



*Serve & Enrich*  
 Zion United Church  
 of Christ

**LENT 2026  
 GIFTS OF THE  
 DARK WOOD**

**Our Mission:** United by Christ's loving embrace, a welcoming light in an unsure world, we serve and enrich the community and provide a safe gathering space for fellowship, spiritual growth, and self-exploration.

**Our Vision:** Transforming and caring for our community through Christ's love.

**Pastor:** Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan

**Organist:** Martha Main

**Bell Choir Director:** Vivian Thomas

**Office Manager:** Michael Brown

**Custodians:** Anita and Greg Law

**Scripture Reader:** Vivian Thomas

**Tech Steward:** Greg Miller



8916 East Troy Avenue  
 Indianapolis, Indiana 46239  
 (317) 862-4136  
 zionsecretary@sbcglobal.net  
[www.zionuccindy.net](http://www.zionuccindy.net)

**April 3, 2026 – Good Friday**

**Welcome**

**Prelude**

**Gathering**

*with There's a Path, verse 1*

*There's a path... though it winds its way through darkness  
 We would choose... to avoid it if we could  
 We awake... to an unexpected calling  
 God says, "come... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"*

**Centering Thoughts:**

*There's a path... though it winds its way through darkness  
 We would choose... to avoid it if we could  
 We awake... to an unexpected calling  
 God says, "come... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"*

**Prayer**—On this Good Friday, we gather to remember the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amid sorrow, we seek the hope his sacrifice brings. We come with heavy hearts, yet we hold on to the hope that Christ's love and sacrifice bring to the world. In His death, we find the promise of new life and redemption. May we look to the cross, not

only as a symbol of suffering but as a beacon of hope and salvation. Though we mourn today, we remember that darkness does not have the final word. Through Jesus, light and hope prevail. May we stand in faith, knowing that Christ's sacrifice opens the way to everlasting hope and life. Gracious God, as we reflect on the depth of Jesus' sacrifice, fill our hearts with hope. May his love guide us and his hope sustain us.~

**The Lord's Prayer (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 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.**

**Hymn**

*There Is a Redeemer, 117*

**Prayer of Confession (unison)—Merciful God, like the disciples before us, we too have denied and betrayed you in our fear and weakness. We have failed to stand by your truth, choosing self-preservation over faithfulness. Forgive our silence in the face of injustice, our indifference to suffering, and the times we have turned away from your love. In your mercy, restore us. Help us follow Jesus' path of sacrificial love, that we may live as people of courage and compassion. In the name of the one who loves us, we pray. Amen.~**

**Assurance of Grace (responsive)**

**One:** While we turned away from God, silently complicit, Christ died that we may live.

Through Christ, we are forgiven. This is our hope and our good news.

**Many:** It is good news indeed. We are forgiven, even on this night. Amen.~

**We Bring Our Sacrifices to God**

**Invitation**—As we gather to reflect on the immenseness of this evening, and as we are reminded of Christ' sacrifice for us, let us respond faithfully. Consider how you can give of yourself—your time, talents and resources—to bless others and serve the Lord of Love.~

**April Benevolence**

*Global Ministries*

**\*Doxology**

**We Give Thanks**—Gracious God, we bring our offerings as tokens of gratitude and humble commitment for the sacrifice of your Son, Jesus Christ. Use these gifts to spread love, bring comfort, and offer hope to those in need. Bless these offerings and those who give them to the glory of your name. Amen.~

## OUR FAITH STORY

### A Blessing for the Dark Wood

“What Abides” by Jan Richardson

### We Hear God’s Word

*Matthew 27:27-44*, Vivian Thomas

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him

, <sup>29</sup> and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” <sup>30</sup> They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. <sup>31</sup> After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

<sup>32</sup> As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. <sup>33</sup> And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), <sup>34</sup> they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. <sup>35</sup> And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; <sup>36</sup> then they sat down there and kept watch over him. <sup>37</sup> Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

<sup>38</sup> Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>39</sup> Those who passed by derided<sup>[a]</sup> him, shaking their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” <sup>41</sup> In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, <sup>42</sup> “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup> He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to, for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’” <sup>44</sup> The rebels who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

### Candle is Extinguished

#### Hymn

*Go to Dark Gethsemane*, 272

#### Reflection

*Roman Soldier*, Collin Bennington

### Candle is Extinguished

#### Hymn

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, 261

## **We Hear God's Word**

*John 19:25b-27, Paula Prange*

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

## **Candle is Extinguished**

### **Hymn**

*Lamb of God, 281*

### **Reflection**

*Mary, Mother of Jesus, Debi Hamblet*

## **Candle is Extinguished**

### **Special Music**

*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, Collin Bennington, violin*

## **We Hear God's Word**

*Mark 15:40-16:1, Mindy Murphy*

<sup>40</sup> There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome, <sup>41</sup> who followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him, and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

<sup>42</sup> When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>44</sup> Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead, and summoning the centurion he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. <sup>45</sup> When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> Then Joseph bought a linen cloth and, taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. <sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

**16** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.

## **Candle Extinguished**

### **Reflection**

*Salome, friend of Jesus, Kaylee Gephart-Kile*

## **The Candle is Extinguished**

## Hymn

*Where You There (on screen)*

## We Hear God's Word

*John 1:1-5*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life,<sup>[a]</sup> and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

## The Christ Candle is Extinguished

## We Depart in Silence

*You are invited to remain in prayer following worship for as long as needed. When you depart, please do so in silence.*

Series based on *Gifts of the Dark Wood* by Eric Elnes. All liturgy by Marcia McFee, [www.worshipdesignstudio.com](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com). "There's a Path" words by Marcia McFee, music by Chuck Bell. ~ Scifres, Mary; Beu, B.J.. Abingdon Worship Annual 2026 (pp. 70-71). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### YOU'RE INVITED

- **AN EASTER INVITATION**—We hope you'll join us this Sunday as we celebrate the new life we know in Christ. We'll move from the Dark Wood into the beauty of the Garden as we walk with our Savior in hope and love.

### SERVE

- **RILEY CHEER GUILD**—The Riley Cheer Guild and the kids at Riley could use your help! They are running low on Hot Wheels and are out of Play-Doh sets, which include a few containers of Play-Doh and some tools. Donations can be dropped off anytime in the sanctuary at our Riley service station. Just look for the big "Riley" sign and tubs.
- **SAVE THE DATE**—Our next Red Cross Blood Drive is Thursday, April 23, from 12-6pm in the Zion United Community Center Gym. Make a difference in our community and beyond and help ensure blood is on the shelves before it is needed for trauma victims, transplant recipients and those being treated for cancer and sickle cell disease. You'll find the link to register at [www.zionuccindy.net/blooddrive](http://www.zionuccindy.net/blooddrive).

### ENRICH

- **MATTHEW SMALL GROUPS**— Thank you to everyone who has been able to participate in our Matthew Small Groups during Lent. Both the Young Adult Group

and All Church Zoom Group had wonderful conversation as we read through this Gospel. The Young Adult Group will finish their discussion on Tuesday, April 7, at 6:30 pm on Zoom. The All Church Zoom Group added two more sessions. They'll meet April 9 and 23 at 7 pm. An in-person group will be offered on Tuesdays in April from 1-2:30 pm, starting on April 7, at Paula's house. If you haven't yet joined one of the small groups, this is a great opportunity.