

Good Friday, April 18, 2025

Bloomington Mennonite Church

Confronting Death



Prelude

Welcome and Introduction

BMC Choir –VT #604 Nada te Turbe

Christ's Anguish Confronts our Selfishness –

Luke 22:39-48, 54a - Readers: Pauline B., **Graham D.**

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, "**Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.**" Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "**Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.**" Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, "**Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.**"

While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, "**Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?**"... Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house.



Congregational Hymn – VT #318
'Tis Midnight, and on Olives Brow

Prayer

Lord Jesus, sometimes our fears and worries draw us inward, and keep us from attending to the agony of others, even those wounded and kneeling at our gate. Rich with the cares of the world, we betray the poor in spirit.

Lord Jesus, help us to be rich in love and awake to care, so that along with all the poor in spirit, we will be comforted. AMEN

Christ's Testimony Confronts our Blinders – Luke 22:63-

71 – Readers: Pauline B., Wayne K. & Greg C., Graham D.

Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?" They kept heaping many other insults on him. When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!"



Congregational

Hymn – VT #330 Ah, Holy Jesus

Prayer

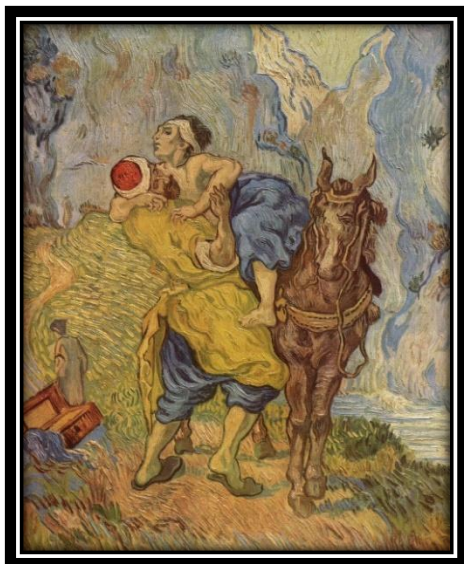
Lord Jesus, often we do not understand the path you call us on – the path of the cross. Human power blinds us to the narrow way, which often involves suffering. We would rather mock your way than change. While we look to you to save us, sometimes we doubt that you can.

Lord Jesus, in faith we come to you shouting, "We believe! Have mercy on us! Blind us to the distractions of power. Help us to focus on your truth, that we might take up our cross and walk in your way of salvation." AMEN

Christ's Cross, carried by Simon, Confronts our Bias

- Luke 23:26 – Readers: Pauline B.

As [Roman soldiers] led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.



Congregational Hymn – VT #388 How Can I Say

Prayer

Lord Jesus, walking that difficult road, we would have expected your disciples to be there to help. But instead, a stranger from another place shouldered your cross. How often does this happen today? When your people should be showing your mercy and compassion, we too often walk by, while others that we call strange or different fulfill the law of neighbour love.

Lord Jesus, help us to be like Simon the Cyrene. Seize our hearts, that we might love our neighbour as ourselves, even when it is hard to. When we are distracted by many things, help us choose the better part of showing love to those we encounter. AMEN

Christ Confronts our Condemnation with Prophecy –

Luke 23:27-31 – Readers: Pauline B., **Graham D.**

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "**Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?'**"



Congregational Hymn – VT #794 If the War Goes On

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you disturbed the status quo and critiqued those in power. You sought to change minds and nurture new growth. You warned your people: destruction is the fruit of injustice.

Lord Jesus, while the wood is green and flexible, before we've been completely hardened and dried out, dig around in the soil of our hearts and help us bear the fruit of your justice. AMEN

Christ's Welcome of the Criminal

Confronts our Priorities – Luke 23:33-43 - Readers: Pauline B., **Graham D.**, **Paul F.**, **Soldier**, **Criminal 1**, **Lorna A.**

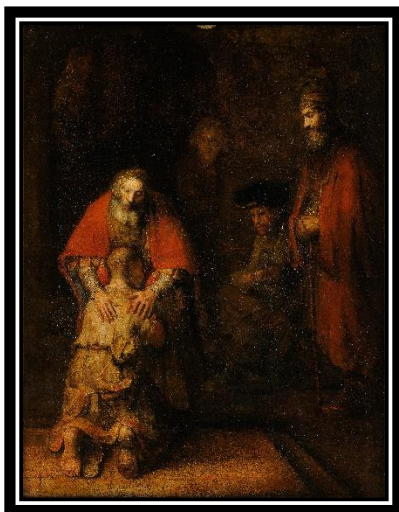
When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Congregational Hymn – VT #631
So nimm denn meine Hande (Take
Thou My Hand)

Prayer

Lord Jesus, like the one criminal on the cross, we often react against those around us from the place of our pain.

Lord Jesus, in our pain and wandering, remember us. Help us return to your embrace. Help us willingly meet the moment of your love and grace with joy and trust. AMEN

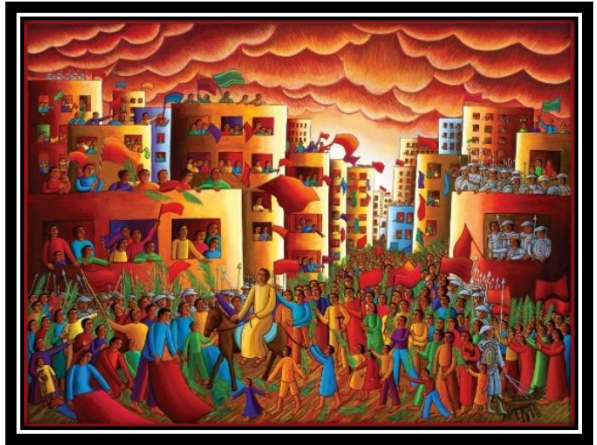


Christ's Death Confronts our Expectations – Luke 23:44-46, 47-49 - Readers: Pauline B., **Graham D.**, **Jonthan C.**

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**" Having said this, he breathed his last.

Flame of the Christ Candle is extinguished (1 MIN SILENCE)

When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "**Certainly this man was innocent.**" And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts.



But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

BMC Choir – VT #569 We Read the Cross

Prayer

Lord Jesus, on the cross you confronted humanity's death dealing powers. You upset our expectations about the Blessed One, who comes in the name of the Lord. Your power and blessing and honor appear to the world as weakness, curse, and disgrace.

God, like Jesus, we commend our spirits to your care as we walk the uncertain road ahead. May our faithfulness to you cause others to long for your salvation, singing "Hosanna!" AMEN

Christ Confronts Death, We Confront Death - Luke
23:50-56 – Readers: Pauline B.

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.



Prayer

God the powers of death that put people on crosses remain active in our world today. Confronting death, like Jesus, is not something we want to do.

God, like Joseph of Arimathea and the women from Galilee, help us to care for those touched by death as we wait expectantly for your kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Help us find rest in this troubled world, knowing that you hold us secure in life and in death. AMEN

Congregational Hymn – VT #671 The Hand of God Shall Hold You

Departing in Silence

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Jan Steen, (Leiden 1626 – 1679 Leiden).

Kloek, Wouter. “Lazarus and the Rich Man or “In Luxury Beware”” (2017). . In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–.
<https://theleidencollection.com/artwork/lazarus-and-the-rich-man-or-in-luxury-beware/> (accessed April 16, 2025).

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Page 4 - The Good Samaritan, 1890 by Vincent van Gogh

Page 5 - Gardener by an Apple Tree, Vincent van Gogh, mid-July, 1883

Page 6 – Return of the Prodigal Son, Rembrandt, 1669

Page 7 - Swanson, John August. Entry into the City, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56544> [retrieved April 8, 2025]. Original source: Estate of John August Swanson, <https://www.johnaugustswanson.com/>.