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CO-OPERATING PARISH

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Friday 3 April 2026 – Good Friday

Our Service today is led by Mike Nielsen,
one of our Lay Preachers.

Welcome

Candle extinguishing

Never doubt the meaning of Lent. It happened a long time ago, but it happened. Jesus walked on this earth. He practiced a ministry of radical inclusivity, drawing to himself all the despised and rejected members of society. He lived what he taught: a life of justice and love, of profound compassion for all people. He lived a life acceptable to you, O God. His death terrifies us, because it reveals how committed the world is to its own way, and the price the world exacts from those whose commitment is to you.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of all the children in the world who suffer in body, in mind or in spirit.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray:

What we contemplate today is beyond words, beyond understanding. May the Holy Spirit intercede for us and give voice to what, for us, is inexpressible. Amen.

Call to Worship

Today is a day of sorrow.

We remember Jesus, a man of suffering and familiar with pain.

Today is a day of abandonment.

We hear Jesus' cry: my God, why have you forsaken me?

Today is a day of failure.

We are confronted by close friends who betray and deny each other.

Today is a day of tears.

We grieve for the death of the innocent and the violence of the world.

Today is Good Friday.

We come to God in our own need, yet with confidence that we will receive mercy and find grace to help us.

Opening prayer

Merciful God, on this solemn day when we remember Christ's death on the cross, be not far from us.

Fortify us to remain at the cross in prayer and sorrow. Help us to see and feel the immensity of your love for all the world, and for us.

Give us wisdom to comprehend the mysterious paradox of divinity subjected to humility and death. Fill us with the mercy and grace we need to testify to the truth in our worship and in our lives. Amen.

Hymn: We do not hope to ease our minds (AA 147)

1. We do not hope to ease our minds
by simple answers, shifted blame,
while Christ is homeless, hungry, poor,
and we are rich who bear his name.
As long as justice is a dream
and human dignity denied,
we stand with Christ; disturb us still
till every need is satisfied.
2. We cannot ask to live at peace
in comfort and security
while Christ is tried in Pilate's hall
and drags his cross to Calvary.
As long as hatred stifles truth
and freedom is betrayed by fear,
we stand with Christ; give us no peace
till his peace reigns in triumph here.
3. We will not pray to be preserved
from any depth of agony
while Christ's despairing cry rings out:
God, why have you abandoned me?
As long as we have hope to share
of life renewed beyond the pain,
we stand with Christ all through the night
till Easter morning dawns again.

Stations of the Cross – Introduction

Today's service will be oriented around the Stations of the Cross – an ancient tradition designed to help Christians make a spiritual pilgrimage through contemplation of the Passion of Christ, the crucifixion of Jesus and the events leading up to it.

We'll be using a version of the Stations of the Cross designed for all age worship by Rev Emily Garcia.

Each station will be represented by a picture and will be accompanied by a brief snippet of the story, then a prayer.

I'll lead us in prayer to begin:

O God, you are the God of our salvation. Have mercy on us and help us so that we can start to contemplate Your mighty acts, with which you gave us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Station – Jesus is condemned to death

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Let us pray.

(Silence)

Loving God, before your Child went up to joy, he suffered pain; before he entered into glory, he was crucified. In your mercy, grant that as we pick up our crosses and follow him, we will find this way is actually the way of life, and the way of peace. Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

Second Station – Jesus takes up his Cross

Jesus went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing.

Let us pray.

(Silence)

Jesus, you chose to take this cross and suffering upon you, and as you did you redeemed all creation. Give us courage to take up our crosses and follow you, who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: O Christ, Lamb of God (An Agnus Dei) (Richard Bruxvoort Colligan)

O Christ, Lamb of God
Sharing our weakness, our weakness
Have mercy, have mercy

O Christ, Lamb of God
Bearing our healing, our healing
Have mercy, have mercy

O Christ, Lamb of God
Sharing our story, our story
Oh grant us, grant us Your peace
Oh grant us, grant us Your peace
Amen

Third Station – The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene

As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Let us pray.

(Silence)

Holy God, you sent your Word to serve others: Bless everyone who serves others, and give them wisdom, patience, and courage, so that they can do their work in Your name to serve the suffering, the friendless, and all in need. We ask this for the love of Jesus. Amen.

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

Fourth Station – Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

There followed after Jesus a great multitude of the people, and among them were women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Let us pray.

(Silence)

Teach all of us in your Church, O Lord, to know when we have sinned, and then to turn away from that sin and turn our backs on it. If you will give us your grace, we can walk away and protect our children and our children’s children from our own mistakes, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

Prayers of the people

On this Good Friday, we hear again the story of Jesus’ arrest, trial and death two thousand years ago. Yet what took place then is still the reality of life for people today.

For those denied or betrayed by friends or family...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those carrying a heavy cross...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those facing trial and judgement...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those torn between conscience and expediency...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those experiencing pain and abuse...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For friends who offer support at a cost to themselves...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who mourn the loss of loved ones...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Amen.

Fifth Station – Jesus is stripped of his garments

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And they divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfil the scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.”

Let us pray.

(Silence)

Holy God, you do not wish for anyone to suffer; but when suffering comes, you are with us in the midst of it. When we cannot escape cruel words and harmful acts, we know you are there with us. Help us remember Jesus, and bring something good out of evil. In your Holy Name we pray, Amen.

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

Sixth Station – Jesus is nailed to the Cross

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, “He was numbered with the transgressors.”

Let us pray.

(Silence)

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honour of your Name. Amen.

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

Hymn: O Christ, Your Crucifixion (Hannah C. Brown; [Tune: Passion Chorale](#))

1. O Christ, your crucifixion
is here among us now,
creation bound and breathless
by tortures we allow.
Can wrongs meet reparation
and war-torn peoples peace,
your ravaged earth find mercy
and prisoners, release?
2. O Christ, you know our suffering,
you join our stricken cries.
When shattered hearts are silent
you speak for us with sighs.
Can your compassion change us,
your presence bring a balm
to mend us with forgiveness
as weapons pierce your palm?
3. O Christ, our tears are falling
for sorrows old and new.
You grant this consolation:
our wounds are known to you.
If we are not forsaken,
if love can stay and save,
what hope might be discovered
beyond this cross and grave?

Seventh Station – Jesus dies on the Cross

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished!” And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” And he bowed his head, and handed over his spirit

Let us pray.

(Silence)

O God, in Jesus’ death and resurrection, you delivered us from the power of our enemy. You help us to shed off all our sins like broken chains, that we may forever live with Jesus in the joy of his resurrection, the One who lives and reigns now and forever. Amen

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

Eighth Station – Jesus is laid in the tomb

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

Let us pray.

(Silence)

O God, your blessed Child was laid in a tomb in a garden. Since we have been buried with him in the waters of baptism, may we find our perfect rest in Your eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

Blessing

Today is Good Friday, and we have gathered around the cross to remember Jesus.

Go from this place in hope and faith, for the story of Jesus is not finished.

We go to remember and to trust in God.

The blessing of God, Earth-Maker, Pain-Bearer, and Life-Giver, goes with you.

Hymn: Stay with me, the night has come (Protest of Praise; [Tune: Cysga Di Fy Mhlentyn Tiws](#))

1. Stay with me, the night has come,
Stay with me, the night has come,
Stay with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.
2. Pray with me, the night has come,
Pray with me, the night has come,
Pray with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.
3. Watch with me, the night has come,
Watch with me, the night has come,
Watch with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.
4. Weep with me, the night has come,
Weep with me, the night has come,
Weep with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.

We leave the church in silence following the final verse of the hymn.

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