

Resources for Good Friday

References to additional resources in the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship (BCW) are provided at the right-hand margin. Prayers and other texts marked DPG are by David Gambrell.

——— *Gathering* ——

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus said: If any of you want to be my disciples,
take up the cross and follow me.

Luke 9:23-24
see also BCW 281

**Those who seek to save their lives will lose them,
but those who give their lives for Christ's sake will be saved.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving God,
you sent Jesus Christ to save us.
We have betrayed him.
We have denied him.
We have abandoned, mocked, and crucified him.
Have mercy, O God,
have mercy on us;
through Jesus Christ, our only hope. **Amen.**

DPG
see also BCW 282 or 292-293

HYMN, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL

In the Good Friday liturgy, the Solemn Reproaches of the Cross (BCW 288-291; see below) take the place of the Confession of Sin.

——— *The Word* ——

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, our hope and strength,
we give thanks for your Word made flesh—
for the life that death cannot destroy,
and for the light that darkness cannot overcome.
Enlighten our minds and enliven our hearts
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may testify to your light
share the life of Christ with a hurting world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

DPG

FIRST READING

Isaiah 52:13—53:12

PSALM

Psalm 22

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:16-25
or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

GOSPEL READING

John 18:1—19:42

A four-part choral reading of the gospel lesson is provided below in the appendix. The Companion to the Book of Common Worship also has an outline for readings in a lessons and hymns format (page 133).

SERMON

The reading of scripture may stand alone in this service as the proclamation of the word, or a brief sermon may follow.

HYMN

THE SOLEMN INTERCESSION

BCW 283-287

The “orans” posture for prayer—arms outstretched at shoulder level and palms up and open—is a particularly appropriate gesture for prayer in the Good Friday service.

LORD’S PRAYER

SOLEMN REPROACHES OF THE CROSS

BCW 287-291

Just before the Solemn Reproaches of the Cross, a rough, wooden cross may be carried in procession and placed in the front of the worship space.

PSALM, HYMN, OR SPIRITUAL

The charge and blessing are omitted. Worshipers depart in silence.

Appendix: A Choral Reading of John 18:1—19:42 for Four Voices

Note: In an attempt to avoid potentially anti-Semitic overtones in the reading of this passage, alternate wording is provided in footnotes.

VOICE ONE: A reading from the Gospel according to John.

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them,

VOICE TWO: "Whom are you looking for?"

VOICE ONE: They answered,

VOICE THREE: "Jesus of Nazareth."

VOICE ONE: Jesus replied,

VOICE TWO: "I am he."

VOICE ONE: Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them,

VOICE TWO: "Whom are you looking for?"

VOICE ONE: And they said,

VOICE THREE: "Jesus of Nazareth."

VOICE ONE: Jesus answered,

VOICE TWO: "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."

VOICE ONE: This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter,

who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter,

VOICE TWO: "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

VOICE ONE: So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police¹ arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews² that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter,

VOICE THREE: "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?"

VOICE ONE: He said,

VOICE FOUR: "I am not."

VOICE ONE: Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered,

VOICE TWO: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews³ come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."

VOICE ONE: When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying,

¹ "religious authorities" or just "police"

² "them"

³ "the people"

VOICE THREE: "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

VOICE ONE: Jesus answered,

VOICE TWO: "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

VOICE ONE: Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.
Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him,

VOICE THREE: "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?"

VOICE ONE: He denied it and said,

VOICE FOUR: "I am not."

VOICE ONE: One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked,

VOICE THREE: "Did I not see you in the garden with him?"

VOICE ONE: Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.
Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said,

VOICE THREE: "What accusation do you bring against this man?"

VOICE ONE: They answered,

VOICE FOUR: "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

VOICE ONE: Pilate said to them,

VOICE THREE: "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law."

VOICE ONE: The Jews¹ replied,

¹ "They"

VOICE FOUR: "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

VOICE ONE: (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him,

VOICE THREE: "Are you the King of the Jews?"

VOICE ONE: Jesus answered,

VOICE TWO: "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

VOICE ONE: Pilate replied,

VOICE THREE: "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

VOICE ONE: Jesus answered,

VOICE TWO: "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.¹ But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

VOICE ONE: Pilate asked him,

VOICE THREE: "So you are a king?"

VOICE ONE: Jesus answered,

VOICE TWO: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

VOICE ONE: Pilate asked him,

VOICE THREE: "What is truth?"

¹ "authorities"

VOICE ONE: After he had said this, he went out to the Jews¹ again and told them,

VOICE THREE: "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"

VOICE ONE: They shouted in reply,

VOICE FOUR: "Not this man, but Barabbas!"

VOICE ONE: Now Barabbas was a bandit.

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,

VOICE THREE: "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him."

VOICE ONE: So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them,

VOICE THREE: "Here is the man!"

VOICE ONE: When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted,

VOICE FOUR: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

VOICE ONE: Pilate said to them,

VOICE THREE: "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him."

VOICE ONE: The Jews² answered him,

VOICE FOUR: "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

¹ "people"

² "They"

VOICE ONE: Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus,

VOICE THREE: "Where are you from?"

VOICE ONE: But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him,

VOICE THREE: "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?"

VOICE ONE: Jesus answered him,

VOICE TWO: "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."

VOICE ONE: From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews¹ cried out,

VOICE FOUR: "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

VOICE ONE: 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,²

VOICE THREE: "Here is your King!"

VOICE ONE: They cried out,

VOICE FOUR: "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!"

VOICE ONE: Pilate asked them,

VOICE THREE: "Shall I crucify your King?"

VOICE ONE: The chief priests answered,

VOICE FOUR: "We have no king but the emperor."

¹ "people"

² "crowd"

VOICE ONE: Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.
 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 Jews¹ 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 Jews² said to Pilate,

VOICE FOUR: "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.' "

VOICE ONE: Pilate answered,

VOICE THREE: "What I have written I have written."

VOICE ONE: 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,

VOICE FOUR: "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it."

VOICE ONE: This was to fulfill what the scripture says,
 "They divided my clothes among themselves,
 and for my clothing they cast lots."
 And that is what the soldiers did.
 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,

VOICE TWO: "Woman, here is your son."

VOICE ONE: Then he said to the disciple,

VOICE TWO: "Here is your mother."

¹ "Many people"

² "The chief priests said"

VOICE ONE: And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.
After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture),

VOICE TWO: "I am thirsty."

VOICE ONE: 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,

VOICE TWO: "It is finished."

VOICE ONE: Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

A brief silence here is appropriate.

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews¹ 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. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews², 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

¹ "religious leaders"

² "religious authorities"

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.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Following a brief silence, one of these prayers (from the Book of Common Worship, p. 282) may be said.

Merciful God,
you gave your Son to suffer the shame of the cross.
Save us from hardness of heart,
that, seeing him who died for us,
we may repent, confess our sin,
and receive your overflowing love,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

or

Almighty God,
look with mercy on your family
for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed
and to be given over to the hands of sinners
and to suffer death on the cross;
who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**