

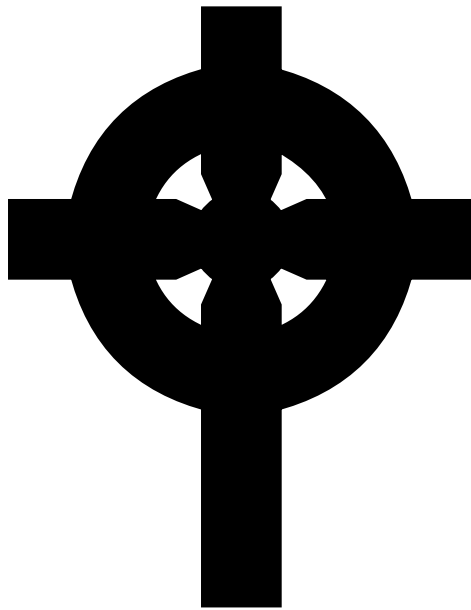
COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Affiliated with the United Church of Christ &
The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Good Friday:

Were you there?



Pastoral Team:

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PRELUDE

The Music of Lent

Music by Cheryl Strecker

WELCOME & PREPARING OUR HEARTS

CENTERING MUSIC

“Were You There?”

Don Cameron, Dina Johnson, Kelly McLaughlin, Cheryl Strecker

As this song is performed, let us commit to a spirit of prayer and veneration as we behold and commemorate the death of Christ

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PROFESSION OF FAITH:

One: In this holy time, as we remember the sacrifice of the cross, we offer the prayers of our hearts, that through them we may be transformed to be servants of justice, love, and peace.

All: We come, O God, to worship you—the great Three in One: Source, Word, and Eternal Presence; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With longing for you, we profess this great mystery of faith: We believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth—of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son], who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

One: We veil our faces before your glory, O Holy and Immortal One. We bow before the cross of your wounded Christ. With angels and archangels, we praise you, our Mercy, and we bless you, our Compassion, for in our brokenness you have not abandoned us.

All: Hear us as we pray through Jesus, our high priest: Heal all division, reconcile the estranged, console the suffering, and raise up to new life all that is bound by death. Amen.

Go to dark Gethsemane, you who feel the tempter’s power.
 Your Redeemer’s conflict see: watch with him one bitter hour.
 Turn not from his griefs away: learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgment hall, view the Lord of life arraigned.
 O the wormwood and the gall! O the pangs his soul sustained!
 Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; learn of him to bear the cross.

Calvary’s mournful mountain climb; there, adoring at his feet.
 Mark that miracle of time, God’s own sacrifice complete:
 “It is finished!” hear him cry; learn of Jesus Christ to die.

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.
¹⁴ Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance,
 beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals—
¹⁵ so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that
 which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall
 contemplate.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been
 revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground;
 he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we
 should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and
 acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised,
 and we held him of no account. ⁴ Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our
 diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was
 wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment
 that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has
 laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not
 open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its
 shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By a perversion of justice he was taken
 away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living,
 stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹ They made his grave with the wicked and his
 tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his
 mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an

offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. ¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Responsive Reflection:

One: When the prophet Isaiah proclaimed these words, it was centuries before the time of Christ. The prophet was describing the pain and suffering of the people Israel, who share a special relationship with God—a royal priesthood, a kingly nation to bring blessings upon the whole earth. The “suffering servant” in the Book of Isaiah, tells of a particular story in the history of Israel: of the loss of their kingdom; of the pain of exile; and of the hope of redemption.

All: As people of faith, we honor our Jewish ancestors while also looking to Jesus as the Christ. In Jesus we hear the words of the prophet Isaiah fully-filled. In the death of Jesus, we can see another telling of Isaiah’s words: of one who is abandoned, beaten, and who absorbs the sins of the world upon him—in order to bring sin to a final end, with the hope of new life. Amen.

HYMN 263

“Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed”

Alas! And did my Savior bleed,
And did my sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For sinner such as I?

Was it for crimes that I have done,
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut its glories in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died
For his own creatures’ sin.

But drops of grief can ne’er repay,
The debt of love I owe.
Here, Lord, I give myself away;
‘Tis all that I can do.

SECOND READING:

Based on Psalm 22:1-8; 12-19

One: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

All: Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned upon the praises of Israel. In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted and you delivered them.

One: But I am a worm, and not human, scorned by others, and despised by the people. All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads. Like bulls they encircle me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

All: I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of the earth. For like dogs they are all around me; a company of evildoers encircle me. My hands and feet have shriveled; I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O LORD, do not be far away. O my help, come quickly to my aid!

HYMN 284

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

O sacred head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down.

Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, thine only crown:

O sacred head, what glory, what bliss till now was thine?

Yet, though despised as gory, I joy to call thee mine.

What thou, my Lord, has suffered was all for sinners' gain.

Mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain.

Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve thy place.

Look on me with thy favor, and grant me to thy grace.

What language shall I borrow to thank thee, dearest friend?

For this thy dying sorrow, thy pity without end.

O make me thine forever; and should I fainting be:

Lord, let me never, never, outlive my love to thee.



THIRD READING

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹ and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him...

FOURTH READING

John 18:1-12

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. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from [among] the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" ⁵ They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶ When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." ⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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 police arrested Jesus and bound him.

Song of Reflection 286

"Stay with Me"

Stay with me, remain here with me.
Watch and pray, watch and pray.

*Stay with me, remain here with me.
Watch and pray, watch and pray.*

Stay with me, remain here with me.
Watch and pray, watch and pray.

FIFTH READING:

Luke 23:1-31

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. ² They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king." ³ Then Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered, "You say so." ⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man." ⁵ But they were insistent and said, "He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place." ⁶ When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷ And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. ⁹ He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.

¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ I will therefore have him flogged and release him." ¹⁸ Then they all shouted out together, "Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!" ¹⁹ (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) ²⁰ Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; ²¹ but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" ²² A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him." ²³ But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

²⁶ As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. ²⁸ But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

SONG FOR COMMEMORATING THE CROSS

“On My Cross”

As this song is performed, bring all your mindfulness to the Cross of Christ: an innocent man, who chose to absorb ridicule, torture, and death into an ultimate declaration of God's love and mercy over all injustice and sin.

SIXTH READING, RESPONSIVE

Luke 23:32-33

One: Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.

All: When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

FINAL READING:

Luke 23:34-53

³⁴ Then Jesus said, *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”* And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ He replied, *“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”*

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land-until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, *“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”* Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent.” ⁴⁸ And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. ⁵⁰ Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, ⁵¹ had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. ⁵² This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid.

TOLLING OF THE BELLS

HYMN 283

“Were You There?”

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh—sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh—sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh—sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

THE BLESSING & DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE

