

A Liturgy for Three Holy Days¹

*As we prepare for and celebrate the Easter Resurrection,
in a time when we cannot meet together,
we join in prayer with other Christians
around the world and through the centuries
on the THREE HOLY DAYS
(from Thursday evening through Easter evening)*

Introduction to this service

The events of the Last Supper, the crucifixion, the burial of Jesus, and the resurrection are at the heart of our immersion into Christ's paschal mystery. For the first Christians, each day began in the evening, reflecting the Jewish understanding of time. From Thursday evening to Friday evening was one day; from Friday evening to Saturday evening a second day; from Saturday evening to Sunday evening, a third day. Together they make up the Three Holy Days (also known in Christian history as the "Triduum."²)

It is traditional for services beginning on holy Thursday evening until the service celebrating the resurrection to have no postlude or benediction. The following liturgy follows that tradition, beginning on Holy Thursday with a time of preparation and concluding later in the day on Easter with a time of going forth.

We will not only recall the sacred story of these holy days for Jesus, but immerse ourselves in the sacred mystery of these days, so that we may embody "Christ in us, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Our reflection on scripture is guided by questions in an "Examen," appropriating the tradition of Ignatian spirituality. An "" marks optional readings from Scripture. Heart words from them as well as "centering verses" from the psalms are also provided for reflection in silence. Each section of the service ends in silence; it is not concluded until Easter evening.*

In a time when we cannot meet together during these three holy days, this service may provide a "touch-stone" with the traditional services to remind us of them and help us appropriate their deep significance for us as we walk the way of Jesus.

This service may be done alone, with another, or in a digitally-gathered community. Bracketed material may be read by a second voice. Note: At this point in digital technology, we recommend that only one other voice speak or sing the responses and the bracketed material, rather than multiple people speaking at once. If desired, one voice may read the material in italics.

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Adapted from *A Lukan Book of Feasts and Holy Days*, OSL Publications, 2017

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² Derived from the Latin for "space of three days."

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PREPARING

(Thursday before evening; may be used as a time of Morning Prayer)

CENTERING

O God, create a clean heart in me,
[put into me a new and steadfast spirit;]
do not banish me from your presence,
[do not deprive me of your holy Spirit!]
Psalm 51:10-11 TIB

PSALTER

**Psalm 43*

Send forth your light and your truth,
let them guide me,
let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to your dwelling place.
[Then at last I will go up again
to the altar of God,
the God of my joy and delight.]

Psalm 43:3-4a TIB

- *Silence* -

SCRIPTURE

**Luke 22:7-13*

Hear what the Spirit is saying:
"Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

Luke 22:8b TIB (*The Inclusive Bible*)

- *Silence* -

*Examen: What needs to be cleared away?
What do we need to bring to the table Jesus hosts for us?*

PRAYING

O Lord of desert and solitude, O Mystery transforming:
as we come to the end of these forty days
and enter the three holy days,
prepare us to be plunged anew into the mystery of your passion
[and bring us to the triumph of holy Easter so that,
by your grace, we pass over from death to life

and from sin to the glorious liberty of the daughters and sons of God.]

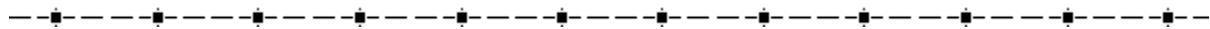
[DTB]

HYMN (*may be read, sung, or pondered silently*)³

I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, No turning back.

Anon., *The Faith We Sing*, 2129

- Silence -



SHARING THE PASCHAL MEAL

(*Thursday evening*)

CENTERING (*The evening candle is lighted*)

In purity of heart let us love one another.
[Where charity and love are, there is God.]
Let Christ our God be present in our midst.
[Where charity and love are, there is God.]

MAUNDY THURSDAY, WESTERN RITE

PSALTER:

**Psalm 116:1-19a*

How can I repay you, ADONAI,
for all your goodness to me?

[I raise the cup of deliverance,
and call on the Name of ADONAI.
I will fulfill my vows to you
in the presence of all your people.]

Psalm 116:12-14 *TIB*

- Silence -

SCRIPTURE

**John 13:1-15*

Hear what the Spirit is saying:
"If I, then—your Teacher and Sovereign—have washed your feet, you should
wash each other's feet. I have given you an example, that you should do
as I have done to you."

³ If you would like to hear a recorded version of any of the songs, one potential source is
<https://hymnary.org>.

- Silence -

*Examen: Who has washed my feet?
Whose feet do I wash?
Whose feet does the Church need to wash?*

PRAYER

[O Lover of souls, whose mercy is declared again and again in the meal you instituted: so compose our hearts in yielding up this day to you, that our spirits may realize we have been reconciled to you. Awaking to tomorrow morning's light, help us know that we are bound anew in holy covenant with you in your cross and passion for the life of the world. Amen.]

DTB

HYMN *(may be read, sung, or pondered silently)*

87.87

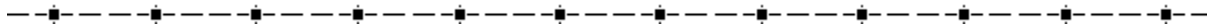
Tune: FOR THE BREAD, (UMH 614)

For the bread which you have broken,
for the wine which you have poured,
for the words which you have spoken,
now we give you thanks, O Lord.

[In your service, Lord, defend us,
in our hearts keep watch and ward;
in the world where you have sent us,
let your kin(g)dom come, O Lord.]

LOUIS F. BENSON, 1924 (Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:15-20)

- Silence -



ACKNOWLEDGING BETRAYAL AND DENIAL

(Thursday Night)

CENTERING

Let us go out to the Mount of Olives with Christ.
[With Peter, we pledge:
we will not desert you, O Lord.]

PSALTER

**Psalm 40:1-13*

My sins entrap me and I am unable to escape.
[They outnumber the hairs on my head,
and my courage is drained.]

Psalm 40:12b, c

- *Silence* -

SCRIPTURE

**Luke 22:39-62*

Hear what the Spirit is saying:
"Are you betraying the Chosen One
with a kiss?" . . .
"Before a rooster crows today,
you'll deny me three times."

Adapted from Luke 22:48, 61 *TIB*

- *Silence* -

*Examen: How has the Church treated Christ with kisses of
outward piety but with betrayal through words
and actions that deny his inclusive love?*

HYMN (*may be read, sung, or pondered silently*)

77.77.77; Tune: REDHEAD 76, (UMH 290)

Go to dark Gethsemane,
ye that feel the tempter's power;
your Redeemer's conflict see,
watch with him one bitter hour.
Turn not from his griefs away;
learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

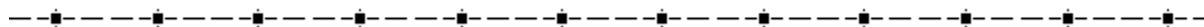
James Montgomery, 1820,1825, alt.

PRAYER

Good Lord, give us the grace, in our fear and agony, to recall that great fear and
agony that you, our Savior, had in the garden before your most bitter passion.
[As we meditate on it, may the Holy Spirit grant us guidance, forgiveness,
healing, and strength for our souls. Amen.]

Adapted from a prayer of St. THOMAS MORE, 1474-1535; DWV

- *Silence* -



JUDGING AND BEING JUDGED

(Friday Morning)

CENTERING

Let us kindle our hearts and not quench our spirits.
Let us go along with Peter to the house of Caiaphas,
and with him, let us cry the words of Peter long ago—
[“Even if you go to the cross and enter the tomb,
we will suffer with you, and we shall die with you
and cry: ‘Hasten, Holy One, save your sheep.’”]

Romanos, 6th C.

PSALTER

**Psalm 35*

They hatch vicious plans to slander me,
and spread lies about me through the land.
“Aha! Aha!” they say.
“With our own eyes we witnessed your crime!”
[But you’re the one who witnessed everything.
Don’t remain silent; don’t be far from me!]

Psalm 35:21-22 *TIB*

- Silence –

SCRIPTURE

**Mark 15:1-20*

Hear what the Spirit is saying:
Pilate asked them,
“What am I to do with the one you call
the King of the Jews?”
The people shouted back, “Crucify him!” . . .
They dressed Jesus in royal purple,
then wove a crown of thorns and put it on him. . . .
pretending to pay homage.

Mark 15: 12-13, 17 *TIB*

- Silence –

*Examen: What do I do with Jesus the Christ?
How do we pay false homage to him?*

PRAYER

O God: we dare to come as your family,
for whom our Lord Jesus Christ
was willing to be betrayed,
given into the hands of sinners,
and lifted high upon the cross
that he might draw the whole world to himself.
[By your Spirit, empower us
to take up our cross and follow him;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.]

Adapted from TRADITIONAL GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTS

HYMN

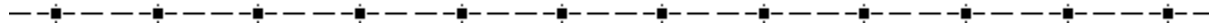
(may be read, sung, or pondered silently)

77.77.77 Tune: REDHEAD 76, (UMH 290)

See him at the judgment hall,
beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned;
O the wormwood and the gall!
O the pangs his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;
learn of Christ to bear the cross.

JAMES MONTGOMERY, 1820, 1825, ALT.

- Silence -



REMEMBERING THE CRUCIFIXION

(Friday Afternoon)

CENTERING *(may be read, sung, or pondered silently)*

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! O—oh!
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

PSALTER

**Psalm 22*

My God, my God.
why have you forsaken me?
[My strength, hurry to help me.]

Psalm 22:1a, 19b *TIB*

- Silence -

SCRIPTURE

**Mark 15:33-41*

Hear what the Spirit is saying:
Jesus uttered a loud cry and said: "Abba, into your hands I commit my Spirit."
Saying this, Jesus breathed for the last time.

Luke 23:46 *TIB*

- Silence -

HYMN *(may be read, sung, or pondered silently)*
88.88.88 Tune: SELENA, (UMH 287)

O Love divine, what hast thou done!
The immortal God hath died for Me!
The Father's coeternal son
bore all my sins upon the tree.
Th' Immortal God for me hath died:
my Lord, my Love, is crucified!

Charles Wesley, 1742

Examen: Christ's Lament Against His Faithless Church

O my people, O my Church, what have I done to
you, or in what have I offended you? I led you forth from the land of Egypt and
delivered you by the waters of baptism, but you have prepared a cross
for your Savior.

[Holy God,
holy beyond the powers of might,
holy beyond the powers of death,
have mercy upon us.]

ELLC 2015

- Silence -

I led you through the desert forty years and fed you with manna;
I brought you through times of persecution and of renewal and gave you my
body, the bread of heaven; but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

[Holy God,
holy beyond the powers of might,
holy beyond the powers of death,
have mercy upon us.]

ELLC 2015

- Silence -

I made you branches of my vineyard and gave you the water of salvation,
but when I was thirsty you gave me vinegar and gall and
pierced with a spear the side of your Savior.

[Holy God,
holy beyond the powers of might,
holy beyond the powers of death,
have mercy upon us.]

ELLC 2015

- Silence -

My peace I gave, which the world cannot give, and washed your feet as a servant, but
you draw the sword to strike in my name and seek high places in my kingdom.

[Holy God,

holy beyond the powers of might,
holy beyond the powers of death,
have mercy upon us.]

ELLC 2015

- *Silence* -

I called you to go and bring forth fruit, but you cast lots for my clothing. I prayed that
you all may be one, but you continue to quarrel and divide.

[Holy God,
holy beyond the powers of might,
holy beyond the powers of death,
have mercy upon us.]

ELLC 2015

- *Silence* -

I grafted you into the tree of my chosen people Israel, but you turned on them with
persecution and mass murder. I made you joint heirs with them of my
covenants, but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt.

[Holy God,
holy beyond the powers of might,
holy beyond the powers of death,
have mercy upon us.]

ELLC 2015

- *Silence* -

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters. I was hungry but you gave me
no food, thirsty but you gave me no drink. I was a stranger but you did
not welcome me, naked but you did not clothe me, sick and in prison but
you did not visit me.

[Holy God,
holy beyond the powers of might,
holy beyond the powers of death,
have mercy upon us.]

ELLC 2015

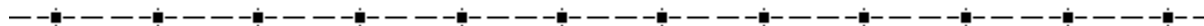
- *Silence* -

HYMN *(may be read, sung, or pondered silently)*
88.88.88 Tune: SELENA (UMH 287)

Behold him, all ye that pass by,
the bleeding Prince of life and peace!
Come, sinners, see your Savior die,
and say, "Was ever grief like his?"
Come, feel with me his blood applied:
my Lord, my Love, is crucified!

Charles Wesley, 1742

- Silence -



WAITING AT THE TOMB
(Friday Evening)

CENTERING

How lonely she is now, the once crowded city!
[Bitterly she weeps at night,
tears upon her cheeks,]
Cry aloud to the Lord,
[let tears stream down like a torrent
day and night!]
Arise, cry out in the night,
at the beginning of the watches!
[Pour out your heart like water
before the presence of the Lord!]

Adapted from Lamentations 1:1-2; 2:18-19

PSALTER

**Psalm 43*

"Why so disquieted?" I ask myself
"Why so churned up inside?"
[I know I'll praise God once again.
for you are my Deliverance; you are my God.]

Psalm 43:5 *TIB*

- Silence -

SCRIPTURE

**Luke 23:50-54*

Hear what the Spirit is saying:
Joseph took the body down, wrapped it in fine linen,
and laid it in a tomb cut out of rock,
where no one had yet been laid.

Luke 23:53 *TIB*

- Silence -

Examen: When hope is nearly extinguished, how do we keep Vigil at the tomb in which our expectations for a better world seem buried?

PRAYER

[Lord Jesus Christ, who this night rested in the tomb and so sanctified the grave to be a bed of hope for your people: teach us to trust in you when things seem hopeless so that when our days on earth are accomplished, we may live eternally with you, the Source of our hope. Amen.]

Adapted from a traditional anon. source

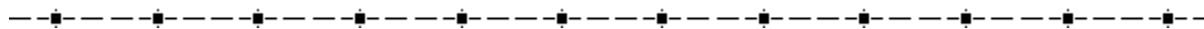
HYMN (*may be read, sung, or pondered silently*)

76.76D Tune: PASSION CHORALE, (UMH 286)

What language shall I borrow
to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
O make me thine forever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to thee.

Anon, Latin; trans. Paul Gerhardt, 1656

- Silence -



OBSERVING THE GREAT SABBATH

(Saturday)

CENTERING

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
[Lord, hear my voice!]
Come, faithful, come, let us keep watch beside Christ's tomb,
crying out with the voice of the psalmist:
[What profit is there in death?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it tell of your faithfulness?]
Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.
[Arise, O Lord! Lift up your hand;
forget not the afflicted."]

Adapted from the Holy Saturday Orthodox Liturgy, TAR
(Psalm 30:9; 9:19, 10:12)

PSALTER

**Psalm 130*

I wait for you, my soul waits,
and in your word I trust.

Selected from Psalm 130:5 *TIB*

- *Silence* -

SCRIPTURE

**Luke 23:55-56*

[They rested on the Sabbath.]

Luke 23:56b *TIB*

- *Silence* -

*Examen: How is the Spirit prompting me to honor "sabbath time?"
Do we escape from our call to quiet waiting and reflecting
by attending too much to what we need to do?
Do we escape from our call to action by withdrawing into quiet waiting and
reflecting?*

PRAYER

Creator and Architect of earth and all stars:
Cause us to rest from our labors this holy Sabbath as you rested from your work.
Cause us to anticipate without fear the rest that comes in death,
as we remember Jesus spent, exhausted, and
inert in the tomb
Cause us to wait in hope for the break of day and the resurrection.

[Remember all who have died through violence
and the miscarriage of justice.

Remember those who cannot rest,
and remember us in our restless thoughts,
strivings, and failures.

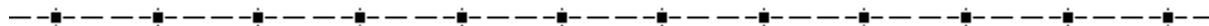
Lord, grant us rest and peace at the last.]

DTB

THE KYRIE (*spoken*)

Lord, have mercy
[Christ, have mercy.]
Lord, have mercy

- *Silence* -



CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION

(Saturday evening)

In this part of the Triduum Office we seek to live into the deep spirituality of the Great Paschal Vigil of Easter. In preparation, have at hand a candle or lamp, a Bible, a bowl of water, and a small roll or piece of bread (as mental images if not in embodied form).

KINDLING THE FLAME

(as we recall the lighting of the paschal candle by lighting our own flame)

Christ our Light!
[Thanks be to God!]
Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation 'round God's throne!
[Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!]

The Exultet

REMEMBERING THE STORY

**Hebrews 11:1-12:3*

(as we recall the story of salvation history by opening the Bible)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us lay aside everything that impedes us . . . Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads
us in our faith.

Excerpted from Hebrews 12:1-3 *TIB*

- Silence -

Let us chant Alleluia.
[Death has been swallowed up in victory.]
Let us chant Alleluia.
[O Death, where is your sting?]
O Blessed Alleluia of heaven!
No more anguish, no more love of destruction.
[Up above, praise to God,
and here below, praise to God.]

Here we chant in hope, there, in possession;
here it is Alleluia on the way,
there it is Alleluia on arriving home.
Let us shout Alleluia!

Augustine, 5th c.

[Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!]

THE EASTER GOSPEL:

**Matthew 28:1-10*

Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus the crucified, who is no longer here.
Jesus has been raised, exactly as it was foretold. Come and see the burial place.
Then go quickly and tell the disciples.
[Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!]

RENEWING OUR BAPTISM

Easter is a baptismal feast,
for baptism is a sacrament of the resurrection.
Therefore, let us come with faith to renew our baptism.

*Examen: Do I reject evil wherever I find it and repent of my sin?
Do I resist injustice, and oppression
in whatever forms they present themselves?
Do I put my trust in Christ's grace and serve him as Lord?*

PROFESSION OF FAITH

When members of the early church were asked the three questions of the baptismal creed, they responded with the word: "Credo!" Usually translated, "I believe," credo literally means "I set my heart upon it, or "I'll stake my life on this." Am I willing to put my life and my death on the line, responding with those through the ages for whom faith was a matter of life and death?

Do you believe in God? [Credo!]
Do you believe in Jesus Christ? [Credo!]
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? [Credo!]

*(touching the water and making the sign of the cross on the forehead) say:
"Remembering my baptism, I am thankful."*

- Silence -

SHARING THE RESURRECTION FEAST

(recalling the Eucharist we share with the Church throughout history and around the world)

Christ is with us!
The Risen One has met us,
blessed and fed us
on the road that leads us home.

[We are your people and you are our God.
Your love makes us friends;
your blood makes us kin.]

You are ever the father who gives us bread, not stones.
You are the mother who never forgets we're her own
From the beginning of life to the closing of time,
you are the One who is with us to the end.
Breathe on us gathered here, and all in your keeping.

[Breathe, Holy Spirit!]

*(Taking the bread, break it and, if another person or persons are present, share it with others.
Eat the bread, remembering other persons known or unknown who are sharing this service)*

- Silence –

PRAYER

God of peace who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make us complete in everything good so that we may do your will, working among us that which is pleasing in your sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever!
[Amen! Alleluia!]

Adapted from Hebrews 13:20-21

Hymn *(may be read, sung, or pondered silently)*

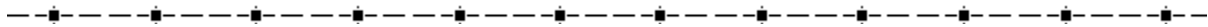
77.77 D Tune: EASTER HYMN, (UMH 302)

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Charles Wesley, 1739

- Silence –



MEETING THE RISEN CHRIST

(Sunday during the day)

CENTERING *Canticle of the Resurrection*

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
therefore let us keep the feast,
not with the old leaven of malice and evil,
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
Christ being raised from the dead
will never die again;
death no longer has dominion over him.

[The death he died, he died to sin, once for all,
but the life he lives, he lives to God.]

So consider yourselves dead to sin
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.
For as in Adam all die,
so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Alleluia!]

I CORINTHIANS 5:7-8 AND ROMANS 6:9-11,
TEXT ADAPTED FROM BCP, DTB, DWV

PSALTER

**Psalm 114*

Earth, tremble before your Maker,
before the God of Israel,
who turned the rock into a pool of water
and flint into a bubbling fountain.
Alleluia!

Psalm 114:7-8. 1a *TIB*

- *Silence* -

SCRIPTURE

**Colossians 1:15-20*

Hear what the Spirit is saying:
Why do you search for the Living One among the dead? Jesus is not here; Christ has
risen. Remember what Jesus said to you—that the Chosen One must be delivered into
the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again.

Selected from Luke 24:6-7 *TIB*

Holy wisdom! Holy word!

[Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!]

- *Silence* -

*EXAMEN: How can I live into the death-and-resurrection of Jesus
in my being and in my doing?
What does it mean for the Church to be a resurrection people?*

PRAYER

God of the night and of the morning: the day of resurrection has dawned upon us, the
day of true light and life, on which Christ, the life of believers, arose from the dead.
[Being blessed from morning to night by your gracious mercy, may we rejoice in the gift
of our Risen Redeemer. Amen.]

Mozarabic Sacramentary, 7th c. alt.

HYMN (*may be read, sung, or pondered silently*)

76.76D Tune: ST. KEVIN (*UMH* 315)

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain
of triumphant gladness;
God has brought forth Israel into joy from sadness;
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke, Israel's sons and daughters,
led them with unmoistened foot through the Red Sea waters.

PRAYER

God of life and light,
you have renewed us with your Holy Spirit
through this celebration of the paschal mystery.
[May we live as those restored by water and the Spirit
through Christ's incarnation, death and rising again
and be led with all your people to serve you faithfully
and come to feast at the paschal banquet
in your presence forever. Amen.]

DWV

COMMENDATION

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping,
[that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep we may rest in peace.]
May the divine help remain with us always.
and with those who are absent from us.

- Silence -

(All say silently while one voice says aloud:)

[Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit,
For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of Truth.]

CANTICLE OF SIMEON *(may be spoken or sung to Psalm Tone 1)*

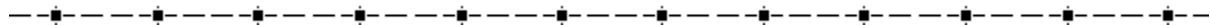
Lord, you have now set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;
for these eyes of mine have seen the Savior
whom you have prepared for all the world to see,
a Light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.

ICET

GOING FORTH

Let us go forth in the name of Christ
whose resurrection has brought us to new life,
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God. and the sustaining community of the Holy Spirit
will be with us now and always.

[Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!!]



TIB = *The Inclusive Bible* by Priests for Equality; Sheed and Ward (imprint of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.),
4501 Forbes Blvd., Suite 200, Lanham, MD 20706