



# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN

ROOTED IN FAITH • GROWING IN HOPE • REACHING OUT IN LOVE

## A Musical Meditation on the Nocturnes of Tenebrae Music by Frédéric Chopin—Jeffrey Jubenville, Pianist Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 7pm

**SERVICE NOTES:** *Whether you are here in person or online, we are glad you have joined us! Welcome! Bienvenidos! The congregation may remain seated throughout the service.*

**PRELUDE** Op. posth. 72, No. 1; BI 19\*

### **PART 1**

*The desolation of the soul and the weight of sin.*

#### ***In monte Oliveti***

On the Mount of Olives Jesus prayed to the Father: Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Thy will be done

**Music: Op. 9, No. 1, BI 54**

#### ***Tristis est anima mea:***

My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here, and watch with me. Now you shall see a multitude that will surround me. You shall run away, and I will go to be sacrificed for you.

**Music: Op. 37, No. 1; BI 119**

#### ***Ecce vidimus eum:***

Behold, we have seen him as one having neither form nor beauty; there is no spectacle in him: he hath borne our sins, and he grieves for us: he was wounded for our iniquities: By his wounds we are healed.

**Music: Op. 9, No. 2; BI 54**

### **PART 2**

*The hidden plots and spiritual conflict of the Passion.*

#### ***Amicus meus:***

My friend hath betrayed me with the sign of a kiss: “He whom I shall kiss, that is he, hold him fast.” This wicked sign was given by him who committed murder with a kiss. The unhappy wretch repaid the price of blood, and, in the end, hanged himself.

**Music: BI 49\***

***Judas mercator pessimus:***

Judas, that most vile merchant, sought the Lord with a kiss, Who, like an innocent lamb, did not deny the kiss to Judas, For a handful of coins, he delivered Christ to the priests.

**Music: Op. 32, No. 2; BI 106**

***Unus ex discipulis meis:***

One of my disciples will betray me this day: Woe to him by whom I shall be betrayed: It were better for him, had he never been born. He who dips his hand with me in the dish, he will deliver me into the hands of sinners. It were better for him, had he never been born.

**Music: Op. 55, No. 1; BI 152**

**PART 3**

*The institution of the Eucharist and the Agony in the Garden.*

***Eram quasi agnus innocens:***

I was as an innocent lamb: I was led to the slaughter, and I knew it not: my enemies conspired against me, saying: Come, let us put wood on his bread, and cut him off from the land of the living.

**Music: BI 108\***

***Una hora***

Could you not watch one hour with me, you that were eager to die for me? Or do you not see Judas, how he sleeps not, but makes haste to deliver me to the priests? Why do you sleep? Arise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

**Music: Op. 48, No. 1; BI 142**

***Seniores populi:***

The elders of the people convened a council, that they might conspire to seize Jesus and kill him. With swords and clubs they went forth, as if against a robber.

**Music: Op. 27, No. 2; BI96**

**The Strepitus**

At the conclusion of the final nocturne, we will remain silent, departing at the sound of the bell.

***\*published posthumously***

**SERVICE PARTICIPANTS**

Pianist: Jeffrey Jubenville

Readers: Mae Barnes, Kimo Kimokeo

Usher: Diana Glick

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## A Musical Meditation on the Nocturnes of Tenebrae

Music of Frédéric Chopin

Jeffrey Jubenville, pianist

### Program Notes

The ancient service of Tenebrae unfolds in gathering darkness. Rooted in the monastic prayers of Holy Week, it moves through nine liturgical nocturnes (“night watches”) as candles are gradually extinguished and the story of Christ’s suffering is told in fragments of scripture and song. The gradual fading of light encourages us to dwell, patiently and honestly, in the shadows. This evening’s performance is offered not as a formal liturgy, but as a musical meditation shaped by that same pattern. In place of chant, we hear nine musical nocturnes by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). While Chopin did not compose these works for sacred use, their deeply interior character makes them uniquely suited to Holy Week reflection. The nocturne itself (“music of night”) thus becomes a theological metaphor.

Chopin composed twenty-one nocturnes, three of which were published by his sister after his death, contrary to his express wishes. These posthumously published nocturnes are characterized by a remarkable emotional intimacy; perhaps Chopin had considered them too personal for an audience. It was Jeffrey’s deliberate choice to include all three on tonight’s program—even to open with one as a Prelude—as a way of underscoring the emotional vulnerability and heartbreaking betrayal expressed by the Office of Tenebrae. In Part 1 of the program, the music accompanies texts of Gethsemane and the suffering servant. The restless tonalities and suspended melodic lines evoke the vulnerability of Christ’s prayer: “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The music lingers between anguish and surrender. Part 2 reflects betrayal and hidden conspiracy. Chopin’s harmonic instability and sudden surges of intensity underline the spiritual dislocation of the Passion narrative: the kiss of Judas, the fear of the disciples, the fracture of communion among friends. Part 3 turns toward Eucharistic mystery and watchfulness. Even some of the most luminous passages are beautiful in their fragility. The capricious nature of the final nocturne and the return to a major key reflect a foolish and misguided triumph. At the conclusion of the program, we will remain in contemplative silence and depart at the sound of the bell, recalling the ancient *strepitus*, the loud noise which traditionally closed the Tenebrae, symbolizing the rending of the sacred veil.

Holy Week invites us to confront realities we often avoid: betrayal, fear, exhaustion, injustice, abandonment. The Passion narrative does not bypass human suffering; it enters it. Chopin’s music gives sound to that inward terrain of desolation, struggle, and conflict; yet, again and again, a singing line rises like a prayer. We who listen know what it is to live with unanswered questions, fractured relationships, public turmoil, and private grief. The shadow of Tenebrae does not offer quick resolution. It does not rush toward Easter light. Instead, it teaches us how to remain, how to watch one hour, how to sit in the night without turning away. In tonight’s program, darkness is not denied; it is acknowledged, and its beauty affirmed.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*We acknowledge the land on which we are gathered. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people. Today, there are three federally-recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil Dehe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.*

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