



Worship Service Theme: Good Friday

Please use care with this service for elders with dementia. Although many elders appreciate it, it may upset others. Skip or modify the scripture readings if you notice any agitation.

Helpful Elements:

No tablecloth, but a scarlet veil to drape over the cross

[Special songbook for Good Friday](#)

Welcome: Welcome and thank you for joining our service today. My name is _____ and I'll be leading our worship time. Today is Good Friday, the day we remember the cross of Christ. It's the most serious day of the Christian faith, but it is also one of glory. We intentionally enter into a holy space of sorrow and wonder that makes the joy of Easter morning that much sweeter.

You'll notice that our table today is bare, symbolizing the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and the stripping of Jesus' clothes before he was crucified. The cross remains, but it is covered in a scarlet veil to symbolize Jesus' blood shed for the sins of all people, including us.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, draw us into your love and mercy as we remember the suffering and death of your son, Jesus Christ. Forgive us for so often ignoring or passing over the painful cost of your grace to us. We glorify and thank you, that your purposes were accomplished through Christ dying for our sins, once for all. In your name we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

Now we begin the story of Jesus' betrayal, suffering, and death, as recorded in the gospels.

(Matthew 26) ²⁰ When it was evening, Jesus reclined at table with the twelve. ²¹ And as they were eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²² And they were very sorrowful and began to say to Jesus one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" ²³ Jesus answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. ..."

[After Judas betrayed Jesus and Jesus was seized,] ⁵⁹ ... the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none. ... And the high priest said to Jesus, "I command you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "... What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?" The council answered, "He deserves death."

Hymns:

My Jesus, I Love Thee, p. 2

Just as I Am, p. 3

The story continues (Matthew 27):

¹⁸ Pilate, the governor, knew that it was out of envy that the religious rulers had delivered Jesus up. ... ²² So when Pilate asked the crowd, "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³ And Pilate said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But the crowd shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" ...²⁶ So Pilate ... delivered Jesus to be crucified.

(John 19) The soldiers took Jesus, ¹⁷ and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which is called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

¹⁹ Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

(Mark 15)

³³ And when the sixth hour [noon] had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour [3 p.m.] ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ...³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the Roman soldier, who stood facing him, saw that in this way Jesus breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

Hymns:

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, p. 4

Then we finish the story (Matthew 27):

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a follower of Jesus. ⁵⁸ Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and Pilate ordered the body to be given to Joseph. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And Joseph rolled a great stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymn:

Beneath the Cross of Jesus, p. 5

[optional: How Great Thou Art, p. 6]

Homily: Let’s pause for a moment as we consider the story of Good Friday. Does it seem a little odd that it’s called “good” Friday? What could be *good* about this story?

- Let’s say you’ve been working on something big. You have a big house project, or you’re creating a piece of art, or you’re writing a difficult letter ... and you finally finish it. How do you feel?
- Now think about someone you love deeply. Imagine that your beloved lives on the other side of a raging river and has no way to build a bridge to get to you. So you build the bridge yourself, even though it’s hard, costly, and painful. When the bridge is done and the person you love is finally able to rush across and be with you, how would that feel to both of you?

- That's the sense of Good Friday. The raging river is our sin, and the cross is the bridge between us and God. We can't fix or swim the river and we can't build the bridge – but God does both.
 - God's glorious plan to be both the judge and the forgiver of human wrongdoing was completed by Jesus dying for us.
 - And in Jesus' resurrection on Easter morning, Jesus proves his power over death itself and seals the promise of eternal life for those of us who follow him in faith – who choose to run over the bridge that God constructed for us to reach God.
- Good Friday is a good – indeed, a glorious – day. When we see and receive the gift of forgiveness and life given by Jesus on the cross and guaranteed by his resurrection, Good Friday becomes good indeed.

Hymn:

Amazing Grace, p. 7

Let us end our service today with a Prayer of Confession:¹

Heavenly God,
 You call us to be your voices in this world
 and we stay silent.
 You call us to be your hands in this world
 and we keep them hidden.
 You call us to be your feet in this world
 and we go our own way.
 When we meet those who are doubting
 and say nothing, forgive us.
 When we meet those who need your touch
 and do nothing, forgive us.
 When we are called to take up your cross
 and carry nothing, forgive us.
 Breathe life into these bones
 bring freedom to these lives
 that we might declare
 with heart and soul and voice
 that you are our Lord and our God. Amen.

¹ http://www.faithandworship.com/Prayers_Maundy_Thursday.htm

Hymn:

Were You There?, p. 8

That concludes our service today, as we wait until we meet again to celebrate Easter Sunday. Thank you for coming, and please receive the closing blessing.

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his to face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology, Reprise, p. 9

[Optional postlude: Crown Him with Many Crowns, p. 10]