

GOOD FRIDAY COMMUNITY SERVICE
MARCH 29, 2024
7:00 PM

ORDER OF WORSHIP

NOTE: People's responses in **bold**; * rise in body, mind, or spirit

PRELUDE ~ *Were You There?*

WELCOME

Good evening, and welcome to our solemn gathering on Good Friday as we recall the suffering and death of Christ on the cross. May this time together help us reflect on Christ's compassion and our response to such love.

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

We gather here in the shadow of the cross, **to remember the sacrifice of Jesus.**

In these moments, **we seek to understand the depth of our Savior's love.**

Let our hearts be open to the weight of Christ's sacrifice, **so we find solace in the shadow of God's mercy. Amen.**

*** HYMN ~ *Abide with Me***

#636

*** OPENING PRAYER**

Almighty God, as we gather in the shadow of the cross, we acknowledge Your presence among us. Open our hearts to the depth of Your love and sacrifice. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

*** CALL TO REPENTANCE**

In our tradition, repentance is seen as a crucial aspect of the spiritual journey, emphasizing the need for individuals to recognize their imperfections, seek reconciliation, and strive for personal and spiritual growth. It involves a conscious decision to align one's life with higher principles, leading to a renewed and transformed way of living. Repentance is not about the feeling of guilt but a commitment to positive change and a desire for reconciliation with God. In this light, let us consider the things that separate us from feeling the love of God.

*** CONFESSION OF SIN**

We acknowledge, O Gracious God, the brokenness that keeps us distant from You. As the evening unfolds and the lights grow dimmer, we confess the darkness of our pride, the moments when self-will has led us away from Your perfect love. Forgive us and draw us near. In the lessening light, we acknowledge the shadows of resentment and unforgiveness that have marred our relationships. Forgive us, O Lord, and teach us the way of reconciliation. As the

shadows deepen, we confess the times we have yielded to the temptations that draw us away from Your righteous path. Have mercy on us, Lord, and guide us in our steps. In the growing darkness, we recognize the wounds we have caused others and the pain we have inflicted. May Your healing grace mend what is broken and may our actions bring forth restoration. Merciful God, strengthen our trust in You, even as we experience total darkness humbled by the weight of our transgressions. Rekindle with in us a longing to be reunited with You in Christ, renewing us and drawing us close once more. Amen.

*** ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Siblings in Christ, hear the good news: as we confess our sins we have already begun the steps of forgiveness through following Christ into God's future. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*** HYMN ~ *O Sacred Head Now Wounded***

#202

*** LENTEN CREED**

I confess my need of God for all that I am and all that I have.

I confess my need of Jesus Christ for healing in relationships and guidance in my life that I might be a worthy steward of all that has been entrusted to me.

I confess my need of the Holy Spirit to kindle the Divine spark in my heart that draws me closer to the Holy so I may respond in love to all.

SPECIAL MUSIC ~ *On the Via Dolorosa* Chancel Choir with Patti Dietzel, violin

READINGS from the Gospel of John 18:33-19:42 [MSSG] and John 1:1-5 [KJV]

As we enter the darkness of Good Friday, please turn your attention to the readings of Christ's trial and death following the betrayal and denial of Christ by his followers.

We imagine the darkness that enveloped the world at the crucifixion as Jesus takes upon Himself the weight of our sins.

The Charge ~ Linda Coffin

Pilate went back into the palace and called for Jesus. He said, "Are you the 'King of the Jews'?"

Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you this about me?"

Pilate said, "Do I look like a Jew? Your people and your high priests turned you over to me. What did you do?"

"My kingdom," said Jesus, "doesn't consist of what you see around you. If it did, my followers would fight so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. But I'm not that kind of king, not the world's kind of king."

Then Pilate said, "So, are you a king or not?"

Jesus answered, “You tell me. Because I am King, I was born and entered the world so that I could witness to the truth. Everyone who cares for truth, who has any feeling for the truth, recognizes my voice.”

Pilate said, “What is truth?”

We imagine the darkness that enclosed the world at the crucifixion as Jesus takes upon Himself the weight of our sins.

The Verdict~ Jim Hoban

Then he went back out to the Jews and told them, “I find nothing wrong in this man. It’s your custom that I pardon one prisoner at Passover. Do you want me to pardon the ‘King of the Jews’?”

They shouted back, “Not this one, but Barabbas!” Barabbas was a Jewish freedom fighter.

We imagine the darkness that covered the world at the crucifixion as Jesus takes upon Himself the weight of our sins.

The Punishment and Second Chance ~ Eric Hantz

So Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on his head, threw a purple robe over him, and approached him with, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they greeted him with slaps in the face.

Pilate went back out again and said to them, “I present him to you, but I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime.” Just then Jesus came out wearing the thorn crown and purple robe.

Pilate announced, “Here he is: the Man.”

When the high priests and police saw him, they shouted in a frenzy, “Crucify! Crucify!”

Pilate told them, “You take him. You crucify him. I find nothing wrong with him.”

The Jews answered, “We have a law, and by that law he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

We imagine the darkness that encircled the world at the crucifixion as Jesus takes upon Himself the weight of our sins.

The Response of Christ ~ Mary Jane Dise

When Pilate heard this, he became even more scared. He went back into the palace and said to Jesus, “Where did you come from?”

Jesus gave no answer.

Pilate said, “You won’t talk? Don’t you know that I have the authority to pardon you, and the authority to—crucify you?”

Jesus said, “You haven’t a shred of authority over me except what has been given you from heaven. That’s why the one who betrayed me to you has committed a far greater fault.”

At this, Pilate tried his best to pardon him, but the Jews shouted him down: “If you pardon this man, you’re no friend of Caesar’s. Anyone setting himself up as ‘king’ defies Caesar.”

When Pilate heard those words, he led Jesus outside. He sat down at the judgment seat in the area designated Stone Court (in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*). It was the preparation day for Passover. The hour was noon. Pilate said to the Jews, “Here is your king.”

They shouted back, “Kill him! Kill him! Crucify him!”

Pilate said, “I am to crucify your king?”

The high priests answered, “We have no king except Caesar.”

Pilate caved in to their demand. He turned him over to be crucified.

We imagine the darkness that wrapped the world at the crucifixion as Jesus takes upon Himself the weight of our sins.

SPECIAL MUSIC ~ *Oh Love That Casts Out Fear*

Patti Dietzel, violin

The Crucifixion ~ Sheri Fallon

They took Jesus away. Carrying his cross, Jesus went out to the place called Skull Hill (the name in Hebrew is *Golgotha*), where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, Jesus in the middle. Pilate wrote a sign and had it placed on the cross. It read:

Jesus the Nazarene ~ the king of the Jews.

Many of the Jews read the sign because the place where Jesus was crucified was right next to the city. It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The Jewish high priests objected. “Don’t write,” they said to Pilate, “‘The King of the Jews.’ Make it, ‘This man said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’”

Pilate said, “What I’ve written, I’ve written.”

When they crucified him, the Roman soldiers took his clothes and divided them up four ways, to each soldier a fourth. But his robe was seamless, a single piece of weaving, so they said to each other, “Let’s not tear it up. Let’s throw dice to see who gets it.” This confirmed the Scripture that said, “They divided up my clothes among them and threw dice for my coat.” (The soldiers validated the Scriptures!)

While the soldiers were looking after themselves, Jesus’ mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her. He said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother.

Jesus, seeing that everything had been completed so that the Scripture record might also be complete, then said, "I'm thirsty."

A jug of sour wine was standing by. Someone put a sponge soaked with the wine on a javelin and lifted it to his mouth. After he took the wine, Jesus said, "It's done . . . complete." Bowing his head, he offered up his spirit.

Then the Jews, since it was the day of Sabbath preparation, and so the bodies wouldn't stay on the crosses over the Sabbath (it was a high holy day that year), petitioned Pilate that their legs be broken to speed death, and the bodies taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man crucified with Jesus, and then the other. When they got to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. One of the soldiers stabbed him in the side with his spear. Blood and water gushed out.

The eyewitness to these things has presented an accurate report. He saw it himself and is telling the truth so that you, also, will believe.

These things that happened confirmed the Scripture, "Not a bone in his body was broken," and the other Scripture that reads, "They will stare at the one they pierced."

We imagine the darkness that surrounded the world at the crucifixion as Jesus takes upon Himself the weight of our sins.

The Burial ~ Jim Hoban

After all this, Joseph of Arimathea (he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he was intimidated by the Jews) petitioned Pilate to take the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission. So Joseph came and took the body.

Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus at night, came now in broad daylight carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. They took Jesus' body and, following the Jewish burial custom, wrapped it in linen with the spices. There was a garden near the place he was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been placed. So, because it was Sabbath preparation for the Jews and the tomb was convenient, they placed Jesus in it.

We experience the darkness that reminds us of our separation from God as Jesus takes upon Himself the weight of our sins.

The WORD

In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There is no Benediction because the events of this night do not conclude until Easter morning resurrection. Keep the faith in vigil through Good Friday and Holy Saturday preparing to share the love through Easter.

We invite you to share your offering in the alms plate in the Narthex. The offering goes to our common mission of Family Promise which Heidelberg Union Church, New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Good Shepherd United Church of Christ support jointly.

Please depart in silence.

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