



NEWSLETTER
March 2026

The Seven Last Words of Christ are:

- “Father, forgive them”
- “Today you will be with me in paradise”
- “Woman, behold your son”
- “My God, my God why have you forsaken me”
- “I thirst”
- “It is finished”
- “Father, into thy hands, I commit my spirit.”

I wondered why “Father, forgive them,” was the first word. Reading the scriptures for Holy Week, I am reminded that Jesus acts for others first. Before his own needs, he is addressing the needs of others. When he says, “Father, forgive them,” he is referring to the mob that yelled “crucify him!!” rather than release Barabas. Jesus knows the people are acting with mob mentality; they cannot help themselves. Jesus then turns his attention to the two that are crucified with him. The one is remorseful, the other not so much. Jesus, seeing the eyes of the thief, knows that he is sorry, he needs forgiveness, so he tells him there is a place for him in paradise. Jesus then takes care of family. “Woman, behold your son,” ensures that Mary will be taken care of by John the Beloved after Jesus’ death.

The last four words are for Jesus. Having taken care of others, he now laments to God the Father asking why he has been forsaken. This is Psalm 22 and Jesus expresses his feelings of abandonment. We too feel abandoned by God at times in our lives, but our faith allows us to understand that God is always with us. God never abandons us; we at times move away from God, but God is always there.

Jesus’ declaratory statement of “I thirst,” is to fulfill the human need for water. We can go days without food, but the body needs water to survive. Then it is Jesus who decides when he is ready to die as he says, “It is finished.” He then surrenders himself to the Father by dying on the cross.

Our belief in God is lived out through these seven words. Can we care for others before we care for ourselves? That is what loving our neighbor is all about...caring for others.

Holy Week is Christianity’s holiest time of the season. Easter reminds us that resurrection is for all of us...we all will enter eternal life in the presence of Christ. I trust we will invite others to experience the faith and joy that we experience together at First Church. We are blessed; may we be a blessing to others. Amen.

Easter Bible Study. *Becoming Jesus' Prayer: Transforming Your Life Through the Lord's Prayer.* This small book is out of print; however, I was able to order 11 copies at about \$7.00 per copy. Let me know if you would like to study The Lord's Prayer during the Easter season. **We will meet on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon beginning Thursday, April 23 through May 21, 2026.** Let me know if you'd like to join me!!

Sunday, March 15 during worship. Rick Westergaard has requested time for the Trustees to give thanks to a few folks who have been extremely helpful and generous to our congregation in getting repairs accomplished. We will follow worship with our time of fellowship in the Chapel. A sign up sheet is in the narthex.

Palm Sunday is March 29

Holy Thursday is April 2 at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday is April 3 12:noon to 1:00

Easter is Sunday, April 5

Plan on being present for this holiest time of the year!!

Church Council is scheduled to meet again on Thursday April 16 at 10:30 a.m.

Annual Conference is Sunday May 17 – Tuesday May 19. Pastor will be hosting early morning communion on the back porch of the Wildwood Convention Center with the Order of Saint Luke.