

**A GOOD ENDING TO A BAD WEEK:
SYMBOLIC ACTIONS FOR GOOD FRIDAY**

Note: All may be given a flower and small twig or images may be displayed. Juice is mixed with a little vinegar and may be distributed with bread in the pews, or all may come forward to receive in silence or with words such as, "God forgives" or "Remember God's love," not as communion but as a solemn act of forgiveness.

PRELUDE "God So Loved the World"

John Stainer

WELCOME: Grace Wallace, COSSO Coordinator

INTRODUCTION: Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, COSSO Director of Spiritual Formation

OPENING WORDS

Leader: Now is the time, there will be no escape.

ALL: We have too much to carry.

The shadows wait for us:
around the table, in high places,
in the cell, on the hill, in the convoy outside the city.

Fear haunts every moment,
we have nowhere to sleep.

Why has God forsaken us?

The world is with us, but not for long.
We are powerless, but God is with us.

Time is running out.
Now is the time, there will be no escape.

This is Holy Week and today is Good Friday.
Today we remember, this is the beginning of new beginnings.

PRAYER

God of Good Friday, we stand beneath your cross
with strangers and friends,
grieving the loss of love in the world.
We meet waiting for Easter morning.
We want to understand the awful things in our world,
so we wait, as they did, beneath your cross.

And in our waiting, we pray:

ALL: We pray for peace when words fail us.

We pray with words when silence is not enough.

**We pray for those crucified today,
those who live in war, in despair, in pain,
those who mourn the loss of loved ones,
and those who continue to work for peace.**

HYMN **“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”**

words UMH 298, tune UMH 643

SOLEMN REFLECTIONS FROM THE CROSS

(from Psalm 78)

Reader 1: O my people, O my church,
what have I done to you,
in what have I offended you?

Answer me.

I led you forth from the land of Egypt
and delivered you by the waters of baptism,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Response: Holy, holy, holy God, have mercy on us.

(from Matthew 25)

Reader 1: I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters;
I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me sour wine to drink,
I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,
naked and you did not clothe me,
sick and in prison and you did not visit me,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Response: Holy, holy, holy God, have mercy on us.

THE FLOWER

(hold a flower or look at the image of a flower)

Leader: Imagine the beauty of a flower. Take a moment, think of the great beauty,
the color, the delicate shape...

What kind of love gifted us with something so precious?

What kind of love allows us to experience such beauty, when around the world God's beauty is
destroyed, life is bruised and broken in gardens and city streets.

(brief pause for reflection)

Scripture Reading: John 19:15-16

Reader 2: They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them,
“Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.”
Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus.

Response: We crushed the flower and prepared a cross for our Savior.

Holy, holy, holy God, have mercy on us.

HYMN **“How Deep the Father's Love for Us” (vs. 1-2)**

Townend

THE WINE AND THE VINEGAR – add picture of wine and bread

Leader: Now, the wine, which has been mixed with a little vinegar, it leaves a bitter taste. It stands for the cost of the dreadful destruction, the cost in the brokenness of humanity, in a world with less love, less kindness, less acceptance, less justice, less peace.

Now, the bread, mixed with grain and yeast, it is food for a hungry world.

It reminds us of manna from heaven and all that we are given to share.

So, let us dip the bread in the sour wine together, and pray for the broken places and people in our lives and our world...

(all come forward or eat and drink as the bread and cup are passed in the pews)

Scripture Reading: John 19:29-30

Reader 3: A jar of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Response: He was thirsty and we prepared a cross for our Savior.

Holy, holy, holy God, have mercy on us.

HYMN "At the Cross (Love Ran Red)" (vs. 1-2) Tomlin/Armstrong/Cash/Myrin/Redman

THE TWIG

Leader: Now take the twig in your hands and feel the roughness and texture. A twig that is wood, reminds us of a cross of wood. It stands for the secrets in our hearts, the things we regret, those things we wish we could change.

(holding the twig or small wooden cross)

Now is the time, and this is the place. On this Good Friday, we remember Jesus on that cross of wood, we remember the forgiveness of the God of heaven, forgiveness that is always total, always complete.

And this is the Good News of this Good Friday, on the cross that is made of wood:

No record is kept, the slate is wiped clean.

The forgiveness of this Good Friday is for you and for me.

(brief pause for reflection)

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 10:16-17

Reader 1: This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days says the Lord: "I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds;

I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

Response: This is the time when we prepared a cross for our Savior.

Holy, holy, holy God. Thanks be to you, our Lord and God.

HYMN "This is a Day of New Beginnings"

UMH 383

A GOOD ENDING

Leader: Today is the day.
Now is the time of new beginnings.
Praise be to God for the courage to change.
Praise be to God for our forgiveness.
Even though there may be difficulties and dangers ahead,
today is the day of new beginnings.

Scripture: Luke 23:46

Reader 2: Jesus gave a loud cry and said, "Father into your hands I commit my Spirit." And with these words he died.

Romans 5:8

Christ died for us while we were yet sinning and that is God's own proof of his love for us.

Response: Holy, holy, holy God, this is the beginning of new beginnings.

A CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, our friend,
your death was our salvation.
So write your laws on our hearts,
put your words on our lips.
And when we forget, let us hear the cock crowing,
turn us around that we may try again
to live your gospel everywhere, every day.
Amen.
(all leave in silence)

POSTLUDE

"The Blessing"

Brown/Carnes/Furtick/Jobe

In these turbulent times, we pray with the world for peace.

Sources:

www.reformedworship.org (resources for Good Friday and Lent)

Ruth Burgess & Chris Polhill, *Eggs and Ashes: Practical & liturgical resources for Lent and Holy Week.* Glasgow: Wild Goose Pubs., 2004

Glendon Macaulay, *Dirt, Mess and Danger: Liturgies & worship resources.* Glasgow: Wild Goose Pubs., 2011.