

Friday 2nd April 2021 – Good Friday

Opening Prayer

You may like to be still or listen to a calming piece of music as we gather in worship. If you have a candle you may wish to light it now.

Holy God, as we come to worship you, help us to remember, that though apart, we belong to your church, your people, your world, we are not alone. Draw us together by your Spirit as we worship. Amen.

Hymn: [My song is love unknown](#) (StF 277)

My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.
O who am I,
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die?

He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow;
but they made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O my Friend,
my Friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend!

Sometimes they strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then 'Crucify!'
is all their breath,
and for his death
they thirst and cry.

Why, what has my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries!

Yet they at these
themselves displease,
and 'gainst him rise.

They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away;
a murderer they save,
the Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful he
to suffering goes,
that he his foes
from thence might free.

In life no house, no home,
my Lord on earth might have;
in death, no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say?
Heaven was his home;
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.

Here might I stay and sing,
no story so divine:
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine!
This is my Friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days
could gladly spend.

Samuel Crossman (c. 1624-1683)

Let us pray together,

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus Christ
endured the cross for our sake.
Remove from us all coldness and cowardice of heart, and give us courage
to take up our cross and follow him;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Methodist Worship Book, *Collect for Good Friday*, p.538)

Today's Gospel Reading: John 18:1-19

(You may wish to read this passage from John's Gospel all at once or throughout the day as you reflect on the events of Good Friday).

Time to Reflect – Jesus is condemned to death

Imagine yourself in the midst of the crowd beginning to shout for Jesus' crucifixion as you read and reflect:

Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord... That had been the cry of the crowd as he entered Jerusalem, celebrating, triumphal, excited, hopeful. How could so much change in so little time? (The crowd shouts Crucify him)

Yet some whispered that Jesus had known and even said that he would be put to death. Arrested in a garden, beaten, blind-folded, brought before the religious authorities and all the might of the Roman Empire. He stood before Pilate, who asked what crime he had committed. Had his crime been loving too much? Or healing the sick? Or telling stories that changed people's lives? Had his crime been welcoming the stranger or eating with the unpopular? Or was it his criticism of the established order? His popularity? Annoying the religious authorities? Threatening the status quo? *(Crucify him)*

"Why, what evil has he done?" – the question on Pilate's lips that none could answer. How could these things be punishable by agonising nails through flesh, robbing him of all humanity, to face the death of a criminal? And yet the cry began to be heard... *(Crucify him).*

What had Jesus done that was deserving of death? Nothing. *(Crucify him)* Yet Barabbas, a murderer, a criminal, a dangerous man, goes free? *(Crucify him).*

I wonder what our place in that crowd would have been? *(Crucify him)*

Would we have shouted crucify him along with them? Would we have been drawn into the hype, the frenzy, the fear? Looking for a scapegoat, someone to blame? Would we have been frightened of speaking against this injustice? *(Crucify him)*

I wonder how do we respond to the injustices of our world today? When we encounter poverty, discrimination, division, hurt, homelessness, hunger, how do we respond? How will we respond? Will we collude with the crowd or will we speak out in the name of love?

Take a time to sit quietly. You may wish to listen to a piece of quiet music or simply be still.

A time of prayer

In our time of prayer there is an opportunity to bring before God the things on our hearts and minds using the following themes:

Holy God, we come to you today with our prayers:
We pray for our world...
We pray for the Church...
We pray for all those striving for justice...
We pray for those suffering with COVID-19 and its effects...
We pray for those grieving the loss of loved ones...
We pray for those we know and love who need our prayers...

We offer all our prayers in and through the name of our living Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: [Jesus, remember me](#) (StF 777)

Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.

Taize Community

(If you have a lit candle, extinguish it at this point and spend a few moments in quiet reflection)

Closing Prayer

Holy God, as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son, help us to see and know your love for us fully expressed here.

Crucified Christ, we draw near with awe to this holy place of Calvary; here you transformed evil into the victory of love, and violence into the victory of peace. On this painful and mysterious day, accept our thanks for the cost of all you endured, and give us the courage to stay with you until it is finished.

We wait, we watch for the hope that defies despair, the life that defies death, the beginning that defies the end. Amen.