

COMMUNITY MENNONITE CHURCH OF LANCASTER

GOOD FRIDAY — REMEMBERING THE CRUCIFIXION

APRIL 10, 2020

**Preparation:** Light a candle in your space, and lay the sticks you've chosen for your Easter God's eyes in a cross beside it.

At Good Friday, we walk through the events of the night that Jesus died. In so doing we honor his faithful/fateful choices and attempt to answer his plea to his disciples at Gethsemane to "Stay with me!" in his hour of suffering.

**Reading** Jesus Weeps, by Malcolm Guite

Jesus comes near and he beholds the city  
And looks on us with tears in his eyes,  
And wells of mercy, streams of love and pity  
Flow from the fountain whence all things arise.  
He loved us into life and longs to gather  
And meet with his beloved face to face  
How often has he called, a careful mother,  
And wept for our refusals of his grace,  
Wept for a world that, weary with its weeping,  
Benumbed and stumbling, turns the other way,  
Fatigued compassion is already sleeping  
Whilst her worst nightmares stalk the light of day.  
But we might waken yet, and face those fears,  
If we could see ourselves through Jesus' tears.

**Song** When Jesus Wept HWB #234

*When Jesus wept, a falling tear in mercy flowed beyond all bound  
When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear seized all the earthly world around.*

**Scripture** Luke 22:39-46

**Reading** Gethsemane, from *Thirst* by Mary Oliver

The Grass never sleeps  
Or the roses.  
Nor does the lily have a secret eye that shuts until morning.  
Jesus said, wait with me. But the disciples slept.  
  
The cricket has such splendid fringe on its feet,  
And it sings, have you noticed, with its whole body,  
And heaven knows if it ever sleeps.

Jesus said, wait with me. And maybe the stars did, maybe  
The wind wound itself into a silver tree, and didn't move,  
Maybe  
The lake far away, where once he walked as on a blue pavement,  
Lay still and waited, wild awake.

O the dear bodies, slumped and eye-shut, that could not  
Keep vigil, how they must have wept,  
So utterly human, knowing this too  
Must be a part of the story.

**Song**                      *Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray*                      HWB #242

**Reading**                      John 19:26-37

**Reading**                      XI. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross, by Malcolm Guite

See, as they strip the robe from off his back  
And spread his arms and nail them to the cross,  
The dark nails pierce him and the sky turns black,  
And love is firmly fastened onto loss.  
But here a pure change happens. On this tree  
Loss becomes gain, death opens into birth.  
Here wounding heals and fastening makes free  
Earth breathes in heaven, heaven roots in earth.  
And here we see the length, the breadth, the height  
Where love and hatred meet and love stays true  
Where sin meets grace and darkness turns to light  
We see what love can bear and be and do,  
And here our savior calls us to his side  
His love is free, his arms are open wide.

**Reading**                      Luke 23:32-43

**Song**                      *Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom*                      HWB #247

**Reading**                      Luke 23:44-46

**Song**                      *Into your hands, I place my spirit*                      Susan Gascho-Cooke

*Into your hands, I place my spirit.  
Into your hands, into your hands ...*

### **Silent Reflection**

*With the candle and stick cross(es) as your focal point, reflect on the story of the crucifixion. Allow whatever feelings have arisen to show themselves. Allow both connections and resistance to the story to name*

themselves. Where might Jesus' suffering meet your suffering right now? Where does your suffering meet the suffering of Christ? Where might this story speak into the suffering in the world?

## Reading

XIV. Jesus is Laid in the Tomb, by Malcolm Guite

Here at the center, everything is still  
Before the stir and movement of our grief  
Which bears its pain with rhythm, ritual,  
Beautiful useless gestures of relief.  
So they anoint the skin that cannot feel  
Soothing his ruined flesh with tender care,  
Kissing the wounds they know they cannot heal,  
With incense scenting only empty air.  
He blesses every love that weeps and grieves  
And makes our grief the pangs of a new birth.  
The love that's poured in silence at old graves  
Renewing flowers, tending the bare earth,  
Is never lost. In him all love is found  
And sown with him, a seed in the rich ground.

## Closing Prayer

Weeping God,  
you came to share our lives,  
and still you share the vulnerability,  
the suffering and desolation  
of human beings ...

May we recognize your presence  
amid each mess we've made;  
give us your painful blessing of tears  
for all we've done  
and all we cannot prevent.  
In the salt of tears  
may we taste our common humanity;  
and, through them, help us to see  
the way that leads to peace.

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From *Iona Dawn: Through Holy Week with the Iona Community*

## Blow out candle