

Welcome and notices:

Easter Day – 6.30am Sunrise Service
Easter Day – 10.30am Easter Communion

Reflective action

Get some silver coins, 30 if possible, and hold them in your hand. Don't let go. Also get a small bowl.

Call to worship:

'He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed' (1 Peter 2:24).

Song: Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice

<https://youtu.be/ewlpRdDU9Q8>

**Jesus Christ, I think upon Your sacrifice,
You became nothing, poured out to death.**

**Many times I've wondered at Your gift of life,
And I'm in that place once again.
And I'm in that place once again.**

***And once again I look upon the cross
where You died,
I'm humbled by Your mercy and I'm
broken inside.
Once again I thank You,
once again I pour out my life.***

**Now You are exalted to the highest place,
King of the heavens,
where one day I'll bow.
But for now, I marvel at this saving grace,
And I'm full of praise once again.
I'm full of praise once again.**

And once again...

**Thank You for the cross,
Thank You for the cross,
Thank You for the cross, my Friend.
(Repeat)**

Opening prayer and confession:

Loving God, as we gather united in spirit but divided in distance on this holy day, may we grasp the full extent of your love witnessed in the crucifixion of your Son. May we remember and give thanks for your amazing love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, you are steadfast in your love and infinite in your mercy; you welcome sinners like us and invite us to draw close to you. We confess our sins to you, trusting in your mercy and forgiveness.

Take your silver coins and drop them in the bowl as an act of confession, of letting go of the sins that took Jesus to the cross.

'Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy' (1 Peter 2:10).

The Father forgives you and sets you free, for you have been washed and made clean by Christ's death. Now live in the power of his Spirit to his praise and glory.
Amen.

Reading: Mark 15:33-41

³³At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'). ³⁵When some of those standing near heard this, they said, 'Listen, he's calling Elijah.'

³⁶Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down,' he said.³⁷With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. ³⁸The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹And when

the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'

⁴⁰Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. ⁴¹In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Song: This blood

https://youtu.be/bOmDI4xN_-A

**There is a blood that cost a life
That paid my way, death its price
When it flowed down from the cross
My sins were gone, my sins forgot**

**There is a grave that tried to hide
This precious blood that gave me life
In three days he breathed again
And rose to stand in my defence**

*So I come to tell you he's alive
To tell you that he dries
ev'ry tear that falls
so I come to tell that he saves
to shout and to proclaim
that he's coming back for you*

**There is a blood that sights the blind
that heals the sick, the lonely finds
it has the power to free the bound
as chains they fall upon the ground**

**So pour it out to cleanse my soul
and let his liquid glory flow
Because it lives to make me whole
I owe my life, I owe my all**

So I come to tell you he's alive...

Reflection: WHY ARE WE HERE? (8)

To stand against the darkness

Many people are afraid of the dark. It's a common fear. In the children's book 'The owl who was afraid of the dark' by Jill Tomlinson, Plop, the baby barn owl, is like every other barn owl except that he's afraid of the dark. However, he is helped to see all the good things about the dark, for example at night he can see the stars.

But here in Mark's gospel the dark at midday was not good. Why was it dark? Some think it just got cloudy. But that wouldn't be darkness. Others think it was a solar eclipse, but that wouldn't last three hours. No, this was more than some like to suggest. This was when creation responded to what was happening on the cross; the Lord of life was taking on death. The prophet Amos prophesied that there would be darkness at the time of the Day of the Lord, saying, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight... I will make it like the mourning for an only son..." (Amos 8:9, 10).

The darkness signified the curse of God. Do you remember the ten plagues that came over Egypt before the Israelites were freed? There was a plague of darkness (Exodus 10). In fact in Exodus 10 it says, 'So Moses stretched out his hand towards the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. No-one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived' (Ex. 10:22-23). Three days of darkness, three days of judgement, yet light for the Israelites. Do you see the parallel with the death and resurrection of Jesus? And the implication for us, that even though we live in dark times, we can still know the light of Christ despite the darkness all around.

God's judgement was being poured out at midday for three hours. In that time all the world's sin, the world's darkness, was being poured out on Christ. The darkness signified the curse of God. `Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, `Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). In the darkness Jesus bore it all. His separation from God was real. Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (15:34). Then with a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last breath and died (15:37). Had the darkness won? Had it finally overcome God's Messiah? If we had been those first disciples we would have thought the darkness had absolutely won. It was all over. Jesus was dead.

Before we get to why it is Good Friday, we need not only to stay in the darkness, with the agony and pain, the loss and the grief of Jesus' death but also this year reflect on the darkness, the agony and pain, the loss and the grief that the pandemic has brought. We need to stand with our neighbours, friends and families so they know we care and that they matter, that their pain and loss are heard and shared.

Out of the darkness a great ripping was heard as the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple. The High Priest went through the curtain once a year to make sacrifice for the sins of the people. Now the sacrifice Jesus our great high priest was making was of himself and it was accepted by God. The curtain was torn because no longer do we have to stand separated from God's presence. We are invited in. When the curtain tore, it started at the top. No-one could tear the curtain from the top, only God could do that. The barrier

between God and people was removed. That's why it is Good Friday. The price is paid.

The third remarkable thing to take place on Good Friday was the Roman centurion declaring, "Surely, this man was the Son of God" (15:39). Jesus' death revealed who he was and is. Jesus said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). The cross drew the soldier, and if it could draw a battle-hardened soldier then it can draw anyone however hardened to the gospel. Have you been praying for someone to turn to Christ? Don't give up praying. No-one is out of God's reach.

So, there was darkness, and in the darkness our sins were laid on Jesus so that he became sin for us. The curtain was torn in two from top to bottom making a way for us meet with God. And a Roman soldier marvelled at what had taken place, that Jesus was and is the Son of God. Let's stand with Christ in his agony, and stand against the darkness that still seeks to shatter lives, knowing that Christ turns hatred to love, war to peace, and darkness to light.

Song: Oh, To See The Dawn

<https://youtu.be/nPFv-ywTY-c>

Oh, to see the dawn of the darkest day:

Christ on the road to Calvary.

Tried by sinful men,

Torn and beaten, then

Nailed to a cross of wood.

This, the power of the cross:

Christ became sin for us,

Took the blame, bore the wrath:

We stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh, to see the pain written on Your face

Bearing the awesome weight of sin;

Every bitter thought,

Every evil deed

Crowning Your bloodstained brow.

**Now the daylight flees,
Now the ground beneath
Quakes as its Maker bows His head.
Curtain torn in two,
Dead are raised to life;
'Finished!' the victory cry.**

*This, the power of the cross:
Christ became sin for us,
Took the blame, bore the wrath:
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

Oh, to see my name
Written in the wounds,
For through Your suffering I am free.
Death is crushed to death,
Life is mine to live,
Won through Your selfless love.

*This, the power of the cross:
Son of God, slain for us.
What a love! What a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

Prayers: from Ray Simpson

Jesus forsaken, we pray to you for the forsaken ones of the world – orphaned children, lovers spurned, AIDS victims deserted.

Jesus broken, we bring to you those suffering from broken dreams, broken relationships, broken promises.

Jesus, defenceless victim, we bring to you those who are victims of violence, abuse and false accusation.

Jesus, who has lost everything, we bring to you those who have lost work, health or hope.

Jesus, thirsty and destitute, we bring to you those who are hungry, homeless and friendless.

Jesus, who looks upon his scattered disciples, grant your universal Church the grace to stay with you and walk in the way of the cross.

Jesus who, lifted up on the cross, draws all people to yourself, look upon the peoples of the world torn apart through greed and hatred – and become the source of a reconciling.

Song: When I survey the wondrous cross
<https://youtu.be/nhFIBXJ78k>

**When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

**See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.**

Closing prayer and blessing

Loving God, with the suffering completed on the cross, and with the darkness defeated, may we be willing servants of the Saviour, bringing the hope and light of Christ to all; in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and all whom the Lord loves this day and for evermore. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.