

Good Friday  
April , 2023 ~ ~ Noon



PRELUDE:

*from Suite No. 2, Prelude*  
Natalie Helm, Cello

J.S. Bach

INVITATION

\*OPENING HYMN

*Were You There?*

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?

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?

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?

\*OPENING PRAYER:

At the center of this day, O God, is the question, how did we get *here*? How could Your love incarnate, in the flesh, breath, and bone of Jesus, end up on a cross ~ a symbol of fear and Rome flexing its muscle? How could cries of, “Hosanna, *save us*,” turn so quickly to, “Crucify him as a scapegoat?” How could Your inclusive love threaten so much that we would rather turn away than be transformed? Yet, even as we ask these questions, we recognize that we live the answers. We continue to turn toward success as defined by numbers, bottom lines, and being in control. We continue to let fear of the other cause us to disconnect and devalue those who are different. We love the quick fix, easy-to-follow steps, and our own biases. When these fail us, we search for *someone* to blame. Help us, O God, for we *cannot* save ourselves. The cycles of violence around us and within us cause hurt and harm. Our cynicism and criticism keep telling us stories that confine us. Help us, O God, for we *cannot* save ourselves. Meet us here, at the cross, which we confess is the *last* place we’d think to meet *You*. This day doesn’t make sense, but maybe, that is the point. Perhaps when we cease trying to think our way through this day and receive the ache and pain for what this day is, there would be silence. In the stillness of our reasons and words, may Your transforming presence enter anew into our hearts we pray.

*Silence.*

\*RESPONSE

*What Wondrous Love Is This*

#223

What wondrous love is this, O my soul! O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this! That Christ should come in bliss  
To bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul,  
To bear the heavy cross for my soul

LITANY of GOD'S FRIDAY

One: Here we are, O God, on this day when our hearts are heavy, our souls are worn and weary, and our minds overwhelmed by the perplexity of persistent problems.

**Many: Meet us, O God, at the cross with Your self-emptying love.**

One: For family members, friends, neighbors, church members, and people we know who have died, we offer our honest grief. For the unresolved sorrow that is heavy in our hearts. Please name, at the foot of the cross, people for whom you mourn.

*Please name loved ones you grieve.*

One: Please name those you know, *including yourself*, who live in pain ~ mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

*Please name people you hold in your hearts.*

One: At the foot of the cross, we name that we are not the "we" God crafts, creates, calls us to be. We offer relationships that have left scars that still throb and where we refuse to forgive.

*Please pray for those who hurt, wound, and have been an enemy to you.*

One: God there are so many gospels in the air we breathe, that all compete for our attention and allegiance. There are gospels politically, economically, socially, and algorithms invisibly online feeding us more of what we are clicking.

**Many: And there are gospels in us, the story we tell ourselves where our inner critic preaches and points out that we "should" know better and be further along by now and why we can't possibly wear that outfit out in public.**

One: We carry a world where normal feels like a myth. We are surrounded by a steady stream of stories about racism, sexism, homophobia, and that creation is there to make money.

**Many: We are overwhelmed, angry, fearful, impatient, intolerant, and unable to recognize that our point of view is a view from a point.**

One: At the foot of the cross, we place *our* attempts to save ourselves, our refusal to be human size, that we don't like looking foolish, and our deep desire to be the smartest person in the room.

**Many: At the foot of the cross, we place our human efforts as a church, the ways we can be lured into equating busyness with faithfulness; that we crave to be seen in a certain way.**

One: At the foot of the cross, we name the gap between our beliefs about God and experience of God; and that there is so much today we long to say.

**Many: Beyond our "shoulds" and "have tos", God show us another gospel, a liberating love that doesn't avoid suffering or death, but embraces all that is.**

One: For the war in Ukraine, for the intolerance and indifference; for the polarization and pain that sits in each of us. In the still small silence of this moment, what rises up from your soul that you want to place at the foot of the cross?

ANTHEM

*My Eternal King*

Jane Marshall

*My God, I love Thee; not because I hope for heaven thereby,*

*Nor yet because who love Thee not must die eternally.*

*Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didn't me upon the cross embrace:*

*For me didst bear the nails and spear, and manifold disgrace.*

*Why, then why, O blessed Jesus Christ, should I not love Thee well?  
Not for the hope of winning heaven, or of escaping hell;  
Not with the hope of gaining aught, not seeking a reward;  
But as Thyself hast loved me, O ever-loving Lord!  
E'en so I love Thee, and will love, and in Thy praise will sing;  
Solely because Thou art my God, and my Eternal King.*

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27:27-37

Jerry Long

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup> and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>30</sup> They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. <sup>31</sup> After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. <sup>32</sup> As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. <sup>33</sup> And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), <sup>34</sup> they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. <sup>35</sup> And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; <sup>36</sup> then they sat down there and kept watch over him. <sup>37</sup> Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

*Silence*

SCRIPTURE CONTINUES

Matthew 27:38-44

Maggie Revere

<sup>38</sup> Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>39</sup> Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." <sup>41</sup> In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, <sup>42</sup> "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup> He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to, for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" <sup>44</sup> The rebels who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

*Silence*

SCRIPTURE CONCLUDES

Matthew 27:45-56

John Ristow

<sup>45</sup> From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>46</sup> And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" <sup>47</sup> When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." <sup>50</sup> Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. <sup>51</sup> At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup> The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. <sup>53</sup> After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. <sup>54</sup> 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!”<sup>55</sup> Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him.<sup>56</sup> Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

SERMON

*Living in the Gaps of the Gospel*

ANTHEM

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

arr. Gilbert Martin

PASTORAL PRAYER

PROCESSION OUT TO THE CROSS

\*CLOSING HYMN

*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

**Beneath the Cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand,  
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land,  
A home within the wilderness a rest upon the way,  
From the burning of the noontide heat, and the burden of the day.**

**Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see  
The very dying form of one who suffered there for me;  
And from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess  
The wonders of his glorious love and my unworthiness.**

**I take, O cross thy shadow for my abiding place;  
I ask no other sunshine than sunshine on his face;  
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain or loss,  
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.**

\*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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Please leave in silence as you feel so led by the Spirit.**

Greeters: Gib and Jeannie Mitchell

Liturgists: Jerry Long, Maggie Revere, and John Ristow

**Tomorrow, Holy Saturday, spend time in silent prayer – ponder places where You long for God’s renewing and resurrecting presence to enter with new life.**

**Easter Sunday Celebration!**

**At 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., we warmly welcome a brass quintet along with our amazing choir who will lead worship. We celebrate that, “Christ is risen! Alleluia!!”**