



Weekly Worship



Preparation

For this day the church is often stripped as bare as possible with no banners, flowers or other decoration. Just have a simple cross standing at the front of the church. Also have a basket of stones, and another of flower petals, and a cloth to drape over the cross later in the service. Have two people organised to bring the cloth forward and wrap around the cross at the appropriate moment. Organise the readers to come forward to read without introduction, and to leave space for silence, and organise the organist to just play a simple introductory note for 'Jesus, remember me' and to not play for the last verse of 'When I survey'.

If using a Christ candle, it might be lit prior to the beginning of worship. It could be snuffed out during the reading at the mention of Jesus' death. It could be lit again during the affirmation of faith.

The acknowledgement of country may be done as a slide prior to the commencement of the liturgy.

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded land and waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Introduction

This is a simple service in which we read the account in John's Gospel of Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion, with time to reflect and respond. Please feel free to join in the specified actions if you wish. At the end of the service, please leave quietly so that those who wish to remain and reflect can do so.

On this Good Friday we meet
at the foot of the cross.

We meet in sadness and sorrow as we face up to humanity's capacity to act without justice and to inflict hurt upon the innocent.

But in the injustice, in the abuse, the wounding, the weeping, the sorrow and the loss, God is present.

Even in death, God is present.

God is present weeping for his Son and for the world, ready to bring redemption and hope despite the worst the world can do.

**Singing: O sacred head,
sore wounded** **Tis 339**





Prayer

Let us pray:

As we gather to worship you,
give us strength to really hear
the account of Jesus' passion,
and open our hearts to be moved
by his great suffering,
and be reminded of the love and forgiveness
made possible by his great sacrifice. Amen.

Reading 1 - Jesus is arrested

John 18:1-11

Singing: Jesus, remember me
TiS 730



Reading 2 - Jesus before the High Priest

John 18:12-27

Singing: Jesus, remember me
TiS 730

Reading 3 - Jesus before Pilate

John 18:28-40

Singing: Jesus, remember me
TiS 730



Reading 4 - Jesus sentenced

John 19:1-16a

Singing: Jesus, remember me
TiS 730



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Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Weekly Worship



Reflecting

Rev. Ian Brown

Reading even the most sketchy and benign accounts of that day is enough to make even the strong shudder. No one there that day, including the Romans who did the deed, would ever have agreed to call it "Good Friday." It was a terrible day by any standard. Nobody thought it good! It was a day of human infamy. That day represents humanity at its worst, but it also shows God at God's best for us. 'Good Friday' is a theological statement about the upending of the concept of destiny.

Jesus' vision put him on a collision course with the authorities. His vision was shared with many of his fellow Jews of the time; that God's new way would restore justice and freedom to the people. But his form of revolution was to teach and live out an experience and theology of God as love.

But Good Friday would not be a good experience for Jesus or those with him. It was not just another day to the family and followers of Jesus, the most terrible day of their lives. Not only did they lose a dear and special friend, their faith and hope was lost as well.

In some ways it was just another horrible day, like other horrible days, for people all over our suffering and broken world. It was just one man's death. The ones there were too grieved and upset to remember that he had said to them that it was "good" that he was leaving — to their advantage even. He promised that he would be more substantially with them in his absence than when he was there. They didn't understand this when he said it, and if it crossed their troubled minds on that Friday, it was no comfort.

"Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" It's a good question for us to ponder. What do we believe when we come to such a day as this?

Some say Isaiah was prescient, given foresight by God. Some say the gospels wrote Isaiah's details into Jesus' story. Some will say Jesus learnt the truth and character of his mission in the lines of the Isaiah scroll. Some will say yes to all these and some shake their heads and won't believe anything.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

"Wounded for our transgressions", said Isaiah, but Jesus was killed. But both texts have good arising out of suffering and brutality.

Life and death issues are the most divisive, the most profound and difficult to deal with of all the problems we face. It wasn't a new problem in Jesus' day and we still struggle with it. Symbols that remind us of these hard problems are often seen as offensive in themselves, but the cross is so familiar that it has lost its symbolic shock.

The cross, that symbol of brutal Roman power, is also our sign of Jesus' powerlessness. And within the symbol lurks something subversive. The cross is a confronting reminder that Jesus defeated death by entering into it. Jesus subverts brutal worldly power by submitting to it. The cross that we meet around reminds us that God stands with those who are victims of brutality. And that through the cross our ultimate destiny is changed.

At the very centre of our faith is this story of suffering, death and resurrection. We have to face the darkness, the endings, the reality in front of us. There can be no healing of our pains until suffering and death have been faced.

Here is the truth that God stands with the suffering. We are invited here to be people prepared to face our pains before God. Invited to be prepared to stand alongside others in their times of need, to put our little faith into action for ourselves and for others. When faced with Isaiah's question of 'what do I believe?', this is the direction I look for answers, to this cross shaped sign of involvement and changed destiny.

The cross says to us there is a reality here to be confronted; then there is hope for rehabilitation, forgiveness and renewal that becomes for us the hope of resurrection, of beginning again. Amen!

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Towards Healing and Wholeness

God in Christ, you are with us in all the worst times of our lives.

You are with us in our failures.
You are with us when we face pain,
loss, and sorrow.
You are with us in despair.
You are with us when others hurt us,
and when we hurt others.

You know our hearts.
You know what lies below the face
we show to the world.
You know our deepest secrets.
You know the hurts we hang onto and
refuse to let go of, and the forgiveness
we refuse ourselves and others.

These are the rocks that
weigh down our hearts and souls.

We take these rocks and lay them at the foot of your
cross knowing that you can help us lay them down
and move towards healing.

*The people take rocks representing the things
for which they need forgiveness, or healing and
release.*

*They bring them forward and leave them at the foot
of the cross.*

We can trust God in Jesus with all that
weighs down our hearts and souls.

He forgives,
he heals and
he shows a way forward.

Silence

Singing: Here hangs a man discarded **TiS 356**



Reading 5 - Jesus' death

John 19:16b-30

*The candle may be extinguished at the end of verse
30. It is appropriate for the reader to pause for a
good amount of time.*

Reading 6 - Jesus is laid in the tomb

John 19:31-42

During the reading a shroud may be carried forward
and placed on the cross

Pause again at the end of this reading.

Reading 7 - Those who loved Jesus

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his
mother's sister, and Mary the wife of Clopas, and
Mary of Magdala. Many women were watching
from a distance. Among them were the mother of
Zebedee's sons, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of
James and Joseph.

They loved Jesus and mourned his death. They
knew he was innocent. They knew he didn't deserve
to die.

A woman takes rose/flower petals from the bowl and
scatters them on the cross.

Reading continues





Reading continues

We remember that Jesus was innocent,
but we also know that innocent people
often suffer and die.

We remember them wherever they are in the world-
whether it be in The Ukraine, or Gaza, or Israel, or
South Sudan or closer to home.

We pray for them and commit to work for peace.

People take rose/flower petals to the cross and
touch it.

Singing: There is a green hill
TiS 350



Affirmation of faith

During the affirmation, the candle may be re-lit

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
We proclaim Jesus Christ,
the crucified and risen One,
confessing him as Lord to
the glory of God the Father.

In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we acclaim Jesus as the Lord of the Church,
the Head over all things,
the beginning of a new creation.

We acknowledge that we live and work
between the time of Christ's
death and resurrection
and the final consummation of all things
which he will bring.

We are a pilgrim people,
always on the way towards a promised goal;
on the way Christ feeds us
with word and sacraments,
and we have the gift of the Spirit
in order that we may not lose the way.

We will live and work within the faith and unity
of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church,
bearing witness to that unity which is both Christ's gift
and his will.

We affirm that every member of the Church
is engaged to confess the faith
of Christ crucified.

Together with all the people of God,
we will serve the world for which Christ died.
And we await with hope
the day of the Lord Jesus.

*Adapted from the Basis of Union, Uniting Church in Australia
from Uniting in Worship 2*





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Dismissal

Go now,
believing that God's love
can overcome all things.

Go now,
trusting that God is with us,
even in the face of death and loss.

Go now,
with courage and hope,
as you journey to Easter Day.

Contributors this week:

Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown
Wattlebird Ministry Team

Liturgy: Rev. Sandra Houghton
Retired minister, Sale Victoria

Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga
revjenniegordon@gmail.com

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3995, Gippsland, Uniting Church in Australia - with
blessings and permission to use the content in
worship services with acknowledgement.*

Singing: When I survey the wondrous cross TiS 342

sing the last verse unaccompanied leave quietly

Other song suggestions

My song is love unknown TiS 341

*OR: Morning glory starlit sky
TiS 174 vv 1, 4, 5, 6*

*OR: Were you there
TiS 345*

