



Good Friday Service

7 PM

April 18, 2025

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ

ACCEPTANCE & RESISTANCE & EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN¹

WELCOME

HAND CHIME CHOIR

Were You There

Traditional

*OPENING RESPONSIVE LITANY: LOSS AND THE CROSS

L: When we stand at the foot of the cross, we feel the weight of loss,

C: A weight so heavy that we cannot bear it alone.

L: Yet in this moment of grief, we remember the love that bore this weight for us.

C: The love that will not let us go, even in the deepest of sorrows.

L: The cross is a symbol of acceptance, not of death, but of life through sacrifice.

C: We come, carrying our own crosses, knowing that we are accepted by God in the messiness of our lives.

L: Lord, teach us how to accept with grace, even when life feels uncertain,

C: For in the midst of suffering, we know there is hope.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:1-12 (CEB)

RESPONSIVE REFLECTION

L: Pilate asks, "What is truth?" in the face of injustice.

C: We, too, question what is true when systems of power distort the story.

L: Jesus, in silence, accepts the cruelty of the world.

C: May we, too, have courage to resist the lies, to stand for truth in the face of oppression.

L: Let us pray.

C: God of tangled truths and broken systems, you see through the lies we tell ourselves and the injustices we normalize. In this moment, give us the courage to face the chaos within and around us, and to trust that your love holds even what we cannot make sense of. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:13-25 (CEB)

RESPONSIVE REFLECTION

L: The crowd chooses Barabbas over Jesus.

C: In the choice between love and violence, we too sometimes choose violence.

L: Jesus accepts the unjust sentence, silent in the face of it all.

C: May we learn to embrace love, even when it calls us to take up the cross.

L: Let us pray,

C: Merciful Christ, when our fear shouts louder than our faith, meet us with grace. Forgive the moments we have joined the crowd instead of standing with the condemned, and lead us back to your path of compassion and justice.

TIME OF CONFESSION

P: When we follow in the steps of Jesus, we say yes to bearing his cross—not because there is any kind of value in suffering, not to prove our selflessness, nor because God wills it, but because living as Jesus lived makes the cross inevitable. So together, let us pray:

C: Jesus, when we side with you, we side with all who threaten the status quo. When we refuse the call to see others' struggles as our own, we abandon our kin to shoulder their crosses alone. So we pray, O God, embolden us to accept the risks that come with following you—even as we resist the powers and systems that set crosses on our shoulders. Amen.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NCH # 191 (see below)

Before Your Cross, O Jesus

Before Your Cross, O Jesus

Ferdinand Q. Blanchard, 1929

Frederick C. Maker, 1881

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written for piano on a single staff with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80. The score consists of four lines of music, each with three verses of lyrics underneath. The lyrics are written in a simple, sans-serif font. The first line of music starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The second line of music starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The third line of music starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The fourth line of music starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The score ends with a double bar line.

1. Be - fore your cross, O Je - sus, our lives are judged to -
2. The hopes that lead us on - ward, the fears that hold us
3. Yet hum - bly, in our striv - ing, we rise to face its

5
- day; the mean - ing of our ea - ger strife is test - ed by your
back, our will to dare great things for God, the cour - age that we
test. We crave the power to do your will as once you did it

9
way. A - cross our rest - less liv - ing the light streams from your cross, and
lack, The faith we keep in good ness, our love, as low or pure, on
best. On us let now the heal - ing of your great Spir - it fall, and

14
by its clear re - veal - ing beams we mea - sure gain and loss.
all, the judg - ment of the cross falls stead - y, clear, and sure.
make us brave and full of joy to an - swer to your call.

MONOLOGUE: SIMON OF CYRENE

Matt Grimes

SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:26-31 (CEB)

RESPONSIVE REFLECTION

P: Jesus tells the women not to weep for him but for themselves.

C: In this moment of suffering, we are reminded that Jesus sees us in our grief.

P: There is no separation between his pain and ours—he is with us in our sorrow.

C: May we be present with others in their pain, just as Christ is present with us.

P: Let us pray,

C: Suffering Savior, you see the burdens we carry and the weariness etched into our bones. Teach us to shoulder one another's pain, and to find strength in your steady, compassionate presence along the way. Amen.

QUARTET ANTHEM

O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

by Francis/Jones

SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:32-43 (CEB)

MONOLOGUE: THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

Braden Bicher

RESPONSIVE REFLECTION

L: One thief mocks Jesus; the other asks to be remembered.

C: In our suffering, we face the choice between rejection and hope.

L: Jesus promises the repentant thief paradise, despite the overwhelming darkness.

C: In the darkest moments, God offers grace—unexpected, yet sure.

L: Let us pray,

C: God of the in-between, you are there in the questions, the silence, the flickers of hope when all feels lost. Stay with us as we wrestle with uncertainty, and remind us that even in our doubt, your mercy reaches out.

POEM

I've Been the Thief

Rev. Sarah Speed

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 223 (black hymnal, see next page)

What Wondrous Love is This

What Wondrous Love Is This

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

1. What won-drous love is this, O my soul! O my soul! What
 2. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to
 3. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and

6

won-drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is
 God and to the Lamb, I will sing; To God and to the
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on! And when from death I'm

11

this! that Christ should come in bliss to bear the heav-y cross for my
 Lamb who is the great I Am, while mil-lions join the theme, I will
 free, I'll sing and joy-ful be, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing

16

soul, for my soul, to bear the heav-y cross for my soul!
 sing, I will sing; while mil-lions join the theme, I will sing!
 on, I'll sing on, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on!

SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:44-49 (CEB)

RESPONSIVE REFLECTION

L: At the moment of Jesus' death, the earth trembles, and the curtain is torn.

C: In the brokenness of the world, God is present.

L: The centurion declares, "Surely, this man was innocent."

C: May we find in the cross the truth that transcends our understanding—grace in the midst of loss.

L: Let us pray,

C: Holy One, the sky has gone dark and the curtain is torn, and still we do not understand. Hold us in this aching silence, and keep our hearts tender as we wait for what comes next. And in the waiting, surround us as we pray the prayer you have taught us,

ALL: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.

CLOSING LITANY

L: In the shadow of the cross, we wait.

C: We wait in grief, for what has been lost.

L: We wait in confusion, for the pain of not understanding.

C: We wait in hope, for what is still to come.

L: In this messy middle, we know that God is with us.

C: In our grief, in our loss, in our waiting, God is here.

L: Lord, help us trust, even when the way is unclear.

C: For in our waiting, we know the story does not end here.

L: But right now, we are here, waiting, lost in the grey in-between.

C: We are here. We were there.

***SENDING HYMN NCH NO. 229** (vs. 1-3, see next page)

Were You There

The congregation is invited to leave in silence after the sending hymn, awaiting Easter morning.

Thank you to our Lenten team for decorating the altar and providing the structure for our Lenten services. The Lent team members are Andrea Adams, Cindy Hogentogler, Sandy King, & Pastor Amy.

Welcome Team Members—Tori Everhart, John Wolfe

Liturgist—Connie Wolfe

Tech Team—George DeMers, Ron Miles, Paul Ramsey

Were You There

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Piano ♩ = 80

1. Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
 2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 3. Were you there when God wept at Mar - y's cry?
 4. Were you there when Christ rose up from the tomb?

5
 Were you there when they cru - ci - fied y Lord?
 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 Were you there when God wept at Mar - y's cry?
 Were you there when Christ rose up from the tomb?

11
 some-times it caus - es me to trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble. Were you
 Were you
 Were you
 Were you

17
 there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
 there when they nailed him to the tree?
 there when God wept at Mar - y's cry?
 there when Christ rose up from the tomb?

References

¹The Time of Confession, Monologues, and Poetry reflection are written by the Rev. Sarah Speed as part of Sanctified Arts Everything in Between series.