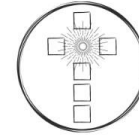




## WHAT ARE YOU UP TO? Good Friday



*Serve & Enrich*  
Zion United Church  
of Christ

### Gathering Song

*Via Dolorosa* (The Way of Suffering), Kari Hon

**Gathering**—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote, “The cross we bear precedes the crown we wear. To be a Christian one must take up ‘their’ cross, with all its difficulties and agonizing and tension-packed content and carry it until that very cross leaves its mark upon us and redeems us to that more excellent way which comes only through suffering.” We move into the darkness this night, taking up our own cross, ready to journey with Jesus to his. We do not embark on this journey alone but go with a God who raises us up.

*Lenten Chorus: “You Raise Me Up”*

**When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary  
When troubles come and my heart burdened be  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence  
Until You come and sit awhile with me**

**CHORUS: You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong, when I am on Your shoulders  
You raise me up to more than I can be**

**There is no life, no life without its hunger.  
Each restless heart beats so imperfectly.  
But when you come, and I am filled with wonder,  
Sometimes I think I glimpse eternity. (CHORUS)**

**Prayer**—God of the Fearful and Grieving, faith’s eclipse of light has overtaken our souls. The darkness sits with us as a companion on this part of the journey as we retreat into our spirits. Confusion, exhaustion, tears, and aches become part of the story. Even on the night of the sword, we will find solace. Even when the glances of neighbors pierce our hearts and their words swirl around in our minds, God’s peace will alleviate any anxiety.

**The Lord's Prayer** (unison)—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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Choir**

*O Man of Sorrow*

**We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving**

**Invitation**— Encourage one another to do good works and perform acts of loving compassion as we share our tithes and offerings this day.~

**March Benevolence**—One Great Hour of Sharing

**We Give Thanks**—Bless the gifts we bring before you, Merciful God, that they may comfort those who suffer and bring hope to those in despair. Amen.

**A Prayer of Transformation and New Life**—God of the Healing Wounds, the pain of our traumas shadow the light that beams from our souls. From the shadows, we cast a shade upon our neighbors. Such gloom is a sword in their hearts. May we be aware of how our pain creates agony in the life of our neighbors. May we reach out to our companions on the journey when we have caused them grief in their own lives. Amen.

**Words of Grace**—Even when we abide in Gethsemanes and Golgathas and can't see the presence of the Divine, God still abides with us. God's grace extends to us. May the soothing love and grace of God bring us peace even in valleys, gardens, and hills of shadows, and may we see hope for the future beyond the gloom.

**THE PASSION NARRATIVE:  
ELIMINATING THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

We begin our journey into darkness, knowing that there are those still who wish to extinguish the Light of the World. We gather to bear witness to Jesus' body, raised up high on a cross of death. As the light goes out, we'll hear God's word from John 18-19, along with reflections and song. After each reading, a candle will be extinguished, moving us further into the darkness of the night and closer to the cross. When the final light, the Light of Christ, is extinguished, we will depart in

silence into the night. You're welcome to stay as long as you wish in the quiet of this sacred place. Let us begin...

## Hymn

*Go to Dark Gethsemane, 272*

*As the shadows of light creep in  
And the light takes its last breath,  
The dawn of betrayal begins to saunter  
Into the tense and tender evening.*

*God so loved the world that Jesus wept-  
Knowing that betrayal and hate  
Were sweeping across the land.*

*The gift of understanding was swept away  
For money, or fame, or one's own protection-  
Out of privilege, out of fear.  
The Light of the world, the greatest Light  
Was extinguished bit by bit,  
Hour by hour.+*

## The First Reading—John 18:1-14

*Paula Prange*

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas 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, 'For whom are you looking?' 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, 'For whom are you looking?' 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.' This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.' Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was

Malchus. 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. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

*The Light was extinguished  
For the hope of riches,  
For the booming voices of the powers-that-be.  
The charisma of power  
Delight even the most faithful  
Enough for one to drown in shame  
And block one’s sight from forgiveness.+*

*The First Light is Extinguished*

**The Second Reading—John 18:15-18 & 25-27**

*Greg Miller*

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, ‘You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, ‘You are not also one of his disciples, are you?’ He denied it and said, ‘I am not.’ One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, ‘Did I not see you in the garden with him?’ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

*The Light was dimmed  
From the winds of denial-  
Dimmed out of fear.*

*Holding one's breath  
Wondering if they knew  
And distancing from the Light.  
One denial. Then two.  
And at the third "I do not know him"  
There was weeping from a torn soul.+*

*The Second Light is Extinguished*

## **Hymn**

*Lamb of God, 281*

## **The Third Reading—John 18:19-24 & 28-32**

*Debi Hamblet*

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.' When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So 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.' (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

*The Light was quenched  
By the ones in power-  
Whether it was the top of Religion  
Or the top of the State.  
The Light had no endurance  
When the two mixed their powers.  
They schemed together.*

*Maybe, just maybe, they'll keep their control a little while longer  
By stamping out the Light.+*

*The Third Light is Extinguished*

**The Fourth Reading—John 18:33-40**

*Paula Prange*

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 to the Jews. 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.

*The Light was smothered*

*By the ones who aimlessly followed*

*The ones in power.*

*Was it their demeanor? Their voices?*

*The way they made all the rules for them?*

*Was it the way they sustained their privileges?*

*Why would they follow the hateful*

*Instead of the one who beamed love?*

*Why would they save the life of a bandit,*

*Instead of the one who taught kindness?*

*The Light never mattered to this gathering,*

*To the ones who loved strength through dominance.*

*Their empire was of this world.+*

*The Fourth Light is Extinguished*

**Hymn***O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, 284***The Fifth Reading—John 19:1-25 & 31-37***Michelle Van Dyke*

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. They kept coming up to him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, ‘Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.’ 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. Pilate therefore said to him, ‘Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?’ Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’ 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, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. 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.’ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So 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. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.’ This was to fulfil what the scripture says, ‘They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.’ And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

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. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, ‘None of his bones shall be broken.’ And again another passage of scripture says, ‘They will look on the one whom they have pierced.’

*The Light was dying out  
After torture and beatings,  
After thorns pressed into his flesh.  
After dragging a wooden beam  
To the place of the Skull.  
After nails driven, and insults thrown,  
After the blood of life ran dry.  
“It is finished,” he said.  
As tired, dimming light  
Flickered its last movement  
And soberly died.+*

*The Fifth Light is Extinguished*



**The Sixth Reading—John 19:25b-27**

*Vivian Thomas*

And that is what the soldiers did.

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.

*The Light was snuffed out  
From the dust of followers fleeing.  
Not knowing what would come next  
And bolting to an undisclosed location.  
Terrified, they hid-  
Far, far away from events  
At the Place of the Skull.  
Deserting the One. Leaving the One behind.  
For the few who found strength and courage-  
For a mom and a few bold friends-  
We give our thanks.+*

*The Sixth Light is Extinguished*

**Hymn**

*Were You There, 283*

**The Seventh Reading—John 19:38-42**

*Debi Hamlet*

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.

*The Light had died out  
From trauma and hate  
From fear and frustration  
From greed, ego, and power.  
The Light was gone  
By the time myrrh and aloes  
Anointed the Empty One.  
The Light was gone  
As spices and linen wrapped the Empty One.  
The Light was gone  
As the Empty One was placed in the tomb-  
Set in a space of shadows.  
And as the dusk wrapped around the tomb,  
We, too, walk away. +*

*The Light of Christ is Extinguished*

**We Walk Away in Silence**