

Pitt Street Uniting Church

ON GADIGAL LAND

always was, always will be

29 March 2024

GOOD FRIDAY GATHERING

MUSICAL PRELUDE

silence is kept

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

GATHERING WORDS

As we gather again this Good Friday at the foot of the cross
***We bring our own sorrowful stories
and those of the wider world to mingle
with the story of Jesus and Jesus' companions
and entrust them all to the God of Love.***

candles are lit

versicle and response: Suffering God
we worship you

HYMN

Words: Brian Wren
Tune: Aurelia TiS 457

Here hangs someone discarded,
a scarecrow hoisted high,
a nonsense pointing nowhere
to all who hurry by.
Can such a clown of sorrows
still bring a useful word
where faith and love seem phantoms
and every hope absurd.

Can they give help or comfort
to lives by comfort bound
when drums of dazzling progress
give strangely hollow sound?
Life emptied of all meaning,
drained out in bleak distress,
can share in broken silence
my deepest emptiness:

And love that freely entered
the pit of life's despair
can name our hidden darkness
and suffer with us there.
Christ, if you now are risen,
help all who long for light
to hold the hand of promise
and walk into the night.

What kind of a Cross?

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

- with *Isenheim Altarpiece* painting by Matthias Grünewald (1512-1516)

PRAYER OF ACCOMPANIMENT

*Loving God, to accompany another through their suffering
to their death takes loving courage.
It feels powerless. We struggle.
We can feel useless and helpless.
Help us to recognise that the gift of presence
is beyond price to the one we love.*

Today in memory and imagination
we accompany Jesus on their final journey,
*and with Jesus all who suffer,
in our own communities and in the wider world.*

*The first candle is extinguished, as red petals are scattered
on the shroud*

How could a God whose name is love
seek blood to pay sin's price?
Are torture, shame, and senseless death
a holy sacrifice?
Each violent crime is tragic loss;
how could it be God's will?
How can we glorify the cross
when victims suffer still?

Did Jesus come as God's own child
to share each human tear?
Did Jesus die in speaking truth
that rulers will not hear?
If Wisdom hangs upon a tree,
what, then, are we to do?
Must we, like Jesus, risk our lives
for what is just and true?

In Jesus Christ we meet a God
whose love embraces all,
who weeps when children are abused,
who hears each sparrow fall.
When grace is ancient as the earth,
we need not worship death.
So let us live in tender care for all
whom Love gives breath.

What kind of a Cross? (I)

From the Gospel of John chapter 18 verses 28-38

A BRIEF REFLECTION

- with the *Crucifixion* by Pablo Picasso

a period of silence is shared

The second candle is extinguished, as red petals are scattered

SONG

sung by Lynne Murray

What kind of Cross? (II)

A reading from the Gospel of John chapter 19 verses 1-16

A BRIEF REFLECTION

- with *Crucifixion (Corpus Hypercubus)* by Salvador Dalí

*The third candle is extinguished, as red petals are scattered
on the shroud*

HYMN

TiS 174

Morning glory, starlit sky,
soaring music, scholar's truth,
flight of swallows, autumn leaves,
memory's treasure, grace of youth:

Open are the gifts of God,
gifts of love to mind and sense;
hidden is love's agony,
love's endeavour, love's expense.

Love that gives, gives ever more,
gives with zeal, with eager hands,
spares not, keeps not, all outpours,
ventures all its all expends.

Drained is love in making full,
bound in setting others free,
poor in making many rich,
weak in giving power to be.

Therefore Christ who shows us God
helpless hands upon the tree;
and the nails and crown of thorns
tell of what God's love must be.

Here is God: no monarch they,
throned in easy state to reign;
here is God, whose arms of love
aching, spent, the world sustain.

What kind of a Cross? (III)

A reading from the Gospel of John chapter 19 verses 16b-24

A BRIEF REFLECTION

- with *Crucifixion* by F N Souza

A period of silence is shared

The fourth candle is extinguished, as red petals are scattered

HYMN

Words: Iona Community (Bell & Maule)

Tune: Golgotha

When the Son of God was dying, long ago,
Some played dice and some knelt crying, lost and low,
Cynics sneered and wagged their tongues,
Mockers mimicked funeral songs:
This while God's own son was dying, long ago.

Crowds which once had cried, "Hosanna", lost their voice:
Hell had grinned to hear Barrabas was their choice,
Judas hung himself for blame,
Peter hung his head in shame,
While the crowds which cried, "Hosanna", lost their voice.

Horror, hurt and pain found home in Mary's breast
Watching torture's toll and hearing soldiers jest:
Where was God to hear her cry?
Why should her own Jesus die?
Grief and agony found home in Mary's breast.

Jesus, lay your body in this sad earth's grave,
Only one who suffers can presume to save.
End hypocrisy and lies
Through our apathy arise,
Bring us the salvation which our spirits crave.

What kind of a Cross? (IV)

A reading from the Gospel of John chapter 19 verses 25-30

A BRIEF REFLECTION

- with one of the *Stations of the Cross* by death row prisoners in Tennessee

A period of silence is shared

*The fifth candle is extinguished, as red petals are scattered
on the shroud*

*The candle symbolising the light of Christ continues to burn
as a sign of the enduring power of love
beyond our deepest suffering.*

It is taken from its place and set at the foot of the cross.

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

God of extravagant love,
Transform us with the freedom of forgiveness.
God of unbounded, sacrificial love,
Teach us to give ourselves in joyful service.
God whose love persists even in the darkest hour,
***Deepen our faith, renew our spirits
and strengthen our confidence in you,
that we may truly learn to walk in self-giving love.***

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Jesus said that if we come with hearts that seek forgiveness,
we will know God's mercy.

God forgives us.

Let us forgive others. Let us forgive ourselves.

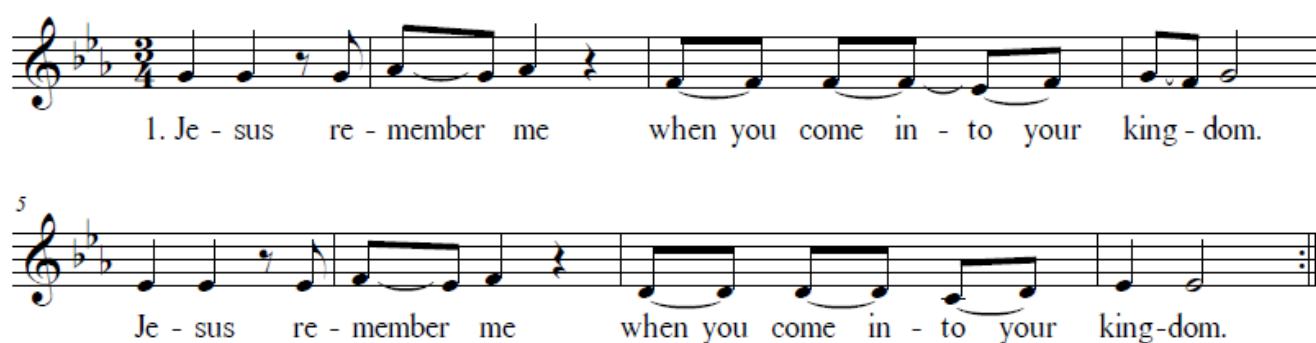
PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

versicle and response: Crucified God
 may your enduring love prevail.

ACT OF OFFERING

all are invited to come forward and lay flowers on the shroud

As we sing:



1. Je - sus re - member me when you come in - to your king - dom.

5
Je - sus re - member me when you come in - to your king-dom.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff. The second staff starts with a measure rest followed by a 5, indicating a continuation of the melody from the first staff. It ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

SONG (recorded)

When I die

Words: Rumi

HYMN

We walk in silence

Words: Bronwyn Angela White

Tune: Winchester WOV 45

We walk in silence while the earth
quivers and cracks beneath our feet
swallows our dreams and shatters worth
solemn, we trudge to hearts' dull beat.

We walk while singing, motley choir
of traitors, lovers, meek and proud
small sparks of apostolic fire
light up the path, lighten the shroud.

We walk in solidarity
and sing of hope that never dies
we march to end disparity
graves open as our spirits rise.

We walk the way that has no end
free to evolve, transform our creed
hearts, torn like curtains, start to mend
love rising now in word, in deed.

SENDING OUT PRAYER

The congregation departs in silence

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Psalm 22 adapted from Jim Cotter version in *Darkness Yielding* (Canterbury Press)

Prayer of Reconciliation by Janet Morley.

Prayers of Intercession and Sending Out Prayer by Josephine Inkipin

Other prayers and adaptations by Penny Jones.

HOLY SATURDAY – The Closed Tomb

a time to drop in for meditative peace

10.30 am – 12.30 pm

EASTER SUNDAY – 10 am

Easter Sunday Celebration

New life: embracing love's return...

Everyone welcome.