

The background is an abstract composition of dark, textured colors including deep blues, purples, and reds. In the bottom left corner, there is a detailed, realistic illustration of a crown of thorns, made of dry, brown, and spiky branches.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

HOLY WEEK 2020

Maundy Thursday

Good Friday

Holy Saturday

Maundy Thursday

April 9, 2020

7PM

CENTERING MEDITATION

O God, your love is embodied in Jesus Christ, who washed disciples' feet on the night of his betrayal. Wash us from the stain of sin, so that, in hours of danger, we may not fail, but follow your Son through every trial, and praise him always as Lord and Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Jesus said: I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

MUSICAL MEDITATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Beloved people of God:

This is the day when Christ, our Passover Lamb,
surrendered himself to those who would kill him,
setting us free from sin and death forever.

This is the day when Christ, our Teacher and Lord,
knelt down to wash the disciples' feet,
showing us how to love and serve one another.

This is the day when Christ, the bread of heaven,
shared a holy meal with his followers,
offering a feast of abundant life and grace for all.

PRAYER

HYMN

An Upper Room Did our Lord Prepare

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Eternal God, whose covenant with us is never broken, we confess that we fail to fulfill your will. Though you have bound yourself to us, we will not bind ourselves to you. In Jesus Christ you serve us freely, but we refuse your love and withhold ourselves from others. We do not love you fully or love one another as you command. In your mercy, forgive and cleanse us. Lead us once again to your table and unite us to Christ, who is the bread of life and the vine from which we grow in grace.

(our prayer continues in silence)

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

May the God of mercy, who forgives you all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

GOSPEL READING

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

SERMON

MUSICAL MEDITATION

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

The Lord said to Moses:

This shall be a day of remembrance for you,
you shall celebrate it as a festival of the Lord.

Paul says to the Church:

As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

STRIPPING OF THE CHURCH

The service continues on Good Friday, 7 PM.

Good Friday

April 10, 2020

7 PM

CENTERING MEDITATION

We are not alone. We live in God's world. We believe in God, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and in others. By the Spirit we proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our Judge and our Hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Hebrews 10:16-25

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." He also adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." ¹Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

PRAYER

Merciful God, you gave your Son to suffer the shame of the cross. Seeing him who died for us, may we repent, confess our sins, and receive your overflowing love, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN

Ah, Holy Jesus

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, as we bow our heads beneath the cross pour out your Holy Spirit upon us to testify to the truth so that we may believe; this we pray through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. Amen.

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

First Reading Matthew 26:36-46

Second Reading Luke 22:47-62

Third Reading Mark 14:53, 55-56

Fourth Reading Mark 15:1-20

Fifth Reading John 19:17-24

Sixth Reading Mark 15:33-37

CLOSING HYMN

Were You There?

SILENT PRAYER

TOLLING OF THE BELL

Holy Saturday

“There is total end and there is a total beginning, but....what comes in between them?”

Hans Urs von Balthasar

Shelly Rambo writes in her book *Spirit and Trauma*¹ of this mysterious day in between, Holy Saturday. “Positioned between Good Friday and Easter Sunday in the Christian liturgical calendar, Holy Saturday is often overshadowed by the two days and remains in many traditions, a day that merely marks a turn between the events of Jesus’s death and resurrection. She leans into Hans Urs von Balthasar’s question (shown above) posed in 1956 to radio listeners. What comes between is what we confess every week when we say the words of the Apostles’ Creed, “he descended into hell.” For most of us, these words are hard to say and even harder to comprehend. Balthasar, according to Rambo, believed “that Holy Saturday, if attended to theologically, provides the key to interpreting Christian redemption.”

If you are like me, you probably haven’t given much thought to this day in the middle, Holy Saturday. If you are like me, you have often gone about business as usual—maybe filled this day with the yearly Easter Egg Hunt or putting final touches on the perfect Easter Sunday outfit. However, this day is a day for contemplation rather than a day for play. And I know that is asking a lot in this crazy time in which we currently find ourselves.

If we think about it, this virus has already situated us in a Holy Saturday-like time. We have no idea what tomorrow will bring. We are like those scared disciples behind locked doors. Unsure of what has happened and what will be.

On this Holy Saturday, what we are called to do is much like what we have been practicing—sheltering in place. Our challenge is to be still and embrace the uncertainty. What are the thoughts coming into our minds? What possibilities lie ahead and what new life might spring forth? What was once dead that might be resurrected? Only God knows.

Friends, let us not rush into tomorrow’s celebration. Let us sit with today, acknowledging that Jesus lay quiet in the tomb. Today, let us just be “in between.”

Faithful and Loving God, on this day of uncertainty, allow our minds to rest and be quiet; for our Lord Jesus lay in the tomb. Comfort our feelings of uneasiness today, hold us in the palm of your hand. Remind this day of your steadfast and unending love and help us to trust even when we do not understand. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. —Philippians 3:10-11

¹ Rambo, Shelly, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), p 45.