

**Melville United Church  
April 10, 2020  
Good Friday**




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Worship presented today by  
Rev. Marion Loree

((Based on 'Good Friday Service' by Gary Paterson & Keri K. Wehlander  
in *Courage for Hallelujahs* - Pg 51)

We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality and culture of the Indigenous peoples with whom Treaty 4 - also known as the Haldimand Tract - was signed and the territory wherein our church resides, and we acknowledge our responsibilities as treaty members.

**Welcome**

*We gather in community. Even though we cannot be together physically, we share in the community of faith through things like this - printed or videoed worship. This service is prepared for Good Friday. This day is one of the saddest days in the church calendar because today we mark the death of Jesus - one who came to model and teach us about God's love. His message was a threat to the religious and civil authorities of his time and so they plotted to shut him up, to destroy him. We know that didn't work. We know that his message lives on but we also know that people are still being crucified in many ways even in this day and age.*

*And so we lament and we grieve and we remember how the world tried to snuff out love. We mark an occasion of humanity at its worst.*

*A warning before we begin - this short service is a solemn one. Good Friday can be a difficult time for many of us. There is no joy in an execution, especially of one who lived only love. But I invite you to stay the course to the end if you can because we cannot truly experience the joy and new life of Easter without going through this time of pain and death.*

*Also please note we will end in silence.*

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**April 10, 2020**

**Sharing the Light** *(take a moment to light a candle and centre yourself to prepare to enter in to a time of worship and prayer. As you light the candle repeat the following words)*

I light a candle

in the name of the God who creates life,  
in the name of the Christ Presence who loves life,  
in the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life.

**Call to Worship:**

I invite you now into a time of worship.  
A time for recognizing and acknowledging  
the still small voice within each of our hearts.  
A time to listen and reflect on issues of the day.  
A time to find calm and hope and inspiration.  
Come, let us worship together.

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:15-23 (The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation)

Now on the occasion of the festival the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner, whomever the crowd would designate. At the time they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you wish me to release for you? Barabbas? Or Jesus, the so-called Messiah?" Pilate knew, of course, that it was out of jealousy that they had handed Jesus over.

While Pilate was still presiding on the bench, his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man. I had a dream about him last night which has been troubling me all day long."

But the chief priests and elders convinced the crowds that they should ask for Barabbas, and have Jesus put to death. So when the governor asked them, "Which one do you wish me to release for you?" ; they all cried, "Barabbas!:

Pilate said to them, "Then what am I to do with Jesus, the so-

called Messiah?"

"Crucify him!" they all said.

"Why? What crime has he committed?" Pilate asked.  
But they only shouted louder, "Crucify him!"

**Symbol** - A Cross *(picture a cross in your mind)*

**Reflection:**

The cross symbolizes human cruelty and suffering; an oppressive political regime and all those who are deemed expendable by those in power; it represents Jesus' death.

**Response:** O God We Call

VU 411

O God we call, O God we call,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn for you.

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:24-26 (The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation)

Pilate finally realized that he was getting nowhere with this - in fact, a riot was breaking out. Pilate called for water and washed his hands in front of the crowd declaring as he did so, "I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours." The whole crowd said in reply, "Let his blood be on us and on our children." At that, Pilate released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus whipped with a cat-o'-nine-tails, then handed him over to be crucified.

**Symbol** - Water *(picture a bowl of water in your mind)*

**Reflection:**

Water symbolizes life and death; the waters of birth contrasted with the water that flowed from Jesus' side when it was pierced; water represents our tears and our sorrows; it represents our thirst for mercy, healing and God's presence; it represents Jesus' act of

washing the feet of his followers; and it represents the vulnerability of our earth and our human condition, in that we need to have clean, safe water to survive.

**Response:** O God We Call VU 411

O God we call, O God we call,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn for you.

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:27-31 (The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation)

The governor's soldiers took Jesus inside the Praetorium and assembled the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and wrapped him in a scarlet military cloak. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they pressed it onto his head and stuck a reed in his right hand. Then they began to mock Jesus by dropping to their knees, saying, "All hail, King of the Jews!" They also spat at him. Afterward they took hold of the reed and struck Jesus on the head. Finally, when they had finished mocking him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes and led him off to be crucified.

**Symbol:** Crown of Thorns (*picture a crown of thorns in your mind*)

**Reflection:**

The Crown of Thorns - a symbol of mockery and humiliation; a warning from those in power to those deemed powerless; a reminder of all those who are imprisoned and tortured.

**Response:** O God We Call VU 411

O God we call, O God we call,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn for you.

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:32-36, 45-51, 54-56 (The Inclusive Bible: the First Egalitarian Translation)

On their way out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon, whom they pressed into service to carry the cross. Upon arriving at a site called Golgotha - which means Skull Place - they gave Jesus a drink of wine mixed with a narcotic herb, which Jesus tasted but refused to drink.

Once they had nailed Jesus to the cross, they divided his clothes among them by rolling dice, then they sat down and kept watch over him. Above his head, they put the charge against him in writing: "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." Two robbers were crucified along with Jesus, one at his right and one at his left.

At noon a darkness fell over the whole land until about three in the afternoon. At that hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" Which means, "My God. My God, why have you forsaken me?" This made some of the bystanders who heard it remark. "He is calling for Elijah!" One of them hurried off and got a sponge. He soaked the sponge in cheap wine and, sticking it on a reed, tried to make Jesus drink. The others said, "Leave him alone. Let's see whether Elijah comes to his rescue."

Once again, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, then he gave up his spirit. Suddenly, the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies was ripped in half from top to bottom. The earth quaked, boulders were split.

The centurion and his cohort, who were standing guard over Jesus' body, were terror stricken at seeing the earthquake and all that was happening, and said, "Clearly, this was God's Own!"

A group of women were present, looking on from a distance. These were the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee as ministers to him. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

**Symbol:** A Black Cloth (*picture a piece of black cloth in your mind*).

**Reflection:**

A symbol of our human vulnerability; a reminder of how our own lives are connected to those who weave the cloth; a symbol of mourning; a reminder of the temple veil tearing in two; a reminder of tearing one's clothing as a sign of grief.

**Response:** O God We Call VU 411

O God we call, O God we call,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn for you.

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:57-61

When evening fell, a wealthy man from Arimathea named Joseph, who had become a disciple of Jesus, came to request the body of Jesus. Pilate issued an order for its release. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in fresh linen and laid it in his own tomb, which had been hewn out of rock. Then Joseph rolled a huge stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. But Mary of Magdala and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

**Symbol:** A Rock (*picture a rock in your mind*)

**Reflection:**

A symbol of our own entombment; a reminder of all that keeps us weighed down; a symbol of death and closed doors; a reminder of the women asking, "Who will roll away the stone?"

**Response:** O God We Call VU 411

O God we call, O God we call,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn for you.

**Symbol:** A Nail (*picture a large nail in your mind*)

The nails represent our capacity to use what we have and what we know to either build up and bring together, or to tear and wound and cause death.

**Prayer:**

Dear God, as we come together to remember on this day the way that Jesus met his death, we present the nails of our lives. Nails are tools that can be used to bind together, to build strong structures of support, to be the small bits that make all the difference to how the whole is held together.

But we know we have not always used our knowledge and skills to build up and contribute to the world becoming a better and more loving place. We know that many have used the nails of power, privilege and wealth to hold others down, to imprison them both physically and emotionally. We know that when we keep silent about injustice and wrong-doing we are hammering those nails deeper.

Wake us up, God of Justice. Wake us up to the need and the ways that so many are crucified every day - crucified on the cross of injustice, abuse, inequality, oppression and cruelty.

We pray today for all of the innocent ones who are sacrificed and crucified at the hands of oppressors and war lords and dictators. We pray today for all those who lack the basic tools to provide for their families. We pray today for all those who hoard the tools and the bounty of their harvests for the few who can

afford to buy them.

And we pray today for ourselves as we offer up the nails of our lives - our grief, our selfishness, our arrogance, our narrow mindedness, our privilege. May we find and use the nails of mercy, of compassion, of justice, of understanding and of love that we may help to build a better world for all your children.

We offer these and all of our prayers in the name of the crucified one - Jesus the Christ - as we pray together the words he taught us saying...

**Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kindom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

*(Picture your nails dropping in to a metal container)*

**Hymn: Were You There**

**VU 144**

1 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?

2 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?

3 Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,  
tremble, tremble.

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

4 Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,  
tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

5 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?

**Extinguishing the Candle:** *(extinguish your candle)*

As we extinguish the flame, we acknowledge the pain and sorrow we each have experienced, the pain and sorrow we each have caused, we acknowledge our deep yearning for healing, wholeness and new life, and we remember the death of the one called Jesus of Nazareth.

*(Depart in silence)*