



NEWCASTLE UNITED CHURCH

Good Friday Service

March 29th, 2024

10:30 am

Welcome

“As followers of Christ, we are called to be a worshipping and learning, receiving and giving community of faith, hope and love.”

– Newcastle United Church Mission Statement

As we gather as a faith community, we acknowledge that we are on sacred land rich in the legacy, culture, and spirituality of the Indigenous people. It is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. We acknowledge that we live and work on land that is under the Williams Treaty, which has been the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee Nations, as well as many other Indigenous nations. These lands today are under the care of the Mississauga's of the New Credit First Nations people.

We acknowledge this land, out of respect for the many Indigenous nations who have cared for the lands and waterways from the beginning of time and continue to do so. Today we are grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and to worship on their traditional lands.

We are committed to learn and understand the truth of our shared history, confronting our past and present so that we can strive to build a future together upon true reconciliation, living out what the original ancestors of Turtle Island envisioned: sharing the resources of the land and waterways, and to live in harmony with one another as one people.

Introduction To Good Friday

The service of Tenebrae is an ancient Holy Week series of worship services that began around the beginning of the 7th century. The name “Tenebrae” means shadows. The service takes its name from the liturgy of extinguishing candles in succession, symbolizing not just the disciples’ desertion and denial of Jesus but also his death and burial.

Today we stand at the foot of the cross that was erected on Golgotha. We remember Jesus’ pain suffered before his death. We are mindful of Jesus’ triumph over death – that didn’t look much like triumph to anyone until Easter Sunday. And today we are reminded of what it really means to say we are “taking up our cross” and “following Jesus.”

We are going to move together, as we did during Lent, through the words Jesus spoken during the Passover gathering with his disciples, to the last hours of his life on the cross, to when his body was placed into the tomb. As we move through each phrase that Jesus spoke from the cross, we will blow out one of our Lenten candles – and we will have a short time of silence. When the Christ Candle is blown out we will share a longer moment of silence in memory of the One who brought us eternal life.

When the service concludes I invite you to leave the sanctuary in silence. For those who wish to meditate or pray further please feel free to stay as long as you need.

Prelude "Were You There?"

African-American Spiritual (arranged by Phillip Keveren)

Lighting of The Christ Candle

Call to Worship

L: Come, let us gather again in the shadow
of the Cross of Christ.

**A: We gather to remember the overwhelming evidence of
Love's ultimate sacrifice.**

L: Who would have guessed that the height and depth, the length
and width of God's love might look like this: a forsaken savior on a
cross?

**A: Certainly not us. Not us, who are too often lost
amid the world's distractions and responsibilities. Not us, for
whom such love was offered without cost.**

L: Let us gather again in the shadow of the Cross of Christ and
commit ourselves to remember the price paid. Let us live our lives
in a way that indicates why this Friday is called "Good."

**A: Thanks be to God, who opened the gates of heaven, that
we might have the faith, hope, and love, witnessed in Christ's
sacrifice for our salvation.**

Hymn VU 147 "What Wondrous Love Is This" vv. 1-2

Opening Scripture Mark 14:12-31

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Communion Hymn MV 195 "Long Ago And Far Away"

**Long ago and far away
Jesus lived and worked and prayed
healed the sick and the fearful and lonely
lived his life to show us God's way.**

**REFRAIN Stretched his arms out as he said
Fill the cup and share the bread
Remember me in love and joy and blessing.**

**Jesus gathered the children around him
spoke of Love and the joy to be found
told them stories of wisdom and wonder
God's creation in all that's around.**

**REFRAIN Stretched his arms out as he said
Fill the cup and share the bread
Remember me in love and joy and blessing.**

**Jesus called all his friends to be with him
share the bread and the cup once again
life to you I will offer it gladly
love will be with you right to the end.**

**REFRAIN (Sing Refrain twice)
Stretched his arms out as he said
Fill the cup and share the bread
Remember me in love and joy and blessing.**

Words and music: Pat Mayberry

**L: It's a dark day to be gathered here, Jesus;
it's a barren place – filled with shadows and death.**

**A: But we are here because we need to be here;
the shadows of this day are our shadows, the death is our
death;**

L: Now, as we worship, your cross becomes for us a mirror, reflecting back to us our own brokenness, sinfulness and darkness.

A: And as we reflect on Your love-inspired sacrifice, we discover an open doorway to life. We gather at the foot of Your cross, because we desperately need to be here. Amen.

Praise and Confession

L: It seems impossible that anyone would give what you did to save men and women and children like us;

A: But, you gave yourself freely for our sake.

L: It seems unimaginable that anyone could love the way you did, including outcasts, rebels, and even your persecutors, refusing to strike back;

A: But, you loved so much that you laid down your life for our sakes.

L: It seems inconceivable that anyone would offer the forgiveness that you did even as nails pierced your flesh, and the cross was stained with your blood;

A: But, you did not hold our sin against us, taking on the suffering that should have been ours.

L: Forgive us that we have allowed greed and violence, pride and deceit, bitterness and coldness, to have a place in our hearts;

A: And fill us again with Your immeasurable grace, Your inexhaustible love, and Your unconquerable life, that we may be changed, and may express our love and devotion through lives of worship.

L: As a community shaped by Christ's spirit, we pray the ancient pray, taught to the followers by Jesus,

A: "Creator, who art in heaven ..." Amen.

Prayers of the community

L: If the cross tells us anything, Lord, it is that You know and share our suffering: You are with us, and all those who are victims of disease, of the violence or abuse of others, of our own ignorance, foolishness or sin.

A: Help us and restore us, O Lord, we pray.

L: You are with us and all those who inflict pain on others and on our world, through our selfishness or greed, through our brokenness or anger, through our rigidity or need to be right.

A: Help us and restore us, O Lord, we pray.

L: You are with us and all those who are fearful of threats to this world we call home, to our safety and survival, to our sense of community and togetherness as people.

A: Help us and restore us, O Lord, we pray.

Silent Prayer

I invite you to offer your personal prayers at this time.

L: Christ of the Cross,

**A: See our need of Your grace,
Hear our prayer for Your mercy,
And come to us again, to help and restore,
because we cannot heal ourselves. Amen.**

The Sacrament

L: Jesus came into the world, not to judge it, but to save it.

**A: We are so grateful for God's infinite love,
and we celebrate with all of creation, the saving work of our
Suffering Saviour.**

L: On the night before he was nailed to the merciless cross,
Jesus shared His last meal with His friends.
He took the bread, He broke it, and He gave thanks, and then He
passed it among them saying,

**A: This is my body which is broken for you. Eat, and
remember Me.**

L: He took the wine, and He gave thanks,
and then He passed it among them saying,

**A: This is my blood which is shed for you. Drink it and
remember Me.**

L: And so, we take, we eat and drink, and we remember: There is
no greater love,
than this sacrifice which You, Jesus, made for us;

**A: When we come to this meal, O Lord,
we are reminded that it is the death and darkness in us, that
drove You to the cross;
And so we come with no pride, no sense of entitlement; we
come humbly and with deep gratitude; For it is You alone that
has made a place for us at Your table. Amen.**

L: As you awaken us to your presence by your Spirit, may we
know this bread and wine,
to be your body and blood;
As you embrace us now, by your Spirit, may we be changed, so
that together we become the embodiment of your love, of your life
to the world.

A: Amen.

The sacrament is shared

Post Communion Prayer (In Unison)

In Your cross, O Christ, we see Your incredible love; in Your death, O Lord, we discover Your irrepressible life; in Your suffering, O Saviour, we find that we are saved.

Thank You for leading us out of darkness and into Your marvellous Light; Now, lead us into the world, as agents of Love, Light and Salvation. Amen. *(Written by John van de Laar*

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Ministry of Music: “God Weeps”

Words: Shirley Erena Murray Music: Jim Strathdee

L: Jesus we come – to walk the road with you – to follow you to the cross. We prepare ourselves now to follow your footprints in the dust. To understand how you died. To understand how we die. To understand how you lived. To understand how we should live.

First Reading: Anne Harrison and Colleen Harrison

Reader 1: John 18:28-19:18 and Luke 23:32-34

Reader 1: You forgave even those who took your hands and feet and drove nails into solid wood; Who, strained to lifted up the cross that held you and dropped it into place. You have forgiven them. When we ask for mercy, we are amazed to find that it has already been extended. You have forgiven us.

1st Candle blown out – Silence

First Nail

Hymn VU 153 “When The Son of God was Dying” vv. 1 & 3

Second Reading: Wendy Thompson

Reader 2: Luke 23:35-43

Reader 2: In your darkest hour, you turned to reassure the man beside you – a stranger. You extended eternity to him, even as you died. When we suffer, we find your hand extended to us – we find strength in the life you give us.

2nd Candle blown out – Silence

Hymn VU 145 “O Sacred Head” vv. 1, 2

Third Reading: Brian Reid

Reader 3: John 19:19-27

Reader 3: You turned, in your suffering, to care for those who cared for you. You turned those you loved toward each other, and asked them to give each other the status of family. You have called us your sisters, your brothers.

3rd Candle blown out – Silence

Hymn VU 145 “O Sacred Head” v. 3

Fourth Reading: Hope Pascoe

Reader 4: John 19:28-29

Reader 4: You were fully human – thirsty as you hung there, in the hot sun. You felt the urgent need of a parched throat and a dry tongue. You have quenched our thirst with your living water.

4th Candle blown out – Silence

Second Nail

Hymn VU 154 “Why Has God Forsaken Me” v. 1

Fifth Reading: Diane Winchester

Reader 5: Mark 15:33-34

Reader 5: You were abandoned by God, alone in your suffering. You withstood what we could not, and promised to never leave or forsake us.

5th Candle blown out – Silence

Hymn VU 348 “O Love How Deep” vv. 1& 4

Sixth Reading: Heather Snoxall

Reader 6: John 19:30

Reader 6: Jesus, the ministry that you came into the world to do is finished. Your ministry of revealing God’s presence to the world came at a great cost to you, your crucifixion. Inspire us with your Spirit to continue to reveal your love and grace to all.

6th Candle blown out – Silence

Last Nail

Hymn VU 348 “O Love How Deep” v. 5

Scripture Reading: Luke 23: 44-46

After all. After everything. After the pain, the rejection, the sorrow – you entrusted your spirit to your heavenly father. Although you, Jesus, felt forsaken and abandoned to die alone on the cross, you trusted in the One who sent you. Jesus, you were entrusted with all who follow you into the Creator’s care. We trust in your promise that you will intercede for us and never forsake us. The curtain

was torn, our separation from God is ended – in this moment. May we trust. May we learn, in the darkness, the extent of your faithfulness. May we entrust ourselves to you. Lord Jesus, we ask that you would teach us to understand this great and terrible mystery. Please accept now our silent worship.

Hymn VU 135 “Beneath The Cross Of Jesus”

Final0 Scripture Reading John 19:31-42

Hymn VU 144 “Were You There” vv. 1 & 5

Benediction: And so we wait. Through the night, through the long, silent Saturday of Jesus in the tomb. The battle is already won. Jesus has already declared his work finished – but we wait. We wait for the glimmer of dawn in the darkness, for the sliver of hope that lightens despair. We wait for the empty tomb. We wait for Christ to return.

(by Stacy Glediesmith modified by Rev. B. Ransom)

The Christ Candle is blown out

We will take a moment together to grieve, and to feel the weight of Christ’s sacrifice, of Yahweh’s sacrifice.

Moment of Silence

I invite you to leave in silence. For those who wish to continue to sit in silence and prayer please do so.