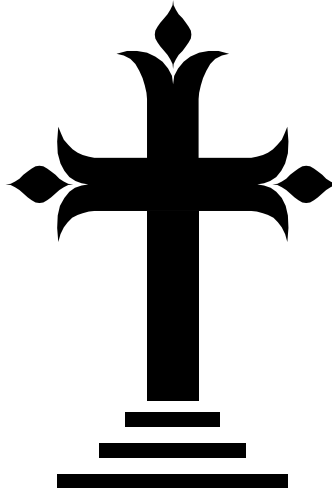


*Saint Matthew's
Episcopal Church*



101 Saint Matthew's Lane
Spartanburg, South Carolina 29301
(864) 576-0424
www.stmatthewsepiscopal.org

Our mission is to preach, teach, heal and make disciples.

**Sunday Services - 9:00 A.M. & 11:15 A.M.
Christian Formation - 10:15 A.M.
Wednesday Evening Prayer & Healing Service - 6:30 P.M.**

**The Right Reverend Daniel P. Richards, Bishop
The Reverend Robert L. Brown, Rector
The Reverend Paul R. Abernathy, Assistant Rector
Donna Simpson, Organist/Choir Director
Derek R. Langley, Director of Christian Formation
Lisa Fowler, Preschool Director
Michelle Pierce, Director of Communications
Jane Bird, Church Administrator
Allie Fowler & Melissa Pellin, Nursery**

Good Friday

April 3, 2026

*The ministers enter in silence and then kneel,
after which the Celebrant stands and begins the liturgy.*

Celebrant: Blessed be our God.
People: *For ever and ever. Amen.*
Celebrant: Let us pray.

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Old Testament

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

The Lord's chosen Servant must endure agony and tremendous sorrow to atone for the sins of many. His sufferings, however, will bring righteousness and redemption to the people.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him--so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals--so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,

so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 22:1-11 *(In Unison)*

BCP 610

Deus, Deus meus

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
 and are so far from my cry
 and from the words of my distress?
- 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
 by night as well, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are the Holy One, *
 enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our forefathers put their trust in you; *
 they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried out to you and were delivered; *
 they trusted in you and were not put to shame.
- 6 But as for me, I am a worm and no man, *
 scorned by all and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; *
 they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
- 8 "He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; *
 let him rescue him, if he delights in him."

- 9 Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, *
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
- 10 I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; *
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.

Epistle

Hebrews 10:16-25

The letter to the Hebrews encourages Christians to stand confident in the redemption bought for them in the perfect and willing sacrifice made by Jesus.

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews:

The Holy Spirit testifies saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds," he also adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

There are no responses before or after the Passion reading. The congregation is seated for the first part of the Passion. At the verse which mentions the arrival at Golgotha all stand.

Silence

Sermon

"The Meaning of Death"

The Rev. Paul Abernathy

All standing, the celebrant says to the people:

Dear People of God: Our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death, and become heirs with him of everlasting life.

We pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs.

All kneel.

Let us pray for the holy Catholic Church of Christ throughout the world; for its unity in witness and service; for all bishops and other ministers and the people whom they serve. For Daniel, our Bishop, and all the people of this diocese; for all Christians in this community. For those about to be baptized; that God will confirm his Church in faith, increase it in love, and preserve it in peace.

Silence

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them; for Donald, the President of the United States; for the Congress and the Supreme Court; for the Members and Representatives of the United Nations and for all who serve the common good, that by God's help they may seek justice and truth, and live in peace and concord.

Silence

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility your dominion may increase, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind; for the hungry and the homeless, the destitute and the oppressed; for the sick, the wounded, and the crippled; for those in loneliness, fear, and anguish; for those who face temptation, doubt, and despair; for the sorrowful and bereaved; for prisoners and captives, and those in mortal danger. That God in his mercy will comfort and relieve them, and grant them the knowledge of his love, and stir up in us the will and patience to minister to their needs.

Silence

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all who have not received the Gospel of Christ; for those who have never heard the word of salvation; for those who have lost their faith; for those hardened by sin or indifference; for the contemptuous and the scornful; for those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and persecutors of his disciples; for those who in the name of Christ have persecuted others. That God will open their hearts to the truth, and lead them to faith and obedience.

Silence

Merciful God, Creator of all the peoples of the earth and lover of souls: Have compassion on all who do not know you as you are revealed in your Son Jesus Christ; let your Gospel be preached with grace and power to those who have not heard it; turn the hearts of those who resist it; and bring home to your fold those who have gone astray; that there may be one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us commit ourselves to God, and pray for the grace of a holy life, that, with all who have departed this world and have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to God alone, we may be accounted worthy to enter into the fullness of the joy of our Lord, and receive the crown of life in the day of the resurrection.

Silence

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Anthem 1

Celebrant: We glory in your cross, O Lord,
People: *and praise and glorify your holy resurrection; for by virtue of your cross joy has come to the whole world.*

Celebrant: May God be merciful to us and bless us,
show us the light of his countenance, and come to us.
People: *Let your ways be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.*

Celebrant: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
People: *We glory in your cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify your holy resurrection; for by virtue of your cross joy has come to the whole world.*

Anthem 2

Celebrant: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
People: *because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Celebrant: If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure,
we shall also reign with him.
People: *We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Anthem 3

Celebrant: O Savior of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood hast
redeemed us:
People: *Save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.*

The Lord's Prayer *In 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross, and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*

The congregation departs in silence.

Servers

Lector: Susan Pretulak

Ushers: Matt Cox, Dave Pretulak

Holy Week Continues ...

Friday, April 3: Stations of the Cross through Downtown, 5:30 pm. We walk with our banners and our sister churches through downtown Spartanburg, stopping at fourteen places to pray the story of Christ on his way to the cross. This year we begin and end at the Church of the Advent. It's beautiful. Come with us.

Sunday, April 5:

Easter Sunday, Easter Vigil at 7:00 am.

We gather at dawn to kindle the New Fire, process into the growing light, and **proclaim the Resurrection** as morning rises around us. It is one of the most ancient liturgies of the Church - a movement from darkness into light - echoing Mary Magdalene's early walk to the tomb and the holy stillness before joy broke open the world. **We are planning ahead and would love to know if you are considering attending at 7:00 a.m.**

Easter Services, at 9:00 and 11:15 am.

Christ is risen! The long journey through Lent and Holy Week breaks into celebration with music, joy, and the full voice of the Church raised in hope.

Easter Brunch & Children's Egg Hunt!

Between the services, join us for Easter Brunch and our annual Egg Hunt. Our parish cooks and bakers will have the tables full, and the children will be off in search of eggs. Come linger, share a plate, and celebrate the morning together.

Mealtrain for Easter Brunch: <https://www.mealtrain.com/potlucks/zm1836>

Asking for donations of candy for the Easter Egg Hunt, and Rain Ponchos for the homeless.