

Good Friday 2023

Service of Stones and Shadows

Do Not
be afraid



Love Faith

He has Risen ^{Resurrection} Love
Jesus
His love endures forever ^{New start}

Good News

Rejoice

Hope ^{Be glad}

Joy ^{Risen Faith}

Give ^{Love}

thanks



The United Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

Good Friday 2023 Service of Stones and Shadows

Key Scriptures and Theme Focus

Today the scriptures are chosen to tell the story of Jesus' last days, and his death on the cross. The readings focus on the darkness of these events, and leave worshippers anticipating the hope that will come on Easter Day.

Preparation

Prepare readers in advance. There are 11 readings, however each reader could read several readings.

Collect small stones, one for each worshipper, to be given to each person as they come in.

You may also choose to have 7 larger stones or small rocks, light enough to be carried. As indicated, each reader carries a rock forward and places it at the base of the cross before reading.

Six candles plus a plain white Christ candle. After each reading, one candle is extinguished. Note: use a candle snuffer rather than blowing out the candles!

Small tea candle extra

Decorations

No flowers or extra decorations.

Offering bowl for LentEvent, if using.

Set up Communion bread and chalice for display on Communion table.

Set up 6 candles plus the Christ candle on the Communion table or at the front of the worship space. Begin the service with ALL of these candles lit.

Make sure there is a cross easily visible and accessible for worshipers to lay their stones at the end of the service. This might be your usual cross at the front of your church, or you might place a cross on a table or near your communion table. Ensure there is room to lay the rocks and stones at it's base.

Large black cloth or sheet to cover communion table at conclusion of service

Tea candle to place on black cloth

Children's Activity: Good Friday Bag

See separate sheet for instructions

Paper bag; Easter stickers; hot cross bun or bread roll wrapped in gladwrap/sandwich bag; patty pans x2; scissors; green pipe cleaner; colouring pencils; cardboard crown template; brown pipe cleaners x2; pop sticks x2; white pipe cleaner; nail; tea candle

GATHERING

Have quiet music playing beforehand.

Music Suggestions:

O sacred head sore wounded *Together in Song 339*

Glory be to Jesus *Together in Song 344*

In Christ alone *Stuart Townend & Keith Getty*

Amazing Love *Praise and Worship 592*

There is a redeemer *Praise and Worship 723*

O the deep, deep love of Jesus *Together in Song 232*

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds *Together in Song 223*

Via Dolorosa *Sprague & Borop* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pj_INgDo-MM

NO Welcome or Introduction

Reader 1

Lord, your constant love reaches the heavens; your faithfulness extends to the skies. Your righteousness is towering like the mountains; your justice is like the depths of the sea. People and animals are in your care. How precious, O God, is your constant love! We find protection under the shadow of your wings. We feast on the abundant food you provide; you let us drink from the river of your goodness. You are the source of all life, and because of your light we see the light.

- Psalm 36:5-9

Reader 1 sits down

Introduction

Reader 2

The season of Lent, leading up to Easter, invites us to reflect more intentionally on our faith and our discipleship.

We are reminded of the call to follow Jesus.

We are also reminded that following Jesus can be challenging:

following Jesus can be comforting and confronting;

following Jesus can make us sure and uncertain;

following Jesus can mean letting go and embracing;

following Jesus can seem foolish and wise;

following Jesus demands our all, when we have nothing to bring.

In following Jesus we may lose our lives, in order to find the fullness of life eternal.

The season of Lent leads us into a time of darkness.
 However, we know from our experiences of life
 that new growth comes from soil that lies dormant,
 and light shines brightly when the darkness is greatest.
 We know that God is the source of all life,
 and because of God's light, we too can find light.

This morning we will follow Jesus through the events of his final week,
 in a series of readings, hymns and prayers.

These events are not easy.
 They are dark, ugly, cruel, painful, confronting.
 But they encourage us to be honest,
 and to open ourselves to seeking the Spirit of God
 as the one who brings light to our dark times,
 and the promise of new growth and new possibilities.
 In doing so, we join with generations of Jesus' followers,
 walking the way of love, and confessing our faith in,
 and our dependence upon, God.

At this time we also acknowledge the traditional owners
 of the land on which we meet, the _____ people.
 We pause to remember that they too have experienced
 dark, ugly, cruel, painful, confronting events.
 We acknowledge the work of their elders
 past, present and emerging,
 who through the ages have faithfully kept their traditions alive
 and who continue to do so today.

As you came into worship, you will have each received a stone.
 As you worship: as you listen to the Scripture readings, as you sing and reflect and pray,
 hold this stone. Feel its weight, heavy in your hand.

Reflect on the weight of your own burdens, which you carry with you.
 Reflect on the weight of the burdens which fell upon Jesus, in the events of Easter.
 Today, during this time of worship, this stone will symbolise aspects of Jesus' suffering
 and death.

At the end of this worship, you will be invited to lay your stone at the foot of the cross,
 leaving your burdens with him.

Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you
 will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
 - Matthew 11:28-30

If applicable

After each reading, there is a response, which will be on the screen.
 So as not to interrupt the flow, the hymns and songs will be unannounced:
 please remain seated. The service concludes with silence.
 You are invited to leave when you are ready, in silence,
 showing respect to those who might wish to remain and pray.

If applicable

Morning tea with hot cross buns will be served in the hall for those who wish to stay, but some will want to go in silence and continue reflecting on these events and what they mean for us today.

If applicable

If you have brought an offering, you are invited to place it in the bowl at the back of the worship space. This offering goes towards the UCA LentEvent.

If applicable

There is an activity kit available for young people which explains the symbols that are being used this morning.

Music suggestions

Love will be our Lenten calling *Together in Song 684*

Just as I am *Together in Song 584*

Lead me to the cross *Hillsong: Brooke Ligertwood*

O Lord, hear my prayer *Together in Song 741 /All Together Everybody 282*

None but Jesus *Hillsong: Brooke Ligertwood*

LISTENING

The Shadow of Betrayal

Reader 3 place rock at base of cross then move to stand behind communion table.

Uncover Communion bread and cup. Raise bread, break it and look to roof.

Raise chalice and look to roof, holding both bread and chalice.

Then place down on table and move to lectern to read.

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them. They were pleased to hear what he had to say, and promised to give him money. So Judas started looking for a good chance to hand Jesus over to them. On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the day the lambs for the Passover meal were killed, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and get the Passover meal ready for you?" Then Jesus sent two of them with these instructions: "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him...

The disciples left, went to the city, and found everything just as Jesus had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve disciples. While they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "I tell you that one of you will betray me - one who is eating with me."

The disciples were upset and began to ask him, one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, do you?" Jesus answered, "It will be one of you twelve, one who dips his bread in the dish with me. The Son of Man will die as the Scriptures say he will; but how terrible for that man who will betray the Son of Man! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born!"

While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. "Take it," he said, "this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God, and handed it to them; and they all drank from it. Jesus said, "This is my

blood which is poured out for many, my blood which seals God's covenant. I tell you, I will never again drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine in the Kingdom of God." Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.
- Mark 14:10-13, 16-26

Time of silent reflection.

Response

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Grant us your peace.

Reader 3 extinguish one candle and sit down.

Music suggestions

According to thy gracious word *Together in Song 515*

When his time was over the palms lay where they fell *Robin Mann Together in Song 357/ All Together Again 147*

Jesus, you are the bread *All Together All Right 658*

Remember now, my children *All Together All Right 659*

Take and eat *All Together Everybody 288*

Eat this bread, drink this cup *Together in Song 714*

The Shadow of Anguish

Reader 4 place rock at base of cross then move to lectern to read.

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over him, and he said to them, "The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch with me."

He went a little farther on, threw himself face downward on the ground, and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet not what I want, but what you want." Then he returned to the three disciples and found them asleep; and he said to Peter, "How is it that you three were not able to keep watch with me for even one hour? Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Once more Jesus went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cup of suffering cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done." He returned once more and found the disciples asleep; they could not keep their eyes open.

Again Jesus left them, went away, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then he returned to the disciples and said, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look!

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, here is the man who is betraying me!"

– Matthew 26:36–46

pause

Jesus had an inkling of the pain he was about to experience.

We can sense his anguish and struggle.

Yet he is able to say, "Not what I want, but what you want.

Your will be done."

When have you felt the weight of anguish and sorrow?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you name your sadness before God, then pray for strength to follow God's ways for your life.

Time of silent reflection.

Response

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Grant us your peace.

Reader 4 extinguish one candle and sit down.

The Shadow of Denial

Reader 5 place rock at base of cross then move to lectern to read.

Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard when one of the High Priest's servant women came to him and said, "You, too, were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied it in front of them all. "I don't know what you are talking about," he answered, and went on out to the entrance of the courtyard.

Another servant woman saw him and said to the men there, "He was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again Peter denied it and answered, "I swear that I don't know that man!"

After a little while the men standing there came to Peter. "Of course you are one of them," they said. "After all, the way you speak gives you away!" Then Peter said, "I swear that I am telling the truth! May God punish me if I am not! I do not know that man!"

Just then a rooster crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me." He went out and wept bitterly.

– Matthew 26:69-75

pause

When have you acted out of self-interest
instead of standing up for what you know to be true?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you consider other choices to be made,
then ask Christ to give you courage in making these choices.

Time of silent reflection.

Response

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Grant us your peace.

Reader 5 extinguish one candle and sit down.

Music Suggestions

Every single stone Leigh Newton <https://leighnewton.com.au/every-single-stone-2/>
or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lojmoatQowQ>

Before the cock crew twice *Together in Song* 340

Bitter was the night *All Together Again* 135

Stay here and keep watch with me *All Together Everybody* 287

Watch and pray with me awhile *Helen Wright*

The Shadow of Injustice

Reader 6 place rock at base of cross then move to lectern to read.

Jesus stood before the Roman governor, who questioned him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked. "So you say," answered Jesus. But he said nothing in response to the accusations of the chief priests and elders. So Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear all these things they accuse you of?" But Jesus refused to answer a single word, with the result that the Governor was greatly surprised.

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and have Jesus put to death. But Pilate asked the crowd, "Which one of these two do you want me to set free for you?" "Barabbas!" they answered. "What, then, shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they all answered. But Pilate asked, "What crime has he committed?" Then they started shouting at the top of their voices: "Crucify him!" When Pilate saw that it was no use to go on, but that a riot might break out, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am not responsible for the death of this man! This is your doing!" The whole crowd answered, "Let the responsibility for his death fall on us and on our children!" Then Pilate set Barabbas free for them; and after he had Jesus whipped, he handed him over to be crucified.

- Matthew 27:11-14, 20-26

pause

When have you taken the easy way, even if it meant being a part of injustice?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you reflect, then ask Christ to help you show integrity, accountability and responsibility in your life.

Time of silent reflection.

Response

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Grant us your peace.

Reader 6 extinguish one candle and sit down.

The Shadow of Humiliation

Reader 7 place rock at base of cross then move to lectern to read.

Then Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace, and the whole company gathered around him. They stripped off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and placed it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand; then they knelt before him and made fun of him. "Long live the King of the Jews!" they said.

They spat on him, and took the stick and hit him over the head. When they had finished making fun of him, they took the robe off and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. They came to a place called Golgotha, which means, "The Place of the Skull." There they offered Jesus wine mixed with a bitter substance; but after tasting it, he would not drink it. They crucified him and then divided his clothes among them by throwing dice. After that they sat there and watched him. Above his head they put the written notice of the accusation against him: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then they crucified two bandits with Jesus, one on his right and the other on his left.

People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus: "You were going to tear down the Temple and build it back up in three days! Save yourself if you are God's Son! Come on down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and the elders made fun of him: "He saved others, but he cannot save himself! Isn't he the king of Israel? If he will come down off the cross now, we will believe in him! He trusts in God and claims to be God's Son. Well, then, let us see if God wants to save him now!" Even the bandits who had been crucified with him insulted him in the same way.

– Matthew 27: 27-44

When have you judged or ridiculed another?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you ask God to help you show mercy.
Know then that Christ's grace covers you, and them

Time of silent reflection.

Response

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Grant us your peace.

Reader 7 extinguish one candle and sit down.

Music suggestions

My song is love unknown *Together in Song 341*

The great love of God *Together in Song*

O dearest Jesus, why aren't you acquitted? *Together in Song 337*

Man of sorrows *Hillsong worship: Matt Crocker & Brooke Ligertwood*

When I survey the wondrous cross *Together in Song 342*

How deep the Father's love for us *Praise and Worship 841*

And we stood right there *Leigh Newton <https://leighnewton.com.au/and-we-stood-right-there/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfwUzF9Xq0M>*

At the cross *Chris Tomlin*

The Shadow of Abandonment

Reader 8 place rock at base of cross then move to lectern to read.

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

I have cried desperately for help, but still it does not come.

During the day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer;

I call at night, but get no rest.

But you are enthroned as the Holy One, the one whom Israel praises.

Our ancestors put their trust in you; they trusted you, and you saved them.

They called to you and escaped from danger; they trusted you and were not disappointed.

"Praise him, you servants of the Lord! Honour him, you descendants of Jacob!

Worship him, you people of Israel!

He does not neglect the poor or ignore their suffering; he does not turn away from them, but answers when they call for help."

All nations will remember the Lord.

From every part of the world they will turn to him; all races will worship him.

The Lord is king, and he rules the nations.

Future generations will serve him; they will speak of the Lord to the coming generation.

People not yet born will be told: "The Lord saved his people."

- Psalm 22: selected verses

When have you felt alone and abandoned?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you give thanks for God's faithfulness. Know that that Christ walks with you, even in times when you do not feel his presence.

Time of silent reflection.

Response

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Grant us your peace.

Reader 8 extinguish one candle and sit down.

The Shadow of Death

Reader 9 place rock at base of cross then move to lectern to read.

It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father! In your hands I place my spirit!" He said this and died.
– Luke 23:44-46

Reader 9 extinguish white Christ candle – sanctuary lights are extinguished, leave just enough light for reader to continue.

Longer time of silent reflection.

Allow yourself to be confronted by the reality of suffering, separation, and death in our world. Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you pray for people and situations where there is destruction and devastation in our world.

Time of silent reflection.

Response

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.

Grant us your peace.

Reader 9 sit down

Music Suggestions

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? *Together in Song 345*

There is a green hill *Together in Song 350*

The servant King/From heaven you came *Together in Song 256/ All Together Everybody 261*

Here hangs a man discarded *Together in Song 356*

In Christ alone *Stuart Townend & Keith Getty*

Amazing love *Graham Kendrick Praise and Worship 592 or*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lla89XoyBE>

O sacred head sore wounded *Together in Song 339*

When human voices cannot sing *Together in Song 682*

There is a redeemer *Keith Green Praise & Worship 723 or*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_YM_hYzcPo

The power of the cross *Stuart Townend & Keith*

Getty <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPFv-ywTY-c>

At the Cross (Love Ran Red) *Chris Tomlin*

SENDING OUT

Reader 10

When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea arrived; his name was Joseph, and he also was a disciple of Jesus. He went into the presence of Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave orders for the body to be given to Joseph. So Joseph took it, wrapped it in a new linen sheet, and placed it in his own tomb, which he had just recently dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away.

- Matthew 27: 57-60

Time of silent reflection.

Reader 10 to cover Communion table with a large black cloth and sit down

Reader 11 light smaller tea candle and place on black cloth

In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

- John 1:1-5

Pause

We hope for the dawning of a new day.

We hope for God to bring newness out of endings.

But for today, enough. We leave this place.

There is nothing more to see.

Jesus has been laid in the darkness of the tomb.

As you leave, in silence, you are invited to leave your stone at the foot of the cross.

Lay before him your burdens of care and sorrow, and find mercy and love.

This is an in between time. A time of waiting.
But it is also a time of hope.
Because we know...
that after the night comes a new day,
after sin comes forgiveness,
after defeat comes another chance,
after struggles comes peace,
after death comes resurrection,
and the hope of eternal life
The light will shine in the darkness,
and the darkness will never put it out.

Reader 11 sit down.

Drum roll (strepitus) symbolising closing of tomb.

If you do not have a drummer, you might find a timpani roll on youtube, eg:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMDsba5pH3g>

Readers to model getting up and placing their stones at the base of the cross, then leaving in silence.