

The First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn
Good Friday Service, April 2, 2021
7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Call to Worship

The people stood yelling,

Crucify!

And it breaks our hearts every time.

For Jesus' death occurs every time someone is ignored, mistreated, or oppressed.

Crucify!

That word tears away at God's Beloved.

Crucify!

(Readers, please light your candles)

The First of the Shadows: Jesus is Arrested

John 18:1-12a

18 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

⁴ Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" ⁵ "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)

⁶ When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said. ⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." ⁹ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus.

(Extinguish the First Candle)

The Second of the Shadows: Peter Denies Jesus

John 18:12b-18; 25b-27

¹² They bound him ¹³ and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, ¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter. He replied, "I am not."

¹⁸ It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. So they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not. ²⁶ One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

(Extinguish the Second Candle)

A Prayer of Confession for Good Friday

Ever-present God, on this Good Friday night, our world is engulfed in shadows as we remember the story of Jesus' death. We confess that we want to push the fast-forward button on this familiar story because it hurts so much. It hurts to think of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. It hurts to imagine Jesus abandoned and suffering on the cross with only a faithful few watching Him breathe His last breath. It hurts to watch your Light overtaken by the shadows of the world.

But we must find our place in this crucifixion story and feel the pain that is there: the pain of the world, of faithless decisions, of betrayal, of injustice. Jesus entered that pain out of faithfulness to You and to us, to witness to the truth that is justice, wholeness, and love.

We confess that we are afraid to enter this pain with Jesus. Strengthen us with Your courage. Offer glimpses of hope in the shadows of death. Let us know that You are present with us here in this moment of pain, now as always. Amen.

Assurance of Blessing

Beloved followers of Jesus, it is okay to feel hurt and uncomfortable as you enter into this story and imagine your place in it. Know that God meets you in the story with courage as well as love. Take comfort in the knowledge that your sins are forgiven. Amen.

The Third of the Shadows: The Trial of Jesus Before Pilate John 18:28-38a

²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?” ³⁰ “If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.”

³¹ Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” “But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. ³² This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die. ³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

³⁴ “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?” ³⁶ Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” ³⁸ “What is truth?” retorted Pilate.

(Extinguish the Third Candle)

The Fourth of the Shadows: Jesus is Condemned to Death John 18:38b - 19:16a

³⁸ With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one

prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews?’” ⁴⁰ They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face.

⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” ⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” ⁶ As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.” ⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

¹¹ Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” ¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.” ¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. ¹⁵ But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. ¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

(Extinguish the Fourth Candle)

**The Fifth of the Shadows:
From the Cross, Jesus Calls Forth the Beloved Community**

John 19:16b-27

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷ Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

¹⁹ Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. ²¹ The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

²² Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” ²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴ “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, “They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.” So this is what the soldiers did.

²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman,^[b] here is your son,” ²⁷ and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

(Extinguish the Fifth Candle)

Prayer

Ever-Present God, we are amazed that Jesus, nearing His death, reached out to comfort and empower those dearest to Him. At the foot of His cross, He called His mother and His beloved disciple into a new community. Give us the grace and courage to join them there, welcoming all who struggle and grieve, into this new covenant of love and grace.

We pray for our world, our community, and our family under the shadow of the cross in the words Jesus taught us, saying, “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.

The Sixth of the Shadows: Jesus Dies.
30

John 19:28-

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

(Extinguish the Sixth Candle)

The Seventh of the Shadows: Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb.
42

John 19:38-

³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

(Extinguish the Seventh Candle)

**Instrumental Music Offering:
Were You There When They Crucified My Lord”**

Jesus is laid in the tomb, and His followers leave Him to God, in the silence and rest of the Sabbath.

(After the musical offering has finished, in silence please turn off your computer and exit the service.)