



TETHERED
TO GOD:
I CHOOSE LOVE...

April 10th, 2020
Good Friday

Centre for
Music, Liturgy & the Arts



Preparing for worship

You may wish to find a comfortable space and light a candle to remember the presence of Christ this day. If you are worshipping with others you are encouraged to share the various parts of worship and read them aloud.

This Good Friday, we come face to face with suffering, injustice, and violence. For a short time we look to the crucified Christ and see the depth of sorrow, pain and despair. We wonder what it means and experience again the invitation of God to know that we are loved – we are tethered – even in the darkest times of life.

Call to Worship

Come, you who are weary seeking places of rest.
Come, you who yearn for greater meaning and depth.
Come, you who suffer, longing for healing and hope.
Come, you who ponder the mystery and strange stillness of this day.
**Come, let us make this Jesus-journey together
tethered to the One who is love.**

Prayer

Today is a day for tears –
tears for a world who sees Love and puts it to death,
tears for a world who is given Truth and turns the other way
tears for a world who locks away Life in a cold stone tomb
tears for a world who cannot bear the weight of suffering
and yet offers no healing.
Today is a day of tears – for then, for now, for the future.
Tears of anger,
tears of frustration,
tears of loss and grief and sadness, deep sadness.
Tears for what has been and what is lost,
tears for what could have been and what is not,
tears for what should not be but is.

Tears – only tears, O God.
Take our tears as offerings of our souls.
Hold us and draw us near to you. Amen.

Nearer My God to Thee

As we set out upon this Good Friday journey, one that is familiar to us, it's violence and terror well known, take a moment to be in the presence of God. Surround yourself with the assurance of God's love and draw near to God this day. [Click here](#) to listen to Nearer, My God, to Thee.

Reading from John 18

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden. Now Judas, who betrayed him, brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

Prayer of Confession

A little over 2 years ago, Sam Smith, an English singer songwriter released a new song. In an interview he said it was in response to when he went with a charity to Iraq. He'd spent five days in Mosul and felt embarrassed that he'd known so little about the world and other people's lives. He said: "I'd just written a bunch of songs about love. So I wanted to write about how I'm now starting to open my eyes, at 25, to what is going on in the rest of the world, and that it's not always pretty."

Loving God, we confess that so often we only turn to pray in times of need. So often, we close our hearts to the needs of the world. So long as our cocoon of safety remains in tact, we would prefer not to see or understand the suffering of the world. And yet, you call us to open our eyes and see your presence – even in places of suffering. You call us to engage with the world. Forgive us, O God, turn us to you that we be love and hope in the world.

[Click here](#) to listen to Sam Smith's song, *Pray*. (*note: language warning)

When Sam released this song, he wrote to his fans: “I hope you love 'Pray', I hope it becomes your friend in those deep dark nights of confusion and loneliness.” It's like praying, or even the desire to pray, offers a still point in the middle of feeling overwhelmed.

Hear these words of assurance:

God hears our prayers, whenever we pray,

God offers us a still point and hope,

even when we are overwhelmed.

God brings comfort in the darkness,

and never leaves us abandoned.

Thanks be to God.

Reading from John 18

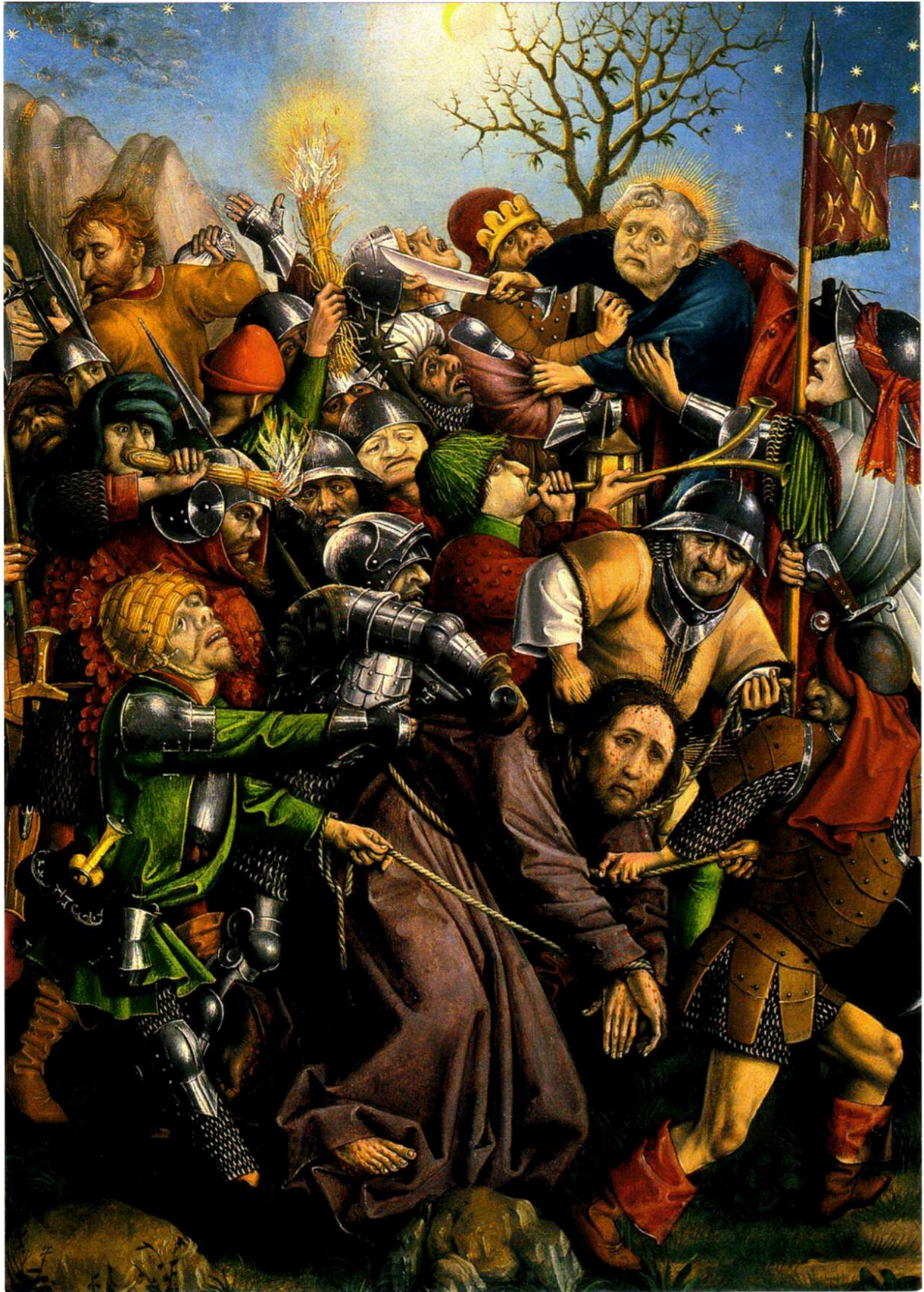
They took Jesus to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” They answered, “If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.” The Jews replied, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death.”

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom

were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate asked him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” They shouted in reply, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a bandit.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe.



Spend time with *Capture of Christ*, a painting from 1450 by the Master of the Karlsruhe Passion. What emotions do you see present? Which of these resonate with you this day? Where do you find yourself in the crucifixion of Christ this day?

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http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Master_of_the_Karlsruhe_Passion_001.jpg

Reading from John 19

So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.” The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.”

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.”

Prayers of Lament

This is a time of grief and sorrow; confusion and anger. Our nation has emerged from the bushfire crisis to find ourselves in another crisis of a different kind. The Christian faith has never been afraid of asking questions of God, or of expressing the deepest and rawest of emotions. And so today, let us bring before God, our prayers of lament.

We lament...

Bushfires that ravage the land
Environmental policies that harm the earth
Violence towards women and children
Silencing of marginalised voices
Places where kindness is crushed
Suffering that is undeserved

Illness that diminishes life
Death that comes too early

God,

Hear our cries of pain and anguish.

Hear our questions in the face of suffering -

why, O God, do your people suffer?

why is your beloved creation destroyed?

We have watched the landscape burn and the creatures die,

we have seen the devastation of fire and flood.

We watch the spread of coronavirus and the devastation, fear, alienation,
and death that comes with it. Spare us, heal us, unite us in action.

We see the sudden disarray of our community as jobs are lost, leaders
search for answers, businesses are destroyed.

Our hearts are weary. Our souls long for living water.

And yet, we will remember,

with you there is hope.

Your steadfast love is for every generation and for all the earth.

You do not abandon your people. You do not leave your creation
unattended.

You come as living water to renew courage and bring wisdom.

Even now. For us, for our communities, for our world.

To this we cling.

To this hope we are tethered.

Reading from John 19

They took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." When the

soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

I Choose Love

Mark Miller, music minister in the United Methodist Church, wrote *I Choose Love*, in response to the horrific and violent mass shooting at Emanuel AME church in Charleston South Carolina. This prayer, invites us to find the strength to Choose Love, in the midst of pain and suffering. [Click here](#) to pray as you listen to Mark sing.

Reaffirmation of Baptism

Take a bowl of cup of water and reaffirm your baptism. At your baptism, you received the blessing and challenge of Christ's cross. Mark your forehead with water in the sign of the cross, reminding you of your baptism.

As you do this, you are invited to use the following words:

Remembering my baptism, I take upon myself the cross of Christ and follow in his way. I choose love.

Reading from John 19

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came

to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

As Jesus' death is incomplete without his resurrection, this service has no conclusion until Easter Sunday. Receive these words as a source of courage:

"Life's mysteries remain and deepen, its answers unresolved. So you walk on through the dark because that's where the next morning is."

Bruce Springsteen in the trailer to "Western Stars".

Sometimes it is enough to know only the one next step.

Sometimes it is enough to know only that the light will come.

Sometimes it is enough to know only that one day there will be music and dancing and rejoicing again.

Sometimes it is enough to know that others have been here before, and their remembering assures us that tomorrow will come.

"We walk on through the dark because that's where the next morning is."