



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship-Responsive:

Pastor: The color has drained from the sky, and all is still.

**All: Let all creation stand and watch
as Jesus willingly goes to the cross.**

Pastor: May we be broken open in grief
that room may be made for new life.

**All: Let us breathe together, children of God,
as Jesus breathes no more.
Let us worship God.**

Opening Prayer:

Holy, holy, holy Jesus,
at the foot of the cross
we proclaim that you are God.
We repent of all the ways we hang you here
and turn away in shame. Give us courage
to stay with you and witness your suffering
as you join with all who suffer
in every time and place.
Melt our stubborn hearts in grief
so that we may be remade in mercy,
and help us to learn once again
the depth of your love,
now and forever. **Amen.**



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

* Call to Confession

God does not sit on high,
judging us from afar.
God sympathizes with our weaknesses.
Our God came to experience our lives,
to be tested as we are,
to know what it is to live on this earth.
So let us approach God with boldness,
to receive mercy and find grace.

* Prayer of Confession

Congregation

**O Christ, Son of God,
we want so desperately to look away.
We want to turn away from your suffering;
we do not want to witness your death.
We choke on our own cries of "Crucify!"
and are ashamed of our silence
in the face of hatred.
We still ignore suffering,
we still hurt the innocent,
we still betray those we love,
we still care more about ourselves
than those who are in pain.
Yet we trust in your mercy,
asking your forgiveness
while knowing we do not deserve it.
Jesus Christ, have mercy on us sinners,
not according to our works,
but your inconceivable love.**

* Time of Silence for Personal Prayers of Confession



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

***Assurance of Pardon**

Beloved children of God, all is not lost.
Even now, when it seems all has ended,
we wait in hope. For in the darkness
of this night, salvation is just
beginning.

Prayer for Illumination

Holy One, our strength in suffering
and our hope for salvation,
lift up your Word of life
and pour out your Spirit of grace
so that we may follow faithfully
all the way to the cross;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gospel Reading: John 18:1-19:42

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So, Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus replied, 'I am he.' Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, 'I am he', they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again, he asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So, if you are looking for me, let these men go.' This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.' Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?'



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

Jesus before the High Priest

So, the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First, they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Peter Denies Jesus

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So, the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.' When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter Denies Jesus Again

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, 'You are not also one of his disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not.' One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?' Again, Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Jesus before Pilate

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So, Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.' The Jews replied, 'We are not



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

permitted to put anyone to death.' (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

Jesus Sentenced to Death

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' They shouted in reply, 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a bandit.

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



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

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.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews." ' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So, they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

'They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.'

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, 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 (in order to fulfil the scripture), '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.

Jesus' Side Is Pierced

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So, they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' And again, another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

The Burial of Jesus

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Sermon

"The Death of Christ"

Rev. Nathaniel Asperger

Affirmation Of Faith:

Congregation

**God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery
which the Scriptures describe in various ways.**

It is called the sacrifice of a lamb,

a shepherd's life given for his sheep,

atonement by a priest;

again it is ransom of a slave, payment of debt,

vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty,

and victory over the powers of evil.

These are expressions of a truth

which remains beyond the reach of all theory

in the depths of God's love for humankind.

They reveal the gravity, cost,

and sure achievement of God's reconciling work.

Adapted from the Confession of 1967, 9.09



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

Prayer of Intercession

Rev. Nathaniel Asperger

In Christ Jesus, we have a great high priest
who knows our weakness and suffering;
Therefore, with boldness, let us seek God's grace.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With boldness, we pray for the church . . .
Unite us in the company of the faithful,
the great congregation of your people,
giving thanks for your saving power.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With boldness, we pray for the earth . . .
Save this world from a violent end,
so that future generations will rejoice
in the glory of your good creation.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With boldness, we pray for all nations . . .
Rule over the nations with peace.
Silence those who threaten and curse,
and deliver us from weapons of war.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With boldness, we pray for this community . . .
Give dignity to those who are despised;
let the poor eat and be satisfied;
rescue the lost and bring them home.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

April 03, 2026

With boldness, we pray for loved ones . . .
Do not be far away from those in trouble.
Come quickly to help them; save their lives!
Surround them with your healing presence.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

To you, O God, we entrust these prayers,
knowing that you alone can provide
grace to help in our time of need;
in the name of our great high priest
who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Savior. **Amen.**

* **Charge, Benediction**

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus:
If any wish to be my disciples
let them take up the cross
and follow me. **Amen.**

Mark 8:34

Thunder Clap – It is Finished

Everyone is invited to leave in silent reflection

Rev. Nathaniel Asperger