



# St. John's Episcopal Church

*"Our mission is to know and to share the love of Jesus Christ"*

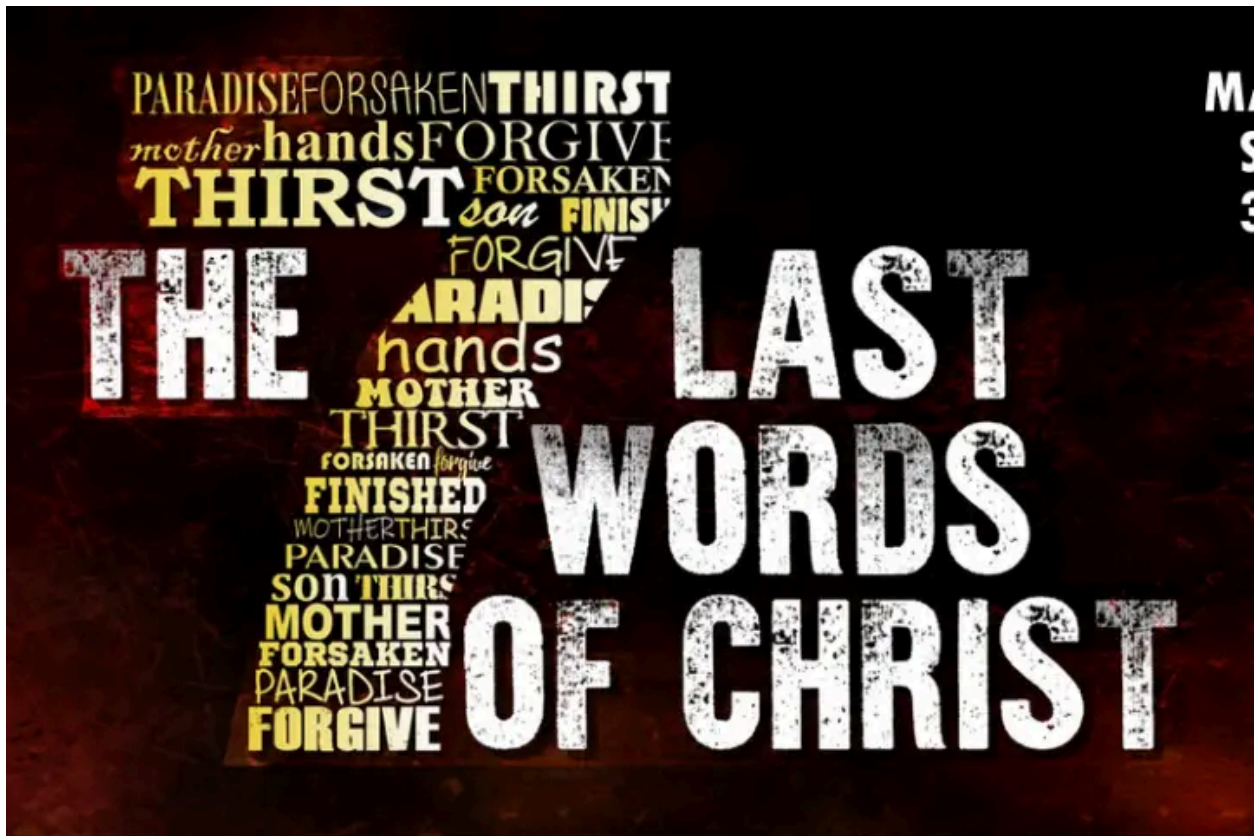
**Good Friday - April 3, 2026**

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## **The 7 Last Words of Jesus Christ by Joseph Haydn Performed by The Dirigo Quartet**

William Somes, Violin  
Abigail York, Violin

Taylor Clark, Viola  
Luiz Gonçalves da Silva, Cello



Introduzione (Maestoso ed adagio): A somber opening setting the tone.

Sonata I (Largo): "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do".  
(Luke 23:34) Read by Mary-Frances

Sonata II (Grave e cantabile): "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"  
(Luke 23:43). Read by Bruce Mallonee

Sonata III (Grave): "Woman, behold thy son".  
(John 19:26–27). Read by Richard Waite

Sonata IV (Largo): "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"  
(Matthew 27:46). Read by Scott Burgess

Sonata V (Adagio): "I thirst".  
(John 19:28). Read by Jacqueline Camm

Sonata VI (Lento): "It is finished".  
(John 19:30). Read by Nancy Dymond

Sonata VII (Largo): "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit".  
(Luke 23:46). Read by Emma Perry

Il Terremoto (Presto e con tutta la forza): A dramatic, chaotic depiction of  
the earthquake

Joseph Haydn himself explained the origin and difficulty of writing the work when the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel issued (in 1801) a new edition and requested a preface:

Some fifteen years ago I was requested by a canon of Cádiz to compose instrumental music on the Seven Last Words of Our Savior On the Cross. It was customary at the Cathedral of Cádiz<sup>[1]</sup> to produce an oratorio every year during Lent, the effect of the performance being not a little enhanced by the following circumstances. The walls, windows, and pillars of the church were hung with black cloth, and only one large lamp hanging from the center of the roof broke the solemn darkness. At midday, the doors were closed and the ceremony began. After a short service the bishop ascended the pulpit, pronounced the first of the seven words (or sentences) and delivered a discourse thereon. This ended, he left the pulpit and fell to his knees before the altar. The interval was filled by music. The bishop then in like manner pronounced the second word, then the third, and so on, the orchestra following on the conclusion of each discourse. My composition was subject to these conditions, and it was no easy task to compose seven adagios lasting ten minutes each, and to succeed one another without fatiguing the listeners; indeed, I found it quite impossible to confine myself to the appointed limits.<sup>[2]</sup>

The priest who commissioned the work, Don José Sáenz de Santa María, had reconditioned the Oratorio de la Santa Cueva, and paid Haydn in a most unusual way – sending the composer a cake which Haydn discovered was filled with gold coins.<sup>[3]</sup>

At the request of his publisher, Artaria, the composer in 1787 produced a reduced version for string quartet: Haydn's Opus 51. This is the form in which the music is most often heard today: a group of seven works (Hoboken-Verzeichnis III/50–56), with the Introduction abutting Sonata I and Sonata VII joined by the Earthquake. The first violin part includes the Latin text directly under the notes, which "speak" the words musically.

This version has come under suspicion of authenticity due to an occasionally careless manner of transcription, with crucial wind passages left out and only the accompanimental figures in the strings retained. As a result, some quartets make their own adaptation, working from the orchestral original. Written for the website Live Music Project.

<https://www.livemusicproject.org/events/89438/seattle-chamber-orchestra-the-seven-last-words-on-piano>

## The Dirigo Quartet

Formed in January 2024 from a group of students and alumni from the University of Maine, the Dirigo Quartet is one of only a handful of permanent string quartets in the state of Maine. Its members have performed as principals in the University of Maine Orchestra and the Downeast Chamber Orchestra and have served as teachers or directors at local studios and schools. The group has also attended coaching sessions and masterclasses with faculty at the University of Maine School of Performing Arts and professional string quartets like the Beo String Quartet. In the fall of 2025, Dirigo Quartet was selected by DaPonte String Quartet to serve as their scholarship Honors Quartet for the 2025-26 academic year. This opportunity allowed for regular coaching sessions and culminated in multiple performance opportunities.

In addition to giving private concerts around Maine, the Dirigo Quartet has been employed to perform at a number of private events at the University of Maine, including for the University of Maine President at the Buchanan Alumni House. They have also performed at venues around Penobscot County, including Minsky Recital Hall, Zillman Art Museum, and the Church of Universal Fellowship in Orono, where they helped raise money and awareness for the Maine Multicultural Center as part of the church's Music With a Mission Series.

The Dirigo Quartet has performed compositions in a range of styles and genres. Their repertoire spans classical to modern contexts with works by Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Villa-Lobos, among others. They have also performed pieces from local contemporary composers like Benjamin Walker and find particular enjoyment in sharing music written by living composers that witness and interpret the joys, challenges, and afflictions of the present day.

The word “Dirigo” (Latin for “I lead”) appears on the Maine state seal and on signs and landmarks across the state. It is a reminder to remain rooted in the local context, but it also carries musical meaning that transcends dividing lines. In a string quartet, each member takes a turn leading the group as an equal. There is no permanent hierarchy, no winner or loser—there is only giving and receiving in pursuit of a common goal. Viewed in this way, “Dirigo” is much more than a motto or a name. It is the substance that binds us together—epitomizing the hope of unity for diverse audiences across Maine and beyond.

For more information about The Dirigo Quartet, go to <https://www.dirigoquartet.com/>