

GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP SCRIPT

Welcome to worship on this holy night we call Good because of the good work Jesus did for the world. Our service is based on the seven last words and phrases Jesus spoke from the cross on the night he died. During the service you will experience seven scenes from the cross through God's word, through original poetry, and through song. Throughout this Lenten season, Jesus has asked us questions of the kingdom: questions of belief, healing, meaning, understanding, and love. Tonight Jesus' question echoes the one spoken to his disciples in John 6 as many turned away from the way of Jesus' kingdom. "Do you also wish to go away?" asks Jesus. Tonight we do not, even though our instincts may call us to ignore the meaning of this night or turn away from its pain. Tonight we respond as Peter did to Jesus' question, "Lord to whom shall we go?", and we stay as Christ's act of love makes our broken lives and broken world whole again.

Procession of the Cross

P: Behold the life-giving cross on which was hung the salvation of the whole world.

C: Oh, come, let us worship him.

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Song ~ When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Reading 1: Luke 23:32-38

³²Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³When 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. ³⁴Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And 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!" ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

Poetry Reading - Their fingers do the bidding they know is right. Hammer the nails. Ignore the cries. The orders they were given are steel; they carry it on their backs. Forgive them father, for they know not what they do.

Song - Were You There

Reading 2: Luke 23:39-43

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

Poetry Reading - A closing of the eyes and a flash of blue. Weight lifted off the shoulders, stones rolled away. Today, you will be with me in paradise.

Song – Jesus, Remember Me

Reading 3: John 19:25b-27

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Poetry Reading - A sorrow that digs a pit into her chest. A hole that the wind whistles through. Her hands shake and her cheeks are wet. She watches him writhe and she cries. No matter what he says, he will always be her son. Woman, behold your son. Son, this is your mother.

Piano Solo – Ave Maria

Reading 4: Mark 15:33-35

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah."

Poetry Reading - A cry of help. For help. It is a fall, a scrape of knees on the dirt his feet no longer touch. It is red. Darker than his blood and richer than the king himself. Father. Yahweh. Dad. My God, my God why have you forsaken me?

Song ~ O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Reading 5: John 19:28-29

²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." ²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

Poetry Reading - It is sour, like the grapes picked too early in his childhood. Back when there was packed dirt under his feet, when the wind was still clutched in the palm of his hand. The memory is fleeting, but there nonetheless. I am thirsty.

Song ~ My Song is Love Unknown

Reading 6: John 19:30

³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Poetry Reading - A hanging of the head. Threads snapping. The tapestry falls. His eyes close, eyelashes fluttering. The pain will be short-lived. A sigh. It is finished.

Solo ~ Ah, Holy Jesus

Reading 7: Luke 23:44-46

⁴⁴It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.

Poetry Reading - The rich purple of the curtain lay on the ground. The wine has dried on his lips. The nails tug at his hands, at his feet. A slow rising in the pit of his stomach. Agony breathes into his lungs. And he speaks. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Going Forth

Peace.

The Savior has breathed his last

The tomb is closed.

Our time is measured in a season of lament.

All we know is darkness, and all we can do is wait...wait...wait...