

**A service for Good Friday – 10th April, 2020
intended for Bridge Court MHA**

Call and Welcome: John 3:16 & 17

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Amen.

Our Good Friday service will be hymns with a series of readings from St. Luke, using "The Message", whose everyday style may help us see Jesus' passion and death in contemporary language. I apologize if it doesn't work for you, but I just want to try out this form of the Bible with you.

Reading 1: Luke chapter 22 verses 39 to 46

Leaving there, he went, as he so often did, to Mount Olives. The disciples followed him. When they arrived at the place, he said, "Pray that you don't give in to temptation."

He pulled away from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, remove this cup from me. But please, not what I want. What do *you* want?" At once an angel from heaven was at his side, strengthening him. He prayed on all the harder. Sweat, wrung from him like drops of blood, poured off his face. He got up from prayer, went back to the disciples and found them asleep, drugged by grief. He said, "What business do you have sleeping? Get up. Pray so you won't give in to temptation."

Hymn: 'There is a green hill far away,'

- 1. There is a green hill far away,
Outside a city wall,
Where our dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.**
- 2. We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.**
- 3. He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood.**
- 4. There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.**
- 5. O dearly, dearly has he loved!
And we must love him too,**

**And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.**

Reading 2: Luke chapter 22 verses 47 to 53

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than a crowd showed up, Judas, the one from the Twelve, in the lead. He came right up to Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said,

"Judas, you would betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

When those with him saw what was happening, they said,

"Master, shall we fight?"

One of them took a swing at the Chief Priest's servant and cut off his right ear. Jesus said,

"Let them be. Even in this." Then, touching the servant's ear, he healed him.

Jesus spoke to those who had come—high priests, Temple police, religious leaders: "What is this, jumping me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I've been with you in the Temple and you've not so much as lifted a hand against me. But do it your way—it's a dark night, a dark hour."

Hymn: 'Jesus in the olive grove,'

**1. Jesus in the olive grove
Waiting for a traitor's kiss,
Rises free from bitterness.**

**2. As he wakes his comrades up,
Torches flicker in the glen;
Shadows turn to marching men.**

**3. In that dawn of blows and lies
Church and State conspire to kill,
Hang three rebels on a hill.**

**4. Innocent and guilty drown
In a flood of blood and sweat.
How much darker can it get?**

**5. How much darker must it be
For a God to see and care
That we perish in despair?**

**6. It is God himself who dies!
God in man shall set us free:
God as Man – and only he.**

**7. Let him claim us as his own;
We will serve as best we can
Such a God and such a Man!**

Reading 3: Luke chapter 22 verses 54 to 62

Arresting Jesus, they marched him off and took him into the house of the Chief Priest. Peter followed, but at a safe distance. In the middle of the courtyard some people had started a fire and were sitting around it, trying to keep warm. One of the serving maids sitting at the fire noticed him, then took a second look and said,

"This man was with him!" He denied it,

"Woman, I don't even know him." A short time later, someone else noticed him and said,

"You're one of them." But Peter denied it:

"Man, I am not." About an hour later, someone else spoke up, really adamant:

"He's got to have been with him! He's got 'Galilean' written all over him."

Peter said,

"Man, I don't know what you're talking about." At that very moment, the last word hardly off his lips, a rooster crowed. Just then, the Master turned and looked at Peter. Peter remembered what the Master had said to him: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." He went out and cried and cried and cried.

Hymn: 'My song is love unknown,'

**1. My song is love unknown,
My Saviour's love for me,
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.**

O who am I.

That for my sake

My Lord should take

Frail flesh and die?

**2. He came from his blest throne,
Salvation to bestow;**

**But men made strange and none
The longed-for Christ would know.**

But O my Friend,

My Friend indeed,

Who at my need

His life did spend.

3. Sometimes they strew his way,

And his sweet praises sing;

Resounding all the day / Hosannas to their King.

Then 'Crucify!'

Is all their breath,

And for his death

They thirst and cry.

4. Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
He gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries!
Yet they at these
Themselves displease
And 'gainst him rise.

5. They rise and needs will have
My dear Lord made away:
A murderer they save,
The Prince of Life they slay;
Yet cheerful he
To suffering goes,
That he his foes
From thence might free.

6. In life no house, no home,
My Lord on earth might have;
In death no friendly tomb
But what a stranger gave.
What may I say?
Heaven was his home;
But mine the tomb
Wherein he lay.

7. Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine:
Never was love, dear King,
Never was grief like thine!
This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days
Could gladly spend.

Reading 4: Luke chapter 22 verses 66 to 71

When it was morning, the religious leaders of the people and the high priests and scholars all got together and brought him before their High Council.

They said,

"Are you the Messiah?" He answered,

"If I said yes, you wouldn't believe me. If I asked what you meant by your question, you wouldn't answer me. So here's what I have to say: From here on the Son of Man takes his place at God's right hand, the place of power."

They all said, "So you admit your claim to be the Son of God?"

"You're the ones who keep saying it," he said.

But they had made up their minds,

"Why do we need any more evidence? We've all heard him as good as say it himself."

Hymn: 'Who would ever have believed it?'

1. Who would ever have believed it?

Who could ever have conceived it?

Who dared trace God's hand behind it

When a servant came among us?

2. Like a sapling in dry soil,

He was rooted in our presence;

Lacking beauty, grace and splendour,

No one felt attracted to him.

3. We despised him, we disowned him,

Though he clearly hurt and suffered:

We, believing he was worthless,

Never turned our eyes towards him.

4. Yet it was the pain and torment

We deserved which he accepted,

While we reckoned his afflictions

Must have come by heaven's instruction.

5. Though our sins let him be wounded,

Though our cruelty left him beaten,

Yet, through how and why he suffered,

God revealed our hope of healing.

6. We, like sheep despite our wisdom,

All had wandered from God's purpose;

And our due in pain and anger

God let fall on one among us.

7. Who would ever have believed it?

Who could ever have conceived it?

Who dared trace God's hand behind it

When a servant came among us?

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father and Lord of life, we come to worship you on this solemn day in reverence and penitence, for we know the dreadful price Christ Jesus was willing to pay for not only our sins but the sins of the whole world. Our readings remind us of your amazing grace to a broken, selfish world, for instead of punishing us as we deserve, you allowed your beloved Son to bear our punishment, though he was sinless. Merciful Lord, we acknowledge our failure to live as you call us to live, of our part in Christ's passion and death. Pardon and restore us, heavenly Father and as you forgive us, help us to forgive our neighbours when they hurt or offend us.

When our Lord Jesus hung on that cross, he looked outwards at the world with all its needs and suffering and despite his agony, he not only pleaded with you to forgive those who were killing him, but arranged for John to take care of Mary, our Saviour's mother. Help us, also, to look out at the

world in all its beauty and brokenness, so we may do whatever we can to help and care for others, for by doing so we are building your kingdom in Jesus' precious name.

We know that we are only a small part of your Church, but we pray that all our brothers and sisters in Christ will unite to bear the light of Good news to a world darkened by selfishness and evil. Strengthen our faith in these trying times, as the world is seeking to deal with coronavirus, so we may encourage and help our neighbours who are fearful for the future. Teach us to be bold in proclaiming Christ crucified and raised to life again, to celebrate his victory over sin and death for our sakes, for his is the victory.

Finally, Lord, we pray for our world, that you will come to rule the hearts and minds of all nations, that justice and loving kindness will triumph over wrongdoing and cruelty and that the beauty of your peace will be established in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We shall say the Prayer Jesus taught his followers.

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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading 5: Luke chapter 23 verses 1 to 25

Then they all took Jesus to Pilate and began to bring up charges against him. They said,

"We found this man undermining our law and order, forbidding taxes to be paid to Caesar, setting himself up as Messiah-King." Pilate asked him,

"Is this true that you're 'King of the Jews'?"

"Those are your words, not mine," Jesus replied. Pilate told the high priests and the accompanying crowd,

"I find nothing wrong here. He seems harmless enough to me." But they were vehement.

"He's stirring up unrest among the people with his teaching, disturbing the peace everywhere, starting in Galilee and now all through Judea. He's a dangerous man, endangering the peace." When Pilate heard that, he asked, "So, he's a Galilean?"

Realizing that he properly came under Herod's jurisdiction, he passed the buck to Herod, who just happened to be in Jerusalem for a few days. Herod was delighted when Jesus showed up. He had wanted for a long time to see him, he'd heard so much about him. He hoped to see him do something spectacular. He peppered him with questions. Jesus didn't answer—not one word. But the high priests and religion scholars were right there, saying their piece, strident and shrill in their accusations. Mightily offended, Herod turned on Jesus. His soldiers joined in, taunting and jeering. Then they dressed him up in an elaborate king costume and sent him back

to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became thick as thieves. Always before they had kept their distance.

Then Pilate called in the high priests, rulers, and the others and said, "You brought this man to me as a disturber of the peace. I examined him in front of all of you and found there was nothing to your charge. And neither did Herod, for he has sent him back here with a clean bill of health. It's clear that he's done nothing wrong, let alone anything deserving death. I'm going to warn him to watch his step and let him go."

At that, the crowd went wild:

"Kill him! Give us Barabbas!" (Barabbas had been thrown in prison for starting a riot in the city and for murder.) Pilate still wanted to let Jesus go, and so spoke out again. But they kept shouting back,

"Crucify! Crucify him!" He tried a third time.

"But for what crime? I've found nothing in him deserving death. I'm going to warn him to watch his step and let him go."

But they kept at it, a shouting mob, demanding that he be crucified. And finally they shouted him down. Pilate caved in and gave them what they wanted. He released the man thrown in prison for rioting and murder, and gave them Jesus to do whatever they wanted.

Hymn: 'The Servant King'

**1. From heaven You came,
Helpless babe, entered our world,
Your glory veiled; not to be served
But to serve and give Your life
That we might live. *Chorus:***

*This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.*

**2. There in the garden of tears,
My heavy load he chose to bear;
His heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said. *Chorus:***

**3. Come see His hands and His feet,
The scars that speak of sacrifice ;
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered. *Chorus:***

**4. So let us learn how to serve,
And in our lives enthrone Him;
Each other's needs to prefer,
For it is Christ we're serving. *Chorus:***

Reading 6: Luke chapter 23 verses 32 to 49

Two others, both criminals, were taken along with him for execution. When they got to the place called Skull Hill, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing." Dividing up his clothes, they threw dice for them. The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting, "He saved others. Let's see him save himself! The Messiah of God—ha! The Chosen—ha!" The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him, making a game of it. They toasted him with sour wine: "So you're King of the Jews! Save yourself!"

Printed over him was a sign: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him:

"Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!" But the other one made him shut up:

"Have you no fear of God? You're getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him—he did nothing to deserve this."

Then he said,

"Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom."

He said,

"Don't worry, I will. Today you will join me in paradise."

By now it was noon. The whole earth became dark, the darkness lasting three hours—a total blackout. The Temple curtain split right down the middle. Jesus called loudly,

"Father, I place my life in your hands!" Then he breathed his last.

When the captain there saw what happened, he honoured God: "This man was innocent! A good man, and innocent!" All who had come around as spectators to watch the show, when they saw what actually happened, were overcome with grief and headed home. Those who knew Jesus well, along with the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a respectful distance and kept vigil.

Hymn: 'Come and see, come and see,'

**1. Come and see, come and see,
Come and see the King of love;
See the purple robe and crown of thorns he wears.
Soldiers mock, rulers sneer
As he lifts the cruel cross;
Lone and friendless now, he climbs towards the hill.**

Chorus:

*We worship at your feet,
Where wrath and mercy meet,
And a guilty world is washed by love's pure stream.
For us he was made sin –*

Oh, help me take it in.

Deep wounds of love cry out, 'Father, forgive.'

I worship, I worship

The Lamb who was slain.

**2. Come and weep, come and mourn
For your sin that pierced him there;
So much deeper than the wounds of thorn and nail.
All our pride, all our greed,
All our fallenness and shame;
And the Lord has laid the punishment on him.**

Chorus:

**3. Man of heaven, born to earth
To restore us to your heaven.
Here we bow in awe beneath your searching eyes.
From your tears comes our joy,
From your death our life shall spring;
By your resurrection power we shall rise.**

Chorus:

Reading 9: Luke chapter 23 verses 50 to 56

There was a man by the name of Joseph, a member of the Jewish High Council, a man of good heart and good character. He had not gone along with the plans and actions of the council. His hometown was the Jewish village of Arimathea. He lived in alert expectation of the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Taking him down, he wrapped him in a linen shroud and placed him in a tomb chiselled into the rock, a tomb never yet used. It was the day before Sabbath, the Sabbath just about to begin. The women who had been companions of Jesus from Galilee followed along. They saw the tomb where Jesus' body was placed. Then they went back to prepare burial spices and perfumes. They rested quietly on the Sabbath, as commanded. Amen.

Hymn: 'When I survey the wondrous cross'

**1. When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

**3. See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**4. His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.**

**5. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.**

Prayer and Benediction

Amazing God, our readings have ended in the gloom of crucifixion and seeming failure. The darkness of this world seemed to have triumphed over the One true Light, but on Sunday we shall hear of the resurrection of Jesus and our sadness will be replaced with joy.

As we have shared in the passion and death of Jesus, may we also share in the power and joy of new life in Christ, where we have the privilege and responsibility of taking good news of your love to those we meet. Amen.

May we go from this place in reflective peace and the love of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit remain with us and those we love now and forevermore. Amen.