

The United Church of Canada
in the Eastern Townships

A service for personal meditations at home

April 10, 2020, 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday 2020

Lighting the Christ Light:

It started out as a joyous week as we followed Jesus through Jerusalem. We were there too – singing, dancing, cheering, faces wreathed in smiles, walking along with the throngs calling out “Hosanna”. But today our singing has turned to mourning, our faces once wreathed in smiles now stained with tears, our cheering voices silent, our walking in hope to running in fear. Today we face the fragility of our faith, the pain of loss, asking ourselves where do we dare turn when the world is as dark as it is? We light this candle and remember the Light of Christ that shone brightly through our brother Jesus. (if you can, light a candle or turn on a light.)

Opening Prayer:

Merciful Christ, Lord of life and death, we give you thanks that out of your emptiness, you have filled our lives with love and grace. Out of your pain, you have brought us healing and wholeness. Out of your sorrow, you have brought us the joy of living in your presence. Out of your death, you have brought us life. We give you thanks for your gifts, your sacrifice, your love. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Holy God, You call us to walk the way of the cross, but we choose the way that is easy, or the one that promises us the best returns. Forgive us; open us to the faithful way, the way of radical trust, the way of true joy. Give us what we need to take these final steps of the Menten journey. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness:

One the cross, Jesus prayed, “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” That prayer is for us as well. We are forgiven, we are restored. Thanks be to God.

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 27:32-37

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

Hymn: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord (X2)*

o Sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 27:45-50

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “This man is calling for Elijah.” At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

Chorus: *Were you there when the sun refused to shine (X2)*

o Sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble

Were you there when the sun refused to shine

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 27:51-54

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

Chorus: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord (X2)*

o Sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayers of the People:

Lord Jesus, today we pause to remember the mystery of sacrificial love: love that shines light into the darkness; love that teaches us how to live; love that reveals hope within devastation; love that released freedom in spite of imprisonment; love that reconciles us with our loving Creator. Thank you that we can now walk in the light of your life, hope, truth, freedom and forgiveness, This day and everyday. Amen.

The Light is Extinguished:

Teach us, O Holy One, to brave the darkness, trusting that we are not alone. (Blow out the candle, or turn off the light)

Closing Prayer:

We have finished our preparations. The sun is setting while we have lingered at the cross. It is Sabbath now. We have offered our prayers and tears for the aching world. Wait now, with the crowds in the echoes of the day. The Spirit hovers in the messy, untidy details of our earthiness, and love persists. And love insists that this death draws us deeper into life. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Grant us peace. Amen.

Prayers by:

Opening: Frances Flook, Gatherings L/E 2020 (Year A), p.42.

Confession: Beth W. Johnston, Gathering L/E 2017 (Year A), pg36.

Closing: Wendy MacLean, Gathering L/E 2017 (Year A), p.37.

Beulah United
Georgeville United
Lennoxville United
Plymouth Trinity United
St.Paul's United
Eaton Valley United Pastoral Charge

A service for personal meditations at home

April 10, 2020, 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday 2020

