

Good Friday Taize Service – Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Preparing our Hearts

Gathering Hymn: Beneath the cross of Jesus (a cappella)

Welcome:

Reader 1: We have gathered this morning beneath the cross of Jesus. It is Good Friday. Our journey of Lent has brought us to this time and this place. All of Lent we have balanced the deepest longings and emptiness of our hearts and souls, a Blessed Hunger, with the anticipation of God's fulfillment and abundance in resurrection hope – a Holy Feast. Today we enter the darkness of Good Friday and the story of the cross. We wait for the Lord and face the cross of Jesus. Yet we also know that God goes with us in this journey, providing hope and light. So today, even as we hear the story of the cross, we will share in the communion meal of the Last Supper and light candles to heal our wounds, knowing that Easter is coming. Beneath the cross of Jesus, in the shadows of a weary land, we also find a home in the wilderness and rest upon the way.

This service will bring us into a mix of Scriptures and songs, with very little instructions along the way. Songs will not be announced, so please have the next song ready, many from the Lenten Song Booklet. Make sure you can see a copy and raise your hands now if you do not have one, and an usher can bring you the booklet. Much of our service is shaped in the tradition of the ecumenical Taizé community of faith in Eastern France. Key to that worship are times of silence and musical space for reflection and contemplation. We will sing several short repeated Taizé refrains. Allow the music to wash over you, whether you sing or close your eyes and listen. This is holy space. The repetition gives freedom and room to commune with the Spirit and deepen your relationship with God. Each refrain will be introduced once by the piano, and then a second time by the instruments, before we all join in, led by the quartet of singers.

We will enter two rituals this morning. The first is communion, which will be served in the pews. Children will be invited to the far right during communion for some intentional time. The second is candle-lighting around the cross. As we sing, you will be invited to come forward, light a tea light and place it on one of the trays surrounding the cross. Some of the trays are at floor level, while others can place the candles on trays on the stage. You can come forward from any of the side aisles, light your candle, and return down the centre aisle. Take your time and use this as a time for prayer. There will be people holding the baskets and helping with the candle lighting.

And so, we find ourselves beneath the cross of Jesus. May Christ guide our steps and our reflections.

Let us pray,

Jesus, we come before your cross. You died for us all. As we enter this story of suffering and your redeeming love, grant us the hope of light breaking through the darkness. Amen.

Waiting for the Lord

Scripture: Isaiah 53:1-6

Scripture: Psalm 130: 1-6

Song: Wait for the Lord

Entering the Darkness

Scripture: Luke 22:1-6

Song: Within our darkest night

Sharing the Body and Blood of Christ

Reader 1: In the midst of this darkest of nights, Jesus shares a meal with the disciples. They are all present and Jesus is eager to eat with them, even with the knowledge that there soon will be betrayal and denial. It is Passover and this meal will fortify the disciples and Jesus for the difficult journey ahead. The gift of this meal is shared now with us in remembrance of Jesus.

Reader 2: Communion will be served in the pews. The servers will come to your row. Please stand if you wish to receive communion. Let the server know if you wish to have a gluten free cracker. Hold the bread or the cup until all have been served. We will eat or drink together. When the servers come forward, children are invited as they wish to come to the front.

Scripture: Luke 22:14-18

Scripture: Luke 22:19-20

Receiving the Bread

Song: Let all who are thirsty come

Reader 1: Have all been served?
Eat, the bread of life broken for you.

Receiving the Cup

Song: God is forgiveness

Reader 2: Have all been served?
Drink, the cup of the new covenant poured out for you.

Facing the Cross

Scripture: Luke 22:39-42

Song: Stay with us

Scripture: Luke 23:32-43

Song: Jesus, remember me

Scripture: Luke 23:44-49

Silence (1 minute)

Song: O sacred Head, now wounded (v.1,4 – with instruments. v. 5 a cappella)

Entering the Light

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:24-25

Reader 1: We enter now this time of lighting candles at the cross as we sing several refrains.

Come forward from any of the side aisles, light a candle and place it on any of the trays – either on floor level or on the stage. Please return down the centre aisle. May the light of Christ come and fill our hearts.

Song: Bless the Lord

Song: My soul is at rest

Song: Come and fill our hearts

Anticipating the Hope of Resurrection

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11

Scripture: Philippians 3:10-11

Song: Laudate Omnis Gentes (Sing praises, all you people)

Benediction

Reader 1: Hear these words of blessing and benediction:

The story has been told, songs have been sung, and now we return to the world where we live and wait.

We wait and watch for the hope that defies despair,
the life that defies death,
the beginning that defies the end.

While we wait,
while darkness covers the land of faith,
remember that we are not alone.

God has not and will not forsake us. The light will shine in the darkness.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Song: Christ we do all adore thee (a cappella)

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