

***As the service begins, the house lights will only be half lit. There will be an array of lit candles in the chancel area. The shorter candles will be snuffed one by one as we proceed through the stations of the cross. Candles will be spread throughout the chancel area and do not need to be extinguished in any particular order. By the end of the evening, only the tall candle will remain lit. This is the Christ candle, and it will be carried out of the sanctuary when the chancel area is stripped at the end of the service.*

***Stations do not need to be verbally introduced by title or scripture. There will be title cards projected on the screen with that information. Please hold off on saying "This is the Word of the Lord" until the end of the stations - it is written in to be said after the fourteenth (final) reading.*

***Communion table will have a red linen-look runner on top of the traditional white cloth, symbolizing the blood. The table will also contain, moving from left to right as you stand behind it facing the congregation, a table cross (we used a stained-glass cross lantern made by our pastor) with a basket for the note cards, the bread, the cup and pitcher, a stack of dice (casting lots), a bowl of water (symbolic of the footwashing) and white towel to dry hands (if the person wishes), plus an unlit candle and thirty pieces of "silver" representing the betrayer. A crown of thorns, if available, should be prominently displayed in the chancel area.*

GATHERING

OPENING WORDS

Welcome to this Holy Thursday worship service, and welcome to <church name>.

You will note that there are blank cards inserted into your bulletin this evening. We invite you, as this service unfolds, to write on your card anything you wish to lay at the feet of Jesus tonight. Later in the service, you will have the opportunity to come forward and place your cards in the basket on the table. They will not be read, but they will be prayed over, and they will be destroyed following the service.

When we began our Lenten journey, we were invited to spend time in reflection, introspection, and prayer over these forty days, considering what we saw reflected in us – our words, thoughts, actions, and attitudes – and what we reflected outward to others – whether we were reflecting darkness or light, and whether the flesh or the Spirit was winning the battle within us.

Tonight, we walk the last mile to the cross, and again, I invite us all to check our reflections in the mirror of God's word.

In First Peter, chapter four, verses one and two, we read,

"Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh and died for us,

arm yourselves like warriors with the same purpose,
being willing to suffer for doing what is right, and pleasing God,
because whoever has suffered in the flesh, being like-minded with Christ,
is done with intentional sin, having stopped pleasing the world,
so that one can no longer spend the rest of one's natural life
living for human appetites and desires,
but lives instead for the will and purpose of God" (AMP).

And so, I invite you to reflect on these questions:

- Are you willing to suffer for doing what is right and pleasing to God?
- Are your appetites and desires driven more by your flesh, or by the Spirit who lives within you?
- And finally, are you living for the will and purpose of God above all else?

I encourage you to take these things to our Heavenly Father in prayer. Spend time talking with Him. His ears and His arms are open and waiting for you.

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

***The next reader should silently count to twenty slowly before standing in order to give congregants time to process what they've just heard.*

GREETING AND OPENING PRAYER

BOW 348, 349, 347 adpt.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Christ Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree.

That we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

Let us pray.

Most merciful God,

we have gathered tonight –

Your children, chosen and beloved –

and we come to remember our Savior Jesus,

who was betrayed, whipped, mocked, and spit on.
By His example, we learn the greatness of true humility.
Grant us grace to endure the sufferings of the present time,
to overcome all that seeks to overwhelm us.
Give us grace to serve one another in all lowliness,
and to enter into the fellowship of Christ's suffering.
May we be transformed by that grace and grow in faith,
that we, walking in the way of the cross,
may find it to be the way of life and peace;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior, Redeemer, and Lord.
Amen.

MUSICAL MEDITATION *O How He Loves You and Me* Hymns Made Fresh

INTRODUCTION TO THE STATIONS

*Jesus to Calvary did go
His love for sinners to show
What He did there brought hope from despair
Oh, how He loves you
Oh, how he loves me
Oh, how he loves you and me*

On this holy night, we come before God in trust and expectation. Tonight, as we reflect on hard questions, we also reflect on our Savior's suffering and everything He took upon Himself for our sakes. We have come from Palm Sunday, where Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem to the shouts of "Hosanna!", to the end of the week, where those same crowds that welcomed their king are now calling for His death. We invite you, not just to listen to the story, but to really hear it, to imagine it in your minds, and to put yourself in each scene.

STATION ONE

Jesus Prays Alone

Luke 22:39-44

Jesus has gathered with His disciples in the upper room. He has washed their feet, demonstrating humility and service born of love for our fellowman. Together, they have broken the bread and drank from the cup, and the betrayer has disappeared into the night to do his dark deed. It is here that we pick up our story.

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

STATION TWO *Jesus Is Arrested* Matthew 26:47-56

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

STATION THREE *The Sanhedrin Tries Jesus* Mark 14:60-64

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

STATION FOUR *Peter Denies Jesus* Matthew 26:69-75

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

MUSICAL INTERLUDE *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus* Music for Videos

STATION FIVE *Pilate Sentences Jesus* Mark 15:6-15

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

STATION SIX *Jesus Wears A Crown* John 19:2-5

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

STATION SEVEN *Jesus Carries His Cross* John 19:6-17

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

MUSICAL MEDITATION *Nothing But the Blood of Jesus* Music for Videos

STATION EIGHT *Weep for Yourself* Luke 23:26-29

<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>

STATION NINE	<i>Jesus Is Crucified</i>	Luke 23:33-34
<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>		
STATION TEN	<i>Today You Will Be with Me</i>	Luke 23:39-43
<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>		
STATION ELEVEN	<i>Woman, This Is Your Son</i>	John 19:25-27
<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>		
STATION TWELVE	<i>It Is Finished</i>	John 19:28-30
<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>		
STATION THIRTEEN	<i>The Veil Is Torn</i>	Matthew 27:51-52, 54
<Passage is read. One candle is extinguished.>		
STATION FOURTEEN	<i>Jesus Is Entombed</i>	John 19:31-42
<Passage is read.>		
This is the Word of God for the people of God.		
Thanks be to God. Amen.		
<One candle is extinguished.>		

*HYMN #288	<i>Were You There?</i>	GBOD version
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*LITANY OF LAMENT	<i>BOW 363 Reproaches</i> , adpt.
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Tonight, in lieu of our normal Prayer of Confession, we are adapting *The Reproaches: Christ's Lament Against His Faithless Church*. It is a litany of laments that contrast God's goodness with the faithlessness of His people.

O my people, O my Church,
 what have I done to you, or in what have I offended you?
 I led you out of the land of Egypt
 and delivered you by the waters of baptism,

but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

I led you through the desert forty years and fed you with manna;
I brought you through times of persecution and of renewal
and gave you my body, the bread of heaven;
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

I made you branches of my vineyard
and gave you the water of salvation,
but when I was thirsty, you gave me sour wine
and pierced, with a spear, the side of your Savior.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

I went before you in a pillar of cloud by day,
and protected you from behind in a pillar of fire by night,
but you have led me to the judgment hall of Pilate.
I brought you to a land of freedom and prosperity,
but you have scourged, mocked, and beaten Me.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

My peace I gave to you, which the world cannot give,
and I washed your feet as a servant,
but you draw the sword to strike in my name
and seek high places in My kingdom.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

I accepted the cup of suffering and death for your sakes,
but you scatter and deny and abandon Me.
I sent the Spirit of truth to lead you,
but you close your hearts to guidance.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

I called you to go and bring forth fruit,
but you cast lots for My clothing.
I prayed that you all may be one,
but you continue to quarrel and divide.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters.
I was hungry but you gave Me no food,
thirsty, but you gave Me no drink.
I was a stranger, but you did not welcome me in.
Naked, but you did not clothe Me.
I was sick and in prison, but you did not visit Me.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

Let us pray.

***Silently count slowly to 10 before continuing.*

Forgive us, Father-God, for the ways in which we have failed You. Let Your Holy Spirit work in us and through us, that we may be transformed into reflections of Your grace, mercy, and love to all the world. Amen.

You may be seated.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION & PRAYER

1 John 4:7, 9

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

God's love was revealed among us in this way:

God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,
who earnestly repent of their sin
and seek to live in peace with one another.

Let us pray:

Almighty God,

unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:

Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who taught us to pray, saying:

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,

And the power,
And the glory

Forever.

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. ***The pastor may lift hands and keep them raised.*

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

From the earth you bring forth bread and create the fruit of the vine.

You formed us in your image, delivered us from captivity,
and made covenant to be our sovereign God.

You fed us manna in the wilderness,
and gave us grapes as evidence of the promised land.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***The pastor may lower hands.*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

***The pastor may raise hands.*

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

When we turned aside from your way and abused your gifts,
you gave us in him your crowning gift.

Emptying himself that our joy might be full,
he fed the hungry, healed the sick,
ate with the scorned and forgotten,
washed his disciples' feet,

and gave a holy meal as a pledge of his abiding presence.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

***The pastor may hold hands, palms down, over the bread, or touch the bread, or lift the bread.*

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took the bread, gave thanks to you,
broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

***The pastor may hold hands, palms down, over the cup, or touch the cup, or lift the cup.*

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

***The pastor may raise hands.*

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

***The pastor may hold hands, palms down, over the bread and cup.*

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and the fruit of the vine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

***The pastor may raise hands.*

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory,
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father,
now and for ever.

Amen.

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

***The pastor, still standing behind the Lord's table and facing the people, breaks the bread while saying:*

Because there is one loaf,
we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.
The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

***The pastor lifts the cup in silence, or while saying:*

The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

This is the Lord's table, and the Sacrament which He implemented on the night in which He was betrayed. You are invited to partake as you feel led, and all are welcome.

As you come forward, you are also invited to bring your cards to place facedown in the basket, laying those cares at the foot of the cross of Jesus. At the opposite end of the table, you will find a bowl of water. In remembrance of Jesus' act of servanthood in washing His disciples' feet, you are invited to dip your hands into the bowl. The altar is open for anyone who wishes to linger in prayer.

***The pastor and one assistant will serve communion. The other assistant will station him- or herself at the "footwashing" basin to hand folks a towel for drying their hands if*

they would like to use a towel. Communion music starts to play.

Whatever song is in progress when everyone has been served and reseated, let it play out to give time for quiet contemplation. The Communion elements should be set right before the pastor and assistants are reseated.

PRAYER AFTER THE MEAL

If everyone would, please extend your hand toward the table and join me in prayer...

Gracious Lord,

you showed us how to love in humility by washing your disciples' feet, and you gave us the gift of your table – your body and your blood.

As we remember the words we have spoken, sung, and heard tonight, may they be for us a mirror of your kingdom

and a guideline for the holiness you desire,

that we may learn to love one another as you have loved us.

Father-God, we lift up to you those concerns, burdens, and cares

that we have brought before you this night

and laid at the foot of the cross.

We place each one into your hands,

trusting that you have heard our prayers,

and that the answer is already on the way.

Thank you, Father, for your incomparable love.

In the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ,

who gave his life for us, we pray this.

Amen.

STRIPPING THE SANCTUARY

***Those participating in stripping the sanctuary should begin with the Communion table, removing the elements, the lantern and basket, the bowl of water and towel, and finally, the table coverings. The bare table itself can be left in place.*

***Next, the candles that were extinguished during the service should be removed (including the two on the altar), followed by the mirrors, the burlap covering the big table,*

the vestments (paraments), and the cloth from the big cross. The small tables in front of the big table and offering plates should also be removed.

***Finally, the brass cross should be shrouded (using red tulle to symbolize the blood of Jesus), and the Christ candle should be carried, still lit, from the sanctuary. It will be extinguished in the storage area and will be reintroduced, lit, Sunday morning.*

***When the stripping of the sanctuary is complete, everyone should be seated, and the reader will go to the lectern.*

CLOSING PRAYER

BOW 366 adpt.

Let us pray.

Merciful and ever-living God, Creator of heaven and earth,
the crucified body of your Son was laid in the tomb,
and His disciples were scattered and afraid,
unsure of what the dawn would bring.

As we await the dawning of the third day,
may we submit to Your sovereignty over our lives,
and seek to live for Your glory and Your will,
that our lives would be a blessing for others
as we follow the example of our Savior.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

DEPART IN SILENCE

CREDITS

O How He Loves You and Me - Hymns Made Fresh @ YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0P-X2O8L_sl&list=RD0P-X2O8L_sl&start_radio=1

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus and Nothing But the Blood of Jesus by Music_for_Videos at pixabay.com:

<https://pixabay.com/users/music-for-videos-24014275/>

What Wondrous Love Is This/Were You There by Sean McCleery at pixabay:

<https://pixabay.com/users/smcleery-39405238/>

Hymn is from *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

Liturgy is taken from the *Book of Worship* of the United Methodist Church.