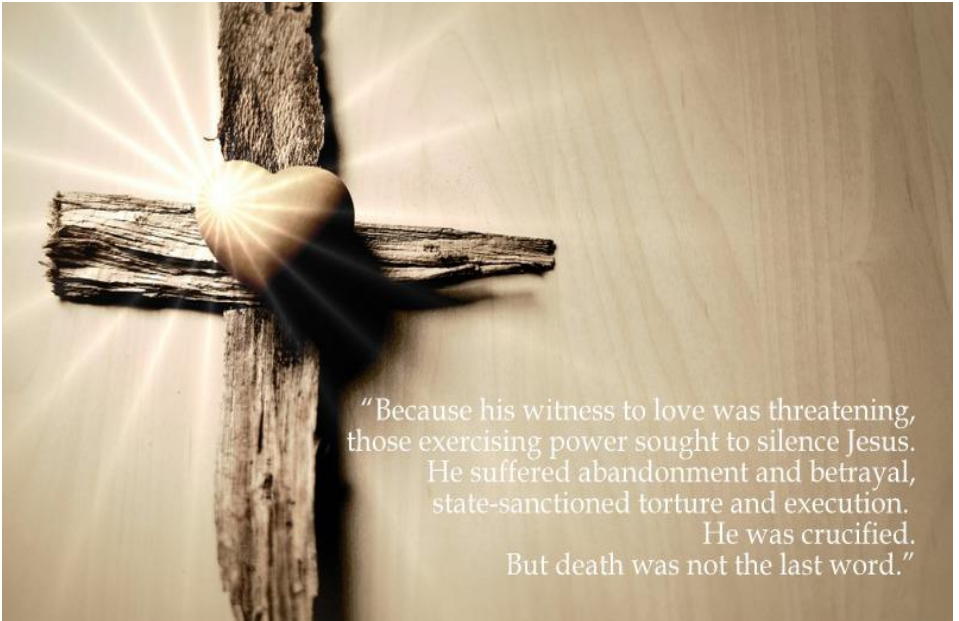




*An Affirming Congregation of The United Church of Canada*

2024 March 29

Good Friday



“Because his witness to love was threatening,  
those exercising power sought to silence Jesus.  
He suffered abandonment and betrayal,  
state-sanctioned torture and execution.  
He was crucified.  
But death was not the last word.”

### **Welcome and Inclusion**

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, age, or gender identity. Many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore we stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.

# *Welcome to Robertson-Wesley*

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*Please know that in the eyes of God you already belong here and you are welcome to participate in any of the activities of the congregation.*

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground for Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 4, who are of mixed Indigenous & European heritage.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

There is an elevator located inside the building with the glass door entrance. Access ramps can be found: inside leading from the lobby to the sanctuary and outside at the rear of the building, leading from the parking lot.

There are accessible washrooms on each floor located near the elevator.



For hearing assistance download the Listen Everywhere app on your cell phone and connect to the R-W network by scanning this QR code. Please bring your own headphones to listen on. Classic hearing assists headsets are still available from the ushers.

Large print worship bulletins, and hymnbooks are available from the ushers.

Service animals are welcome, except where food is prepared.

We commit to make R-W a comfortable space for people with cognitive impairment. If you require accommodations related to cognitive functioning please contact the office.

## **BABY/ CHILDREN'S AMENITIES**

People can breastfeed anywhere in the building, should you want more privacy there is designated nursing space in the Millson room, located by the grand piano. Baby changing tables are installed in all washrooms. If you wish to use it, a children's activity centre is set up in the Chapel. There are also activity books available for children. Please ask the usher.

## **INFORMATION**

The ushers located at the entrances are here to help should you have any questions. More information about the church and church activities can be found in the pamphlet racks outside Memorial Hall.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Please do not leave valuables unattended anywhere in the church.

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## *We Gather for Worship*

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Prelude: *O Sacred Head*, by Hans Leo Hassler arr. by Raymond Haan

John Fedor, cello; Allan Bevan, organ

Call to Worship:

Surely God is in this place.

**Help me notice.** (pause)

**Help me notice.** (pause)

**Help me notice.** (pause)

Never do we notice God's presence more than today - this day we call "Good." Nowhere do our hearts break more than today - this day we call "Good." Nowhere do we experience the power of love more than today - this day we call "Good." We bless God that we can come to this place in the sadness of our living, and, even here, find love, as we wait with a dear one for the kindness of death to arrive. Come, and let us worship God.<sup>1</sup>

Hymn: God Remembers Pain

*Voices United* 610

**God remembers pain: nail by nail, thorn by thorn,  
hunger, thirst and muscles torn. Time may dull our griefs,  
and heal our lesser wounds, but in eternal love,  
yesterday is now, and pain is in the heart of God.**

**God remembers joy: touch of love, taste of food,  
all our senses know is good. Love and life flow by  
and precious days are gone, but in eternal love  
everyday is now, and joy is in the heart of God.**

**God remembers us: all we were, all we are,  
lives within our Lover's care. Time may dull our minds  
and death will take us all, but in eternal love  
everyday is now: our life is hid with Christ in God.**

Opening Prayer:

Awe-inspiring symbol of a fearless, compassionate, and just way for humanity: the cross on which Jesus died.

**The cross, a way of love without limits.**

The cross, a clear symbol of those who refuse to give in to the powerful ones of our society.

**The cross, a way of love without limits.**

The cross, a strong symbol of forgiveness when a hateful response would be understood.

**The cross, a way of love without limits.**

The cross, a bleak symbol of abandonment by friends in time of deepest need.

**The cross, a way of love without limits.**

The cross, a courageous symbol of faithful ones who would not stay away.

**The cross, a way of love without limits.**

The cross on which Jesus died.

**We are moved and changed by the awe-inspiring cross. Amen.**<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Bob Root, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2021, p. 41. Used with permission.

<sup>2</sup> Written by David Sparks, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2018, p. 38. Used with permission.

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## The Witness of Scripture

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Scripture:

Angela Glasel

Luke 22:47-62 • Jesus is betrayed and arrested.

While Jesus was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of God?" When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!" Then they seized Jesus and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house.

Anthem: *Pie Jesu*, by Andrew Lloyd-Webber

Jacqueline Hernandez and Claire Rolheiser, soloists; Choir of Robertson-Wesley

*Pie Jesu, qui tollis peccata mundi*

*Dona eis requiem.*

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi*

*Dona eis requiem, sempiternam.*

*Merciful Jesus, who takes away the sins of the world*

*Grant them rest.*

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world*

*Grant them everlasting rest.*

Scripture:

Dawn Allan

Luke 22:54-62 • Peter denies knowing Jesus.

But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him." But Peter denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "I am not!" Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "I do not know what you are talking about!" At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Prayer of Confession:

O God, it is hard to believe that the friends of Jesus would let him down at the crucial moment.

**We confess that we, too, have not always been friends to trust.**

O God, it is hard to believe that popular opinion could be manipulated to condemn a wonderful person.

**We confess that we, too, have used our power over others unwisely.**

O God, it is hard to believe that popular opinion could be manipulated to condemn a wonderful person.

**We confess that we, too, have gone along with the crowd.**

O God, it is hard to believe that the cruel death of crucifixion was tolerated in a civilized society.

**We confess that we, too, have been slow to speak out against the cruelty and injustice of our time.**

*(a time of silence)*

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

Scripture:

Bob Klakowich

Luke 23:1-5, 13-25 • Jesus is brought before Pilate.

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.” Then Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He answered, “You say so.” Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.” But they were insistent and said, “He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.”...Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him.” Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!” (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

Duet: *He Never Said A-Mumbalin’ Word*, Trad. Spiritual arr. by H. Hopson

Douglas Graham and Raydene Koch, soloists

Scripture:

Angela Glasel

Luke 23:26-27, 32-43 • Jesus is placed on the cross.

As they led Jesus away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. A great number of the people followed him, and among them were

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<sup>3</sup> Written by David Sparks, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2015, p. 70. Used with permission.

women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him....Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Lord, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding Jesus and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kin-dom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Hymn: *O Sacred Head*

*Voices United 145 vs. 1 & 4*

**O sacred head, sore wounded,  
with grief and shame weighed down;  
now scornfully surrounded  
with thorns, thine only crown:  
how art thou pale with anguish,  
with sore abuse and scorn;  
how does that visage languish  
which once was bright as morn!**

**Be near me when I am dying,  
O show thy cross to me;  
and for my succour flying,  
come, Lord, to set me free.  
These eyes, new faith receiving,  
from thee shall not remove,  
for all who die believing,  
die safely through thy love.**

Prayer of Hope:

The hurting of the world is soothed this day. Through Jesus' death on the cross, we know that we, and all humanity, never cry alone. God is with us in the agony of our hearts and in the agony of creation, waiting and watching to be born anew. Thanks be to God. **Amen.**<sup>4</sup>

Anthem: *Crucifixus*, by J. S. Bach                      Choir of Robertson-Wesley, John Fedor cello  
*Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato:  
Passus, et sepultus est.*

*He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate:  
He suffered and was buried.*

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<sup>4</sup> Written by Allan Warren, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2015, p. 39. Used with permission.

Luke 23:44-48 • Jesus dies.

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Lord, into your hands I commend my Spirit." Having said this he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breast.

Hymn: *Were You There*

*Voices United 144 vs. 1 & 2*

**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?**

**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?**

*We Face The Scrutiny of Scripture and History*

Reflection: *God bears the sin, grief, and suffering of the world.* Rev. Karen Bridges

Hymn: *What Wondrous Love Is This*

*Voices United 147*

**What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
what wondrous love is this, O my soul!**

**What wondrous love is this  
that cause the Lord of bliss  
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,  
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.**

**What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
what wondrous love is this, O my soul!**

**What wondrous love is this,  
that caused the Lord of life  
to lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,  
to lay aside his crown for my soul.**

**To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,  
to God and to the Lamb I will sing;  
to God and to the Lamb,  
who is the great I Am,  
while millions join the theme I will sing, I will sing;  
while millions join the theme I will sing.**

**And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,  
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;**

**and when from death I'm free,  
I'll sing and joyful be,  
and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,  
and through eternity I'll sing on.**

**Blessing and Sending Forth:**

Jesus walked the chosen path, facing the court of humankind, a court of self-interest, selfishness, and proclaimed entitlement. His supporters abandoned him, leaving him to face his fate. He was alone, almost, with his mother, Mary, her sister, and one disciple left. His mother watched in pain to see her son bow his head and give up his spirit. On this Good Friday, we too watch in pain, knowing what humankind is capable of.

**We pray for Jesus' spirit to live on in us. We pray for Jesus' life to fill our lives with hope, even as he hangs on the cross. We pray for Jesus' love to propel us forward to our chosen path, the path of Jesus. Amen.**<sup>5</sup>

Closing Meditation: *Adagio in G minor*, by Tomaso Albinoni arr. by Harry Walker  
John Fedor, cello; Allan Bevan, organ

*You are invited to leave in silence when you are ready.  
A free will offer can be given in the offering plates by the exit.*



*Your donations today support R-W Church programs and operations, as well as outreach projects and programs in the city and around the world. You can donate by e-transfer to [pay@rwuc.org](mailto:pay@rwuc.org), cheque, debit/credit by speaking to an usher, pre-authorized remittance, or PayPal by scanning the QR code. Tax receipts are issued at the end of the year for donations over \$20 if your name and address are provided.*

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## *Worship Notes*

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One of the questions that arises about today is why it is called *Good Friday* when the story explains in fine, even gory, detail all the *bad* that happens around and to Jesus. One explanation is that the “good” comes from an older English form of the word “God.” For example, the common English greeting “Goodbye!” is a contraction for “God be with ye!” (“ye” = “you”) With this in mind, “God Friday” may not seem much better than “Good”! However, the name does make more sense if we look at it as an affirmation that when this world’s powers and authorities did their worst to Jesus, they did not prevail. Even this terrible Friday remains, ultimately, *God’s Friday*.

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## *Cover Image*

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Cover image: Cross Heart Jesus by Conger Design on Pixabay

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Minister of Faith Development and Intergenerational Ministry: Vacant  
Minister of Social Justice and Outreach: Vacant  
Lead Minister of Congregation and Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges  
Bridging Minister: Rev. Dirk Jessen  
Music Director: Dr. Allan Bevan  
Office Administrator: Elyse Munro  
Facilities Manager: Brad Campbell

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<sup>5</sup> Written by Herb deJong, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2022, p. 41. Used with permission.