

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
†
THE CHURCH GATHERS TO WORSHIP

WELCOME

FIRST PEOPLES LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the land we worship, live, work, and commune on is the original homelands of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the Abenaki people and the Pennacook people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather.

PRELUDE

River Flows In You

(Adele Elle-Gerlenter)

CALL TO WORSHIP:

The
people
stood
yelling,
"Crucify!"
and it breaks our hearts every time.
For Jesus' death occurs every time someone
is ignored, mistreated, oppressed.
"Crucify!"
tears
away
at
God's
Beloved.

LIGHTENING OF THE TENEBRAE CANDLES:

Never doubt the meaning of Lent. It happened a long time ago, but it happened. Jesus walked on this earth. He practiced a ministry of radical inclusivity, drawing to himself all the despised and rejected members of society. He lived what he taught: a life of justice and love, of profound compassion for all people. He lived a life acceptable to you, O God.

His death terrifies us, because it reveals how committed the world is to its own way, and the price the world exacts from those whose commitment is to you, O God.

Moment of Silence as the Candles are Lit

Tonight as we extinguish these lights, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of all the people in the world who suffer in body, in mind or in spirit. Let us pray:

What we contemplate this night is beyond words, beyond understanding. May the Holy Spirit intercede for us and give voice to what, for us, is inexpressible. Amen.

HYMN: #219

Journey to Gethsemane

1 Journey to Gethsemane, go and feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see; Watch the anguish of this hour;
Do not hide or turn away; Learn of Jesus how to pray.

2 Follow them to Pilate's hall; View the Lord of life arraigned;
Crowned with thorns and mocked by all, faithfully this pain sustained;
Greater still than shame or loss, Jesus now must face the cross.

3 Calvary's mournful mountain climb, See the Savior lifted high,
Mark the miracle of time, God's own Child is sacrificed; "It is finished!"
Jesus cries; Learn from Jesus how to die.

1ST LESSON:

Luke 22:1-13 (Emilia Halstead)

A PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION FOR HOLY WEEK:

Ever-present God, on this night, our whole world is engulfed in shadows as we remember the story of Jesus' death. We confess that we want to push the fast-forward button on this familiar story because it hurts so much.

It hurts to think of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus.

It hurts to imagine Jesus abandoned and suffering on the cross with only a faithful few watching him breathe his last breath.

It hurts to watch your light overtaken by the shadows of the world.

But we must find our place in this crucifixion story and feel the pain that is there:

The pain of the world, of faithless decisions; of betrayal; of injustice.

Jesus entered that pain out of faithfulness to you and to us, to witness to the Truth that is Justice, Wholeness and Love.

We confess, we are afraid to enter this pain with Jesus.

Strengthen us with your courage; offer glimpses of hope in the shadows of death; let us know you are present with us here in this moment of pain; now as always.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hymn: #223

What Wondrous Love is This

1 What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this!
that Christ should come in bliss
to bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the heavy cross for my soul!

2 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,
to God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am,
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
while millions join the theme, I will sing.

3 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on!
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
and through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and through eternity I'll sing on!

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

UNISON COMMUNION PRAYER:

God, like people in Jesus' time, we both sing your praises and betray you everyday. By eating this special meal today, help us to let go of the past and take hold of the future that you are planning for us. We pray this in the name of Jesus, the liberator. Amen.

2nd Lesson:

Luke 22:14-23 (Emilia Halstead)

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

SHARING THE ELEMENTS IN SILENCE

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God, we thank you for the gift of life that you have given us through this meal. Help us to remember that Jesus didn't die so that you might love us. Jesus died to convince us that you love us. In his name we offer our thanksgiving and praise. Amen.

3rd Lesson: Luke 22:24-30 (Emilia Halstead)

TENEBRAE: READINGS AND EXTINGUISHING OF LIGHTS

"Tenebrae" is the Latin term for shadows. This is a series of lessons accompanied by the gradual extinguishing of lights, symbolizing the flight of the disciples and the approach of Jesus' enemies. The time of total darkness recalls Jesus' death and burial. The relighting of the Christ candle reminds us of the promise of resurrection and new life for all.

Jesus' Prediction (Luke 22:31-38) (Carol Hovey)
Praying at the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-46) (Carolyn Andrews)
Jesus is Betrayed and Arrested (Luke 22:47-53) (Eleanor Kimball)

Musical Reflection Fields of Gold (Adele Elle-Gerlenter)

Peter Denies Jesus (Luke 22:54-62) (Everett Sims)
Trial of Jesus (Luke 22:63-71) (Jim Wildman)

A Cappella Taize Chant "O Lord, Hear My Prayer"
O Lord, hear my prayer (x2), when I call answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer (x2), come and listen to me.

Jesus Standing Before Pilate & Herod (Luke 23:1-12) (Linda Sims)
Jesus Sentencing (Luke 23:13-25) (Phil Kimball)

Hammering of the Wood (33 strikes for Jesus' 33 years) (Jock Irvine)

The Crucifixion (Luke 23:26-43) (Sara Nichols)
The Death of Jesus (Luke 23:44-49) (Sheila Swenson)

Silence

Solo Were You There? (Emilia Halstead)

The Burial of Jesus (Luke 23:50-56) (Tim Wildman)

*You are invited to stay online for silent reflection,
as the video will be LIVE for 10 minutes after the end of the service.*