



WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH

Good Friday Service, 3 April 2026

The Gong is sounded three times (*calling us to gather and to be present*).

Musical Prelude (*a time for quiet preparation*).

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Lighting the Community Candle

***Come light, light of hope and love, give light to creation
Enlighten our hearts and show us your truth.***

The community candle is lit.

May this candle be to us a tangible reminder of the transformative spirit of Lent that is here with us today. **Amen**

Opening Sentences

On this Good Friday, as God's gathered community, we remember our sacred story, ***a story of brutality, false accusations, and humiliation.***

We remember the story of Jesus the Christ, who reveals to us the cost of love, ***a reality that, through our baptism, reminds us of the uneasy path of discipleship.***

Together, let us enter into the story that unfolds in the shadows, ***as Christ shines his light of faith, hope, and love.***

And the greatest of these...
is love.

Welcome and Introduction

A Candle Liturgy for Good Friday

Never doubt the meaning of Lent. Jesus walked on this earth. He practised a ministry of radical inclusivity, drawing to himself all the despised and rejected members of society. He

lived what he taught: a life of justice and love, of profound compassion for all people. He lived a life embodying the love of God. His death terrifies us, because it reveals how committed the world is to its own way, and the price the world exacts from those whose commitment is to Christ.

Silence

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of all the children in the world who suffer in body, in mind or in spirit.

The Christ candle is extinguished.

Prayer: What we contemplate this day is beyond words, beyond understanding. May the Holy Spirit intercede for us and give voice to what, for us, is inexpressible. **Amen.**

HYMN A man of ancient time and place *Tune: Tallis' Canon TIS 558*

1. A man of ancient time and place
with foreign speech and foreign face,
reveals the glory, power and grace
of costly, unexpected love.

2. A rabbi, schooled in Moses' Law,
a male, amending Herod's flaw,
arouses wonder, rage and awe
with costly, unexpected love.

3. By teasing word and healing deed,
a leper touched, an outcast freed,
he bears the fruit and plants the seed
of costly, unexpected love.

4. The cost we barely can surmise
when, lifted up before our eyes,
the face of God we recognise
in crucified, unfathomed love.

5. May faith and hope within us grow,
the way of Christ to tell and show,
and may the Spirit breathe and blow
in costly, unexpected love. *(Brian Wren)*

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Jesus before Pilate and Herod Luke 23: 1-11 *(NRSV Updated Edition)*

Silence

Reflection 1 *

I remember a man who had dreams of what might be: that people would be set free from ideas and images about God that enslaved them, that people would believe that through their everyday acts of human kindness they are intimately connected with the sacred, that people would live "in peace, in God's presence, all the days of their lives".

I remember a man driven by his dreams.

Reflection 2

I remember a man who had moments of breakthrough,

when it must have seemed his dream was being realised,
the times people really listened and responded,
the men and women who were prepared to walk with him and support him,
times when he spoke better and more convincingly than other times.

I remember a man enthused by his successes.

Reflection 3

I remember a man who learned of the cruel death of his cousin.

He got into a boat, seeking a lonely place, where he could be with his friends to absorb the shock, to grieve quietly,
and to calm the feelings of powerlessness and frustration
and fear for his own future.

I wonder what he prayed about that night?

I wonder what helped him leave that lonely place to go forward to confront life, rather than retreat into isolation and safety?

I remember a man driven by his convictions.

HYMN Lent Hymn (*Tune: 'Cruger', Thy hand, O God has Guided*). Andrew Pratt 15/2/2020.

A calendar will call us to share with Christ in Lent,
to walk within the darkness: some drawn, yet others sent;
and here we sense contrition, an ashen cross we bear,
reminder that the fire of love of God is everywhere.

In many different places God's people bear the strain
of human expectation as cruel norms constrain;
for each convention sealing another person's fate
forgive, release, give freedom before it is too late.

We witness acts of hatred dressed up as self-defence,
where vengeance is the motive hid deep in self-pretence;
great God forgive those moments, when hate and human pride
leads to the domination of those we might deride.

As Christ you suffered torment, the torture and the hate,
yet on the cross forgave them, the ones who sealed your fate,
so as we kneel confessing complicity, we pray,
great God forgive humanity when selfishness holds sway.

Jesus Sentenced to Death Luke 23: 13-25

Silence

Reflection 4

I remember a man who had to find quiet places to pray and think about things,
a man who had to live by faith, a man who had to search for answers,
a man who had to think about which path to follow,
a man who looked to his friends for support and understanding.

I remember someone very much like me.

Reflection 5

I remember a man whose dream was shattered,
who broke down and cried over what could have been,
who knew the pain of failure and powerlessness,
who knew what it was like to feel broken and terribly alone.

I remember someone human like all of us.

Reflection 6

I remember a man who knew he was going to die,
who gathered with his friends knowing it was for the last time,
who spoke to them about what he really believed,
who wanted them to remember him and keep his dream alive.

I remember a testament to love.

TAIZE CHANT Within our Darkest Night (*remain seated*)**

Within our darkest night, you kindle a flame that never dies away,
never dies away
Within our darkest night,
you kindle a flame that never dies away, never dies away ... X3.

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus – Luke 23: 26 -27, 32-49

Silence

Reflection 7

I remember a man crucified.
He was a failure, abandoned by his male friends, taunted, despised,
enduring a shameful and agonising death,
no consoling or heartfelt presence his God to help him.

I remember a man whose faith in all he believed in was tested to the limits.

Reflection 8

I remember a man who forgave, not just once, but over and over,
a man who embodied the generosity and limitless outpouring of
the Source of all life, a man whose life and death point us
to another dimension of what it means to be human.
No power on earth, nothing, could move this man from what he believed.

I remember a man who inspires me by the way he died.

Reflection 9

I remember a man of extraordinary religious insight, utterly convinced of the
connectedness between human loving and living *in* God,
determined to give people the personal authority in their relationship with God, wanting
to set people free from fear of the Unknown,
setting his heart on breaking down barriers between people.

I remember a man who sets me free.

TAIZE CHANT Within our Darkest Night (*remain seated*)

Within our darkest night, you kindle a flame that never dies away,
never dies away
Within our darkest night,
you kindle a flame that never dies away, never dies away ... X3.

RESPONDING

An Affirmation of Faith

Let us commend ourselves into the care of each other,
and to that sacred creativity we name as 'God'.

The people stand as they are able

In God, Source of Life

***our deaths are not the final word,
our moments of crisis are part of eternal possibility,
and our weakness is taken up into the courage of God.***

As followers of Jesus of the Way,

***our humanness is touched with divine life,
our tears are mingled with longing love,***

***and our solidarity with those who suffer
is joined by divine presence.***

In the Spirit of Creativity,
***there are no boundaries on the dream,
there is no end to hope,
and we will never live beyond the cherishing of God.***

(Adapt/Dorothy McRae-McMahon/bst)

**HYMN We Walk The Way That Has No
End** *(Tune: Winchester New)*

1. We walk in silence while the earth
Quivers and cracks beneath our feet
Swallows our dreams and shatters worth
Solemn, we trudge to hearts' dull beat.

2. We walk in solidarity
and sing of hope that never dies
We march to end disparity
graves open as our spirits rise.

3. We walk the way that has no end
Free to evolve, transform our creed
Hearts, torn like curtains, start to mend
Love rising now in word, in deed.

4. There are no strangers on the way
Just travellers who will soon be friends
A destination - there is none
A spiral path that never ends.

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SENDING FORTH

Now... go in peace and faith towards Easter day.
For nothing can separate us
from the love of God,
the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the communion of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Community Candle is extinguished

People leave the worship space in silence as and when they are ready.

Presider: Evan Mann

Keyboard: Brendan O'Loughlin

Candle Liturgist: Libby Coates

Readers: members of Woden Valley Uniting Church

* The 9 reflections come from Morwood, M. *Praying a New Story*. Richmond. Spectrum Publications, 2003.

** *Within our Darkest Night* (Dans Nos Obscurites) - Taizé song