

**Praying at the Cross**  
**Reservoir Virch | Good Friday, April 2, 2021 | 7 PM**

**Pre-Service Music**

**Welcome**

**Opening Prayer**

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold us your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.  
(from the Book of Common Prayer, page 276)

**Reading 1: Hear Judas' part in the story from Matthew's account**

Matthew 26:3-4, 14-15, 20-25, 46-50; 27:1-10

<sup>3</sup> At that same time [that Jesus and his friends were preparing to celebrate the Passover] the leading priests and elders were meeting at the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest, <sup>4</sup> plotting how to capture Jesus secretly and kill him. <sup>5</sup> "But not during the Passover celebration," they agreed, "or the people may riot."

<sup>14</sup> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests <sup>15</sup> and asked, "How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?" And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> When it was evening, Jesus sat down at the table <sup>[c]</sup> with the Twelve. <sup>21</sup> While they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." <sup>22</sup> Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, "Am I the one, Lord?" <sup>23</sup> He replied, "One of you who has just eaten from this bowl with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup> For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!" <sup>25</sup> Judas, the one who would betray him, also asked, "Rabbi, am I the one?" And Jesus told him, "You have said it."

[After the meal, Jesus led his disciples outside the city to a garden on the Mount of Olives where he could pray. When he had finished praying, he said to his disciples who had fallen asleep,]

<sup>146</sup> Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!"

<sup>47</sup> And even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests and elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: "You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss." <sup>49</sup> So Judas came straight to Jesus. "Greetings, Rabbi!" he exclaimed and gave him the kiss.

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said, "My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for."

Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

[The next day] very early in the morning the leading priests and the elders of the people met again to lay plans for putting Jesus to death. <sup>2</sup> Then they bound him, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

<sup>3</sup> When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. <sup>4</sup> “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.”

“What do we care?” they retorted. “That’s your problem.”

<sup>5</sup> Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself.

<sup>6</sup> The leading priests picked up the coins. “It wouldn’t be right to put this money in the Temple treasury,” they said, “since it was payment for murder.” <sup>7</sup> After some discussion they finally decided to buy the

potter’s field, and they made it into a cemetery for foreigners. <sup>8</sup> That is why the field is still called the Field of Blood. <sup>9</sup> This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah that says,

“They took <sup>[b]</sup> the thirty pieces of silver—

the price at which he was valued by the people of Israel,

<sup>10</sup> and purchased the potter’s field,

as the Lord directed. <sup>[c]</sup>”

### **Prayer Action**

Pick up your rock. Feel it in your hands.

Come close to the rocky garden where Judas kissed Jesus’ cheek, the rocky field where Judas died.

### **Reflective Wondering**

I wonder where you find yourself in this story.

I wonder what catches your attention.

I wonder about Judas, about Jesus.

I wonder if you have ever betrayed someone near you, or been betrayed by someone you loved.

I wonder if you have ever despised your own actions, and felt so alone, and couldn’t ask for help.

### **Prayer**

God of the accused

and the accusing,

who made the mouth, the ear and

the heart of all in conflict.

May we turn ourselves towards that

which must be heard,

because there we will hear your voice.

Amen.

## Reading 2: Hear Peter's part in the story from Matthew's account

Matthew 26:31-35; 50-56; 69-75

<sup>31</sup> On the way, Jesus told them, "Tonight all of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, 'God will strike<sup>[e]</sup> the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

<sup>32</sup> But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there."

<sup>33</sup> Peter declared, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you."

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me."

<sup>35</sup> "No!" Peter insisted. "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!" And all the other disciples vowed the same.

[After they arrested Jesus and took him to the house of Caiphas the high priest, Peter followed at a distance.]

<sup>69</sup> . . . Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came over and said to him, "You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean."

<sup>70</sup> But Peter denied it in front of everyone. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

<sup>71</sup> Later, out by the gate, another servant girl noticed him and said to those standing around, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>[k]</sup>"

<sup>72</sup> Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. "I don't even know the man," he said.

<sup>73</sup> A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and said, "You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent."

<sup>74</sup> Peter swore, "A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know the man!" And immediately the rooster crowed.

<sup>75</sup> Suddenly, Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." And he went away, weeping bitterly.

### Prayer Action

Strike a match, watch the flame. Blow it out. As the smoke rises, say: "I do not know him."

If you don't have a match, you can write on a piece of paper, "I do not know him." Then crumple it up.

### Reflective Wondering

I wonder where you find yourself in this story.

I wonder what catches your attention.

I wonder about Peter, about Jesus.

I wonder what they thought when they heard the rooster crow for the third time.

## Prayer

God of the ground,  
whose body was - like ours - from dust,  
and who fell - like we fall - to the ground.  
May we find you on the ground  
when we fall.  
Oh, our falling fallen brother,  
may we find you,  
so that we may inhabit our bodyselves.  
Amen.

## Reading 3: Hear Pilate's part in the story from Matthew's account

Matthew 27:11-26

[On Friday morning, they took Jesus to Pilate because they wanted to have him killed.]

<sup>11</sup> Now Jesus was standing before Pilate, the Roman governor. "Are you the king of the Jews?" the governor asked him.

Jesus replied, "You have said it."

<sup>12</sup> But when the leading priests and the elders made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent.

<sup>13</sup> "Don't you hear all these charges they are bringing against you?" Pilate demanded. <sup>14</sup> But Jesus made no response to any of the charges, much to the governor's surprise.

<sup>15</sup> Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted. <sup>16</sup> This year there was a notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas.

<sup>17</sup> As the crowds gathered before Pilate's house that morning, he asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" <sup>18</sup> (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

<sup>19</sup> Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: "Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night."

<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the leading priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be put to death. <sup>21</sup> So the governor asked again, "Which of these two do you want me to release to you?"

The crowd shouted back, "Barabbas!"

<sup>22</sup> Pilate responded, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

They shouted back, "Crucify him!"

<sup>23</sup> "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?"

But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!"

<sup>24</sup> Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours!"

<sup>25</sup> And all the people yelled back, "We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!"<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>26</sup> So Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

### **Prayer Action**

Take your vessel of water. Pour the water over your hands, or dip your hands in the water.

Say: "I am innocent of this man's blood."

### **Reflective Wondering**

I wonder where you find yourself in this story.

I wonder what catches your attention.

I wonder about Pilate, about Jesus.

I wonder if you've seen injustice but chosen not to get your hands dirty?

I wonder if your hands are always in the dirt.

### **Prayer**

Jesus of Nazareth,

This cross was a torture.

It only gives life because you made it hollow.

Bring life to us, Jesus,

especially when we are in the places of the dead.

Because you brought life

even to the instruments of death.

Amen.

### **Reading 4: Hear the soldiers' and the women's part of the story from Matthew's account**

Matthew 27:27-31; 32-37; 38-44; 45-50; 54-56; 57-61

<sup>27</sup> Some of the governor's soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters<sup>[1]</sup> and called out the entire regiment. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. <sup>29</sup> They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, "Hail! King of the Jews!" <sup>30</sup> And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it. <sup>31</sup> When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

<sup>32</sup> Along the way, they came across a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene,<sup>[2]</sup> and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. <sup>33</sup> And they went out to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull"). <sup>34</sup> The soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with bitter gall, but when he had tasted it, he refused to drink it.

<sup>35</sup> After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.<sup>[3]</sup> <sup>36</sup> Then they sat around and kept guard as he hung there. <sup>37</sup> A sign was fastened above Jesus' head, announcing the charge against him. It read: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." <sup>38</sup> Two revolutionaries<sup>[4]</sup> were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

<sup>39</sup> The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. <sup>40</sup> “Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!”

<sup>41</sup> The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. <sup>42</sup> “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him!” <sup>43</sup> He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” <sup>44</sup> Even the revolutionaries who were crucified with him ridiculed him in the same way.

<sup>45</sup> At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. <sup>46</sup> At about three o’clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, <sup>[i]</sup> lema sabachthani?” which means “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”<sup>[k]</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. <sup>48</sup> One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. <sup>49</sup> But the rest said, “Wait! Let’s see whether Elijah comes to save him.”<sup>[l]</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit.

### ***Pause for a minute of silence.***

<sup>54</sup> The Roman officer<sup>[m]</sup> and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, “This man truly was the Son of God!”

<sup>55</sup> And many women who had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for him were watching from a distance. <sup>56</sup> Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James and Joseph), and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

<sup>57</sup> As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, <sup>58</sup> went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. <sup>59</sup> Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. <sup>60</sup> He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left. <sup>61</sup> Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb and watching.

### **Prayer Action**

Take your ribbon. Wrap it around your hand, like the burial clothes were wrapped around Jesus. Mourn the death of your son, your friend, your teacher. Say goodbye. Witness his death, witness his burial.

### **Reflective Wondering**

I wonder where you find yourself in this story.

I wonder what catches your attention.

I wonder about the soldiers. I wonder about the women. I wonder about the rich man Joseph.

I wonder about Jesus.

I wonder what it’s like to say goodbye.

**Prayer**

Jesus of the unexpected,  
for at least some of your life  
this was not how you imagined its end.  
Yet even at the end, you kept steady in your conviction.  
Jesus, keep us steady.  
Jesus, keep us steady.  
Because, Jesus, keep us steady.  
Amen.

**Concluding Prayer**

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold us your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(from the Book of Common Prayer, page 276)

Thanks for joining us tonight. See you on Easter!

**Post-service music**