaching Sabbath. They find the tomb empty. Jesus has risen.

Prayer Suggestions

Pray:

- **For forgiveness**
 - For those times you have neglected prayer
 - For those times you haven't been attentive to Christ
- **Pray for Delta Presbyterian Church, that we would faithfully**
 - Strengthen Christ in us
 - Share Christ among us
 - Show Christ around us
- **Give thanks**
 - For God's faithfulness

Pray:

- **For forgiveness**
 - For those times you have not been truthful
 - For those times when you have judged others
- **Pray for our community**
 - For those who have lost hope
 - For those who are angry
- **Give thanks**
 - For God's forgiveness

Pray:

- **For forgiveness**
 - For those times when you have let Christ down
- **Pray for our government**
 - For wisdom
 - For the willingness to seek and follow God's will
- **Give thanks**
 - For those who are willing to take on challenging jobs

Pray:

- **For forgiveness**
 - For times when you have gone with the crowd, even when it was wrong
- **Pray for peace**
 - Among those who must serve together
 - For regions torn by warfare and terrorism
- **Give thanks**
 - For the faithful servants who provide leadership and are willing to make sacrifice

Pray:

- **For forgiveness**
 - For things you have done that make you feel guilt or shame
- **Pray for our country**
 - For those who live in fear
 - That we could learn to listen to and respect one another.
- **Give thanks**
 - For Christ's great love and sacrifice