

Good Friday Service – April 3, 2026

Liturgy from *Seven Moments: a Service of Prayer and Reflection for Good Friday* ¹

Seven candles are lit in preparation for the service.

Welcome and Announcements

A Moment of Reflection

Gathering words

Along this way

We have walked with Christ.

Along this way

We have shared his table.

Along this way

He has washed our feet.

Along this way

We approach the cross.

Along this way

We fear the path.

Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Gathering Hymn *“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”* #335 (verses 1-3)

1. **Jesus, keep me near the cross, there’s a precious fountain;
free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv’ry’s mountain.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.**
2. **Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me;
there the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.**
3. **Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;
help me walk from day to day with its shadows o’er me.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.**

¹ from: **Wild Goose Big Book of Liturgies Volume 2** © 2018 The Iona Community, Published 2018 by Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK.

Introduction and prayer

On this day we recall the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we hear John's account, we focus on seven moments during that day and, as darkness still seeks to conquer the light, pause to reflect on our own sin, and that of the world.

At the end of each reading we will keep silence as a candle is extinguished to mark the prevailing darkness of this day.

Let us pray:

**God of the daytime and the night-time,
God of light and darkness,
God of joy and sorrow, we worship you.
Through you alone are we able to know that
even in the darkest hours
hope is present through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.
Amen.**

1st moment: 'Ecce homo' (Reader 1)

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

John 19:1–7 (NRSV)

We pray: *(a Kyrie is sung)*

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

The 1st candle is extinguished.

Silence

Reflection (Reader 2)

'Here is the man', 'Ecce homo', the Roman prefect said as he offered Jesus to the crowd. No name now for this nuisance-man whose silent threat causes such alarm. Yet even the no-name 'Ecce homo' has become a title for paintings, sculptures and verse over the centuries. A no-name title becoming his title, and a no-name handing-over soon to become his fate. Ecce homo – the Word made flesh.

2nd moment: Gabbatha (Reader 3)

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called the Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

John 19:8–16a (NRSV)

We pray: *(a Kyrie is sung)*

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

The 2nd candle is extinguished.

Silence

Hymn "Ah, Holy Jesus" #349 (verses 1,2,4)

1. **Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended
that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted.**

2. **Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.**

4. **For me, kind Jesus, was thine incarnation,
thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation;
thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion, for my salvation.**

3rd moment: Golgotha (Reader 4)

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.'

John 19:16b–22 (NRSV)

We pray: *(a Kyrie is sung)*

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

The 3rd candle is extinguished.

Silence

Meditation (Reader 5)

The article was finished and passed on to the editor for approval. Within a few minutes the call came. 'Are you *sure* you want to say this?' she asked.

'It's what happened,' the reporter replied. 'Those were the words that were used.'

'But they don't quite reflect our brand, fit in with our readers. Maybe you could say "it seemed" ... or "it appeared that" ... or "she was unclear".'

'But she wasn't. She was clear about what was said and when it occurred and what was meant by it – very clear.'

‘OK,’ the editor responded, ‘if it goes wrong, I’ll take the flak. Let it be as you have written.’

Pilate, in a moment of bravery, insists on what has been written – no fudging – ‘the King of the Jews’ it is. Even in the face of the crowd, sometimes it has to be said as it is. Even when the mood of the crowd threatens, sometimes it needs to be said as it is.

Hymn “Surely He Has Borne Our Suffering”² (tune: # 324)

1. **Surely he has borne our suffering;
He has carried all our pain.
His own life became an offering,
all to make us whole again.**
2. **How we love the joyful thunder —
Easter songs, in crowded pews.
May we pause and pray and wonder
as the cross bears your good news.**
3. **Though we love the city cheering,
though we love the bread and cup,
may we pause to hear the jeering,
may we see Christ lifted up.**
4. **Only as we pause and pray here
at the foot of Jesus’ cross,
will we know the gift of Easter:
God brings new life out of loss.**

4th moment: Casting lots (Reader 6)

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.’ This was to fulfil what the scripture says, ‘They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.’

And that is what the soldiers did.

John 19:23–25 (NRSV)

² text © 2016 Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved. (www.carolynshymns.com)

We pray: *(a Kyrie is sung)*

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

The 4th candle is extinguished.

Silence

5th moment: 'Here is your mother' (Reader 7)

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

John 19:25–27 (NRSV)

We pray: *(a Kyrie is sung)*

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

The 5th candle is extinguished.

Silence

Reflection (Reader 1)

In a moment all can change.

That moment of fearful angelic promise.

That moment of Bethlehem's birth pain and first-nursing.

That moment of fleeing.

That moment of apparent rejection.

That moment ...

So many moments with him.

And now this moment,

this handing over,

as the care given to him from birth to death

is now received from him,

and in this moment,

a new home for him and for me.

6th moment: Finished (Reader 2)

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:28–30 (NRSV)

We pray: *(a Kyrie is sung)*

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

The 6th candle is extinguished.

Silence

Reflection (Reader 3)

Finished.
So final a word,
but what is ever really finished,
accomplished,
completed,
except life itself?

A race run,
a record set,
only serves to herald
the next attempt,
a new champion
and holder of the prize.

But once for all
a death of life,
an obscuring of light bringing
darkness in its wake,
as a moment of completion
is echoed with finality.

Finished ...
the end ...
extinguished light ...
... but only till a brighter dawn.

Hymn “Were You There” #353 (verses 1-4)

1. **Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?**
2. **Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?**
3. **Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?**
4. **Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?**

7th moment: Pierced (Reader 4)

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.

John 19:31–34 (NRSV)

We pray: *(a Kyrie is sung)*

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy.)

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

The 7th candle is extinguished.

Silence

Reflection (Reader 5)

Seven moments of the ordinary.

Crowds,

fear,

power.

Inhumanity made ordinary ...

And so it continues as those with power

quash unrest,

break limbs,

execute trouble-makers,

instil fear.

As the chilling ordinariness of shoes and spectacles piled high whilst those who had chosen and bought them, cleaned them and worn them, are nameless numbers in a place of everyday death. No-names, each loved by God, but treated as less than human by others who, being loved by God themselves, risk their very humanity.

And we pause. And we wonder.

In seven moments of ordinary violence, would we be different?

Other days will soon come ...

the deep, deep sorrow of a garden visit met with a name;

a fear-filled room gathering an unexpected visitor;

a sad path home becoming a way back to hope;

a picnic transformed into a place of restitution.

But for now the candles are extinguished,

and the darkness prevails.

Prayers

We join now in prayer. Each petition will end with "Lord of the cross," and the congregational response "hear our prayer." Let us pray:

We pray for those for whom the terrifying has become the ordinary:

for victims of warfare;

for children and mothers unable to live in homes that are their own;

for fighters who have become immune to the cries of others;

and for politicians who hear only praise.

Silence

Lord of the cross,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for ourselves, if we have become immune to those who suffer,
who have no name, who count for little.

We ask for forgiveness for those times when we failed to speak or act.

Silence

Lord of the cross,

Hear our prayer.

We give thanks for those who remind us that

even in the shadows of pain

humanity may shine forth.

We give thanks for those who care for the dead and the dying,

for those who bring hope.

Silence

Lord of the cross,

Hear our prayer.

Lord of the cross,

in you alone do we find our hope,

even when hope is gone.

Amen.

Hymn “My Song Is Love Unknown” #343 (verses 1-3,5,6 – tune #94 LBW or #65 SBH)

1. **My song is love unknown, my Savior’s love to me,
love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die,
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?**
2. **He came from his blest throne salvation to bestow;
the world that was his own would not its Savior know.
But, oh, my friend, my friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend,
who at my need his life did spend!**
3. **Sometimes we strew his way and his sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day hosannas to our king.
Then “Crucify!” is all our breath,
and for his death we thirst and cry,
and for his death we thirst and cry.**

5. **In life no house, no home my Lord on earth might have;
in death no friendly tomb but what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heav'n was his home
but mine the tomb wherein he lay,
but mine the tomb wherein he lay.**
6. **Here might I stay and sing –no story so divine!
Never was love, dear King, never was grief like thine.
This is my friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend,
I all my days could gladly spend!**

A closing reading (Reader 6)

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

John 19:38–42 (NRSV)

Final prayer and departure

When hope has left

Still we watch and wait.

When darkness prevails

Still we search for light.

When the road is hidden

Still we seek a guide.

Christ of the cross,

hold us in these moments

as we wait for a garden vision,

a mealtime revelation,

a locked-room blessing,

and a lakeside renewal.

We go in peace.

(The congregation leaves in silence)