

Mount Royal United Church
March 29th, 2024

Good Friday

Prelude: "I Wonder As I Wander" **Lee and France**

Greeting:

Friends, tonight we gather, remembering a story that lies at the heart of our faith—the story of Jesus' last night and day. The story of his betrayal, his denial, his abject suffering, and death. Tonight, as we've been doing through Lent, we will follow our sibling in faith, Peter, placing ourselves in his footsteps. Where is he? What's he doing? How is he feeling, and can we see ourselves in any of this?

Call to Worship:

One: Surely God is in this place,

All: on this day we call "Good".

One: Never do we notice God's presence more than today,

All: on this day we call "Good".

One: Nowhere do our hearts break more than today,

All: on this day we call "Good".

One: Nowhere do we experience the power of love more than today,

All: on this day we call "Good".

One: Even here, even now, love enfolds us, on this day we call "Good".

John 13: 36-38

Opening Prayer (Unison):

Holy One, under whose wings all Your creatures find shelter, to you we flee on this haunting holy night. From darkness within and darkness around, protect us.

Keep us always near the cross, which is our hope and our assurance that the power of sin and death is broken and that your reign of mercy and justice has no end. Hold us in this time, for this is our story and Your story. Amen.

Hymn: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

VU#288

John 18: 1-11

Prayer of Confession: (Unison)

Loving and gracious God, we gather in the gloom and grief on this Good Friday. We can only imagine the pain that this day brought to You— handing over Your beloved to the powers of cruelty, opportunity, hatred, and fear. We can only marvel at the depth of Your love for us. For it was to save us that you sent Jesus to face the worst within humanity. For it was to heal us that Jesus was battered. For it was to give us life that Jesus was overwhelmed by death— and so our hearts are grateful, because in this love, we know forgiveness and we know new life. It is in His name, that we offer this, our prayer. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness:

In his suffering, Jesus pleaded, “Father, forgive them.” The God who has heard Jesus’ words on our behalf has granted that grace and mercy to us. We are God’s beloved children, and not even the shadows of this night will ever separate us from the deep love of God. We are a loved and forgiven people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

John 18: 12-27

Reflective Music: “Were You There”

Sermon: "Turning Around"

Hymn: "Be Still, My Soul"

VU#652

John 19: 16-25

Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Reflective Music: "Jesus Died Alone"

John 19: 28-30

Extinguishing of the Christ Light

Our friend, teacher and great hope has died. We leave now,
a defeated people, into the silence and darkness of the days
to come.