

St Paul United Church of Christ

Good Friday Worship

April 2, 2021

Call to Worship

Friends, as we gather on this most sacred day, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God.

*Hymn

“What Wondrous Love is This!”

#257 Blue Hymnal
vss 1-2

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, what wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul,
for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!*

*When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking
down; when I was sinking down beneath God’s righteous frown, Christ laid aside his crown, for
my soul, for my soul, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.*

Opening Litany

(from Chalice Hymnal, responsive)

Christ Jesus, in agony in the garden of Olives, troubled by sadness and fear, comforted by an angel, **have mercy upon us.**

Christ Jesus, betrayed by the kiss of a friend, abandoned by your apostles, delivered into the hands of sinners, **have mercy upon us.**

Christ Jesus, accused, condemned to die, and beaten, **have mercy upon us.**

Christ Jesus, denied by Peter, delivered to Pilate and Herod, counted among wrongdoers, **have mercy upon us.**

Christ Jesus, carrying your cross to Calvary, consoled by some women, helped by Simon of Cyrene, **have mercy upon us.**

Christ Jesus, stripped of your clothes, given vinegar to drink, crucified as a criminal, **have mercy upon us.**

Christ Jesus, insulted on the cross, praying for your executioners, pardoning the one by his side who confessed his wrong, **have mercy upon us.**

Christ Jesus, giving up your spirit into the hands of your Heavenly Parent, **have mercy upon us.**

God be praised for the wondrous cross, the tree of life. Which bears upon itself the scars and wounds of the world, **Yet heals the sick, brings hope to the desperate, and comforts the oppressed.**

God forbid that we should glory, **except in the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Hymn

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

#261 Blue hymnal

*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.*

*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.*

*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?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.*

This is the testimony about what happened that day, as it is told to us by Mark, the earliest Gospel writer. Jesus has been betrayed by one of his own disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was arrested by soldiers. His disciples abandoned him and fled. He was tried by the Sanhedrin and was condemned by them. He was turned over to the Roman procurator Pilate, who made the crowd choose between him and another prisoner, which one would be set free. The crowd chose to free the other man, whose name was Barabbas, meaning “son of the Father.” Jesus was beaten, mocked by the Roman soldiers, and then forced to carry his cross. When he could no longer carry it, the soldiers forced a man named Simon, who had come from Libya, in northern Africa, to carry it. Finally they arrived at the place of execution, a hill called Golgotha, which means “place of a skull”:

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Judeans.” And with him they crucified two law-breakers, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross!” In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah.” And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God's Son!”

Hymn

“O Love, How Deep, How Broad”

#244 Blue Hymnal

vss 1-4

*O love, how deep, how broad, how high, how passing thought and fantasy:
that God, the Son of God, should take our mortal form for mortals' sake.*

*For us baptized, for us he bore his holy fast and hungered sore;
for us temptations sharp he knew, for us the tempter overthrew.*

*For us he prayed, for us he taught, for us his daily works he wrought,
by words and signs and actions thus still seeking not himself but us.*

*For us to evil power betrayed, scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed,
he bore the shameful cross and death, for us gave up his dying breath.*

Meditation

“Amen. This man was God’s son.” The Centurion who spoke these last words in the story of Calvary was a hardened man, and he may have said them sarcastically. Who could believe that the tortured man, now hanging exposed and lifeless on a cross, bore any resemblance to a messenger of God? But those who were followers of Jesus, both then and now, have taken them literally, and imagined that God might have placed them on the Centurion’s lips, because, for us, the words were true.

In his dying, Jesus completed the lessons his life had taught. The ultimate power of violence is the threat of death. When death occurs, that is all that violence can do. When violence is opposed by violence, death is only multiplied. But when Jesus died, it was love that was remembered, and even the vile instrument of the cross became a sign of reconciliation. The great message of our faith is that love never dies.

Anthem

“Father”

Diana Ridener, Tina Tuck,
Paula Weil

Prayer Litany for Good Friday

O Christ, Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

Have mercy upon us.

O Christ, whose body was crucified because of our failure to love,

Have mercy upon us.

O Christ, who receives our confessions and our repentance,

Have mercy upon us.

O Christ, who accepts our intention to live in covenant with the God of love,

Have mercy upon us.

May we learn to love our neighbors and forgive those who do us harm,

Incline our hearts to your ways, O God.

May we seek reconciliation in a world of many differences.

Incline our hearts to your ways, O God.

May we learn the humility of placing the welfare of all ahead of our own advantage.

Incline our hearts to your ways, O God.

And may we see the world made new in the coming of your Realm.

All praise to you, our God and Savior.

***Hymn**

“Beneath the cross of Jesus”

#255 Blue Hymnal

*Beneath the cross of Jesus I gladly take my stand –
the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land,
a home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontime heat, and the burden of the day.*

*Upon that cross of Jesus, my eye at times can see
the very dying form of One who suffered there for me;
and from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess –
the wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.*

*I take, O cross, your shadow, for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of his face,
content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.*

Benediction

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be and abide with us now and forever. Amen.

Postlude