



*Celebrating  
175 Years*



**April 2, 2021**

Melville United Church

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**Melville United Church**  
**Friday, April 2, 2021**  
**Good Friday**

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\* *Congregation please stand as you are able.*  
Presiding Today - Rev. Marion Loree

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

*My name is Marion Loree and I am the minister here at Melville United Church in Fergus, Ontario. We gather in community today - April 2, 2021. Because our province is in a lock-down situation with Covid-19 restrictions there are no worshippers here with me. On-line services will be our norm for the foreseeable future and those who don't have electronic access are offered a printed version.*

*Today is Good Friday - the day when we mark the death of Jesus, who we call the Christ. It is a sad day, a difficult day for many of us because it is always difficult to remember a funeral, the death of a loved one.*

*I invite you to join us now for this time of worship. The service will proceed unannounced. We will end in silence and leave in silence.*

**Sharing the Light:**

Jesus came bringing light into the darkness of a world in pain. We light this candle to remind us of the love of God that shone through him.

**Call to Worship:**

Good Friday is a difficult part of our faith. It is a day of shadows and death.

A day when it seems like the sun will never shine bright enough or warm enough again.

It is a day of pain and sorrow.

A day when hope dies; when the world seems withered and barren.

It is a hard story to tell.

But we will tell it. We will hear it, and feel it, and share it. For it is our story, our hope, and our salvation.

**Hymn: Go To Dark Gethsemane**

**VU 133**

1     Go to dark Gethsemane,  
      you that feel the tempter's power;  
          your Redeemer's conflict see;  
          watch with him one bitter hour;  
      turn not from his grief away:  
      learn from him to watch and pray.

- 2     See him at the judgement hall,  
      beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned;  
          see him meekly bearing all;  
          love to all his soul sustained.  
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss:  
learn from Christ to bear the cross.
- 3     Calvary's mournful mountain view;  
      there the Lord of glory see,  
          made a sacrifice for you,  
          dying on the accursed tree.  
'It is finished,' hear his cry:  
trust in Christ and learn to die.

### **Opening Prayer:**

Eternal Wisdom, we gather in the gloom and grief of this Good Friday to honour Jesus. This is a day of remembering and holding fast to the truths of faithful living. May this sacred time evoke a deep sense of awe. Let not our heartache overshadow the depth of your love for us. Amen.

### **Scripture:** Mark 14:32-38

They went to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to them, "Sit down here while I pray." Jesus took along with him Peter, James and John. Then he began to be very distressed and troubled, and said to them, "My heart is filled with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch."

Jesus went a little further off and fell to the ground, praying that if it were possible this hour might pass him by. He said, "Abba, you have the power to do all things. Take this cup away from me. But let it be not my will, but your will."

When Jesus returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Asleep, Simon? Could you not stay awake for even an hour? Be on guard and pray that you not be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

**Ministry of Music:** Solo - Martha Duncan - Calvary's Love -Greg Nelson and Phil McHugh

### **Introduction**

Five nails. Five nails were used to crucify Jesus. How well we know the story! And yet, each year we must live it again. Each year we must tell the story of the crucifixion as if it happened today. For indeed it did and does happen today. This very day, perhaps even in this very room, love is betrayed, justice is mocked, and any hope of salvation is crushed beneath the brutality of the status quo. And every time, every time, Christ feels our pain, like a nail through flesh and bone.

### **Scripture:** Mark 14:43-46

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd carrying swords and clubs; they had been sent by the chief priests, the religious scholars and the elders. The betrayer had arranged this signal for them: "Whomever I kiss is the one; arrest him and take him away under guard." Judas went directly to Jesus, kissed him and said, "Rabbi!" At this, they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

## **Betrayal**

I am the first nail, the nail of betrayal. It can happen rather quickly. In the beginning, I'm right there with you, sharing the dream, the great vision. Then one day there are two visions, mine and yours. My vision is wonderful, exciting, bold, and courageous. But yours is just in the way. What I don't understand is why you always seem so hurt when I choose my dream over yours; my hopes, my needs, my survival over yours. It's not personal.

*(A nail is dropped into the bowl.)*

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will greet with a kiss is the man. Arrest him and lead him away under guard."

## **Scripture:** Mark 14:66-72

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean." But he began to curse, and he swore an oath. "I do not know this man you are talking about." At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

## **Love Denied**

I am the nail of love denied. I stand in the shadows watching, worrying, perhaps even aching when I see you so tormented. But I will not step out into the light. I will not stand with you. I will not speak in protest, nor raise a hand to rescue or even comfort. My fear holds me silent. Brother, sister, lover, child, it matters not. My fear is stronger than my love.

*(nail is dropped into the bowl)*

"I do not know him."

## **Scripture:** John 18:12-14, 19-24

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

## **Injustice**

I am the nail of injustice. I represent the corruption of those who have been given the sacred trust of leadership. They are called to protect and to uphold the values and well-being of the community, but they have become corrupted by their power. All they protect is their own self-interest.

I represent the arrogance of those who feel they know best, those who are willing to twist the law to their own ends. They tell themselves and others that their motives are pure, noble even. They know the harm they do, but are willing to accept the price so long as they are not the ones who must pay it.

I represent those things best done in the shadows - backroom deals and hidden agendas. They arrested him in the night, far from the cheering crowds, and tried him in the dark hours before the dawn. Where is the justice in this?

*(A nail is dropped into the bowl.)*

They seized Jesus and led him away, but Peter followed at a distance.

## **Scripture:** Mark 15:6-15

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over.

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again. "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

## **Complicity**

I am the nail of complicity. If the nail of injustice speaks of those who lead, I speak of those who follow. I speak of those who allow injustice to happen, those who stand by shaking their head in dismay and tut-tutting at the actions of others but are not willing to act themselves. We turn a blind eye to the corruption around us. We turn a deaf ear to the cries of the oppressed. We go about our day not wanting to know the many ways we benefit from the suffering of others. We want the cheapest prices without concern for the labourers, the greatest profit without concern for the methods, the very best luxuries without concern for those who live in squalor. Pilate is the one named as complicit, the one who found no harm in Jesus but ordered his death anyway. But Pilate is not the only one. We are all part of the injustice of our day.

*(A nail is dropped into the bowl.)*

Pilate gave his verdict that the crowd's demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for and handed Jesus over to be crucified as they wished.

**Scripture:** Mark 15:25-32

It was nine O'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying. "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

**Ridicule**

Two hands. Two feet. You would think that was enough. But no, one more nail is needed. I am the nail of ridicule; the cruel laughter that makes sport of all you hold dear, that belittles and demeans. I am the coward, hiding behind my witty jeers and biting jests. I need to make you small, so I can feel important. I am the nail that holds the sign above Jesus' head, the one that read "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." How clever!

*(A nail is dropped into the bowl)*

"He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, the chosen one!" The soldiers mocked him. "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself."

**Hymn:** O Sacred Head (Vs 1,3,4)**VU 145**

- 1 O sacred head, sore wounded,  
with grief and shame weighed down;  
now scornfully surrounded  
with thorns, thine only crown:  
how art thou pale with anguish,  
with sore abuse and scorn;  
how does that visage languish,  
which once was bright as morn!
- 3 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.
- 4 Be near when I am dying,  
O show thy cross to me;  
and for my succour flying,  
come, Lord, to set me free.  
These eyes, new faith receiving,  
from thee shall not remove,  
for all who die believing,  
die safely through thy love.

**Reflection**

What is the sound of a broken hallelujah, God?  
 Does it scrape  
 like chalk on a chalkboard?  
 Does it jar  
 like a hammer on a nail?  
 Does it crack  
 like a whip against someone's back?  
 Does it whimper  
 like the last breath leaving a body?  
 What is the sound of a broken hallelujah, God?

Is it shrill  
 like mocking laughter?  
 Is it harsh  
 like a voice full of contempt?  
 Is it thin  
 like a lost child calling?  
 Is it garish  
 like an old tired singer?  
 What is the sound of a broken hallelujah, God?

Is it piercing  
 like a voice filled with fear?  
 Is it silent  
 like the voice of death?

**Solo: Hallelujah**

Cohen/Mooney

A crown of thorns placed on his head.  
 He knew that he would soon be dead  
 He said, "Did you forget me, God, did you?"  
 They nailed him to a wooden cross.  
 Soon all the world would feel the loss  
 Of Christ the King before us, Hallelujah.  
 Hallelujah....

He hung his head, prepared to die,  
 then lifted his face to the sky  
 Said, "I am coming home now, Abba, to you."  
 A reed which held his final sip  
 was gently lifted to his lips  
 He drank his last then gave his soul to glory.  
 Hallelujah...

They took away his thorny crown.

Wrapped him in a linen gown  
And laid him down to rest inside the tomb.  
Wounds in his hands, his feet, his side,  
now in our hearts we know he died  
to save us from ourselves, O Hallelujah.  
Hallelujah...

### **Prayer**

Holy God, how have we wounded you? What is there within us that has caused you pain? With petty thoughts and selfish actions, we deny your goodness. The anxiety of our lives betrays our faith in you. Be near us, O God of mercy, as we consider the harm we have done to you. Be near us as we acknowledge our pain. Be near us as we share in the pain of Jesus' death. Be near us as we mourn together.

Gracious God we look to the cross and we can't help but ask Is this the conclusion of love? Is this what it all comes down to? And we cry out in our sorrow "let there be more than this!" Yet we know that you cry with us. This day shows us how you suffer with the world; this day shows us that you understand the depths of our human pain, loneliness, grief, humiliation, and despair. This day we look upon this man, who forgave those who crucified him, and ask for the grace to look upon all pain and sorrow with healing love just as your grace has looked upon us.

Holy Presence, we wait for tomorrow with hopeful hearts. We wait through the dark night of death knowing that you are with us to calm our fears, comfort our pain and strengthen us. Be with us as we pray together as a family of faith saying... Our Father...

### **Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom 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.

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?

(Draping of the cross extinguishing of the candle)

**You are invited to leave in silence when you are ready.**