

GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Through the Neighborhood of First Lutheran Church | Duluth, MN
Good Friday – April 2nd, 2021



[We always carry] in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. II Corinthians 4:10-11

Introduction:

The Way of the Cross is an ancient spiritual discipline that goes back to the early centuries of the church. Traditionally, there have been as many as 14 stations concentrating on the suffering and death of the person Jesus. But the truer purpose of this discipline is to see how the suffering and death of Jesus are seen more clearly to be the suffering and death of the world that continues in our history and in our presence. The cross encompasses the suffering and death of the innocent, those condemned unjustly, those who side with the poor, those who struggle for justice, those who die unnecessarily and violently in war, starvation, climate upheavals, and in prison. We hope that this walk through our neighborhood reveals once more to us the suffering of Christ and the power Christ followers have been given to transform the world and reveal the glory of God.

***We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
By your cross you have redeemed the world.***

STATION 1: Duluth Rose Garden ***“Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane”***

Read: Matthew 26:36-39

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” ³⁹ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”

Reflection: by Stephanie Lundorff



The garden is a place of beauty and truth, of perpetual cycles and seasons. Jesus retreats to the garden, bringing his disciples to stay awake with him as he prays to God in profound anguish for what will come to pass. Jesus’ suffering is just beginning, and his response to grief is to pray. Through prayer, Jesus finds both surrender and strength here in the garden. What will we find?

Frequented by both the privileged and the homeless, Duluth’s Rose Garden draws us into communion with God. No matter our fears and frustrations, this garden is full of God’s constancy seen in the foliage, the flowers, the sky, and the lake. God is perpetually present with us, loving us, consoling us, and inviting us to surrender to God’s peace, even as the world still shakes in desperate chaos.

Prayer:

Everlasting God, help us to surrender our fears and be present with you. Even as we find calm and strength in you, help us to see the needs of those around us. Help us to “stay awake” with one another. Help us to balance refuge with reaching out, self-care with care of others, and patience with action. Lord, give us peace and strength for the uncertain days ahead. Amen.

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STATION 2: CVS Pharmacy “Jesus, betrayed by Judas, is Arrested”

Read: Matthew 26:47-50

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” ⁴⁹ At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Reflection: by John & Denise Musick



In this dramatic passage, Judas uses his position of trust as one of Jesus’ closest followers to betray Jesus and facilitate his killing. Our immediate reaction and the reaction of most Christians throughout history is anger, loathing and a demand for revenge and punishment for this unspeakable crime. But this is not at all Jesus’ reaction. He approaches Judas with calm acceptance, calling him friend, even allowing the fatal kiss. Indeed in light of Jesus’ subsequent prayer of forgiveness for his actual executioners, we know that Jesus also was willing to forgive Judas.

Betrayal of trust is all too common in our modern world. The presence of two major drug store chains in our neighborhood brings to mind the ruthless behavior of large pharmaceutical companies in literally destroying the lives of so many who depend on medications to control life-threatening illnesses. In a recent survey, 29% of Americans admitted skipping prescribed medications due to cost, and 125,000 Americans die each year from medication non-adherence. Like Judas, these companies use their positions of trust to increase their wealth to the detriment of the very people they are set up to serve.

Jesus’ response to Judas and all of his executioners teaches us how to respond to our own betrayal by the pharmaceutical companies. Jesus refuses to condemn Judas, instead calling him friend. We are more likely to strike out at those who betray us, to be hostile, to punish, or seek revenge. But this station challenges us to be prayerful, as Jesus has been, and to act from a place of compassion and justice. We are called to stand in solidarity with the victims of a system which promotes maximization of profit over the lives of people, just as Jesus stood in opposition to the religious, social and economic systems that exploited people in his day.

Prayer:

God of all Consolation and Hope: We confess that we are all too ready to judge and condemn those who betray us based on our narrow sense of righteousness. Challenge our limited vision and open our hearts that we might act compassionately and justly toward all of our fellow human beings. Strengthen our commitment to reform sinful human institutions that exploit your beloved children. Amen.

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STATION 3: Center for Alcohol & Drug Treatment *“Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin”*

Read: Matthew 26:59-66

⁵⁹ Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” ⁶² The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” ⁶³ But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.”

Reflection: by Amy Merchant

Gossip. Mocking. False accusations. Barrage of questions. Verbal assault. Physical assaults. These behaviors are brought to you by the Sanhedrin in the treatment of Jesus. Unfortunately, our own behavior has not progressed too much as folks in Duluth, MN are still treating others like this in the year 2021.

It is easy to look back on readings from long ago and think to ourselves “that would never happen today!” One only needs to look at Joseph Caiaphas (the High Priest) to realize this is not true.

Caiaphas was so intently focused on the misdeeds of Jesus that he didn’t seem to care (or notice) that he himself was breaking several laws of the legal system at the time.

Many churches today claim to be affirming of everyone but there is typically a limit. How welcoming are they to the visitor who shows up while on a substance? What is the reaction when people find out a respected figure in the church has been taking funds from a committee to pay for their opioid habit? What is the reaction when the pastor announces to the congregation she is entering an alcohol recovery program?

Some people may talk to their friends immediately after church to “discuss” the situation. Some folks may choose to call the person directly and question them profusely. Unfortunately, false accusations about what a person has done while in the building may start to fly around as well. If we aren’t careful, we can end up developing a mob mentality similar to the Sanhedrin, and that can lead us to a place we don’t want to go.

Prayer:

Help us to see CADT as holy ground and sacred space. In our lives help us remember to choose love over fear of the current tribulation they may be passing through, and to always remember that our actions matter. Amen.

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STATION 4: Together With Youth, Center for Changing Lives *“Jesus is Denied by Peter”*

Read: Matthew 26:69-75

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” ⁷¹ When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷² Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴ Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

Reflection: by Lynn Gerlach-Collard



Callie is 16. She grew up in a loving household with two parents and three siblings. Her journey through pain began a year ago when she summoned her courage and cautiously explained to her parents that she is gay. Callie was unprepared for their lack of acceptance, which grew quickly to rejection, eventually forcing her out of her home. When we talked, Callie’s tears came from a wellspring deeply rooted in loss as she grappled with the realization that her parents were denying the importance of their relationship with her; denying that her part in the family mattered. There are many others like Callie...rejected LGBTQ+ teens whose value in their family is based on gender and orientation.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, their journey is your journey. You were there first, having someone you love deny your relationship. Bless these youth who suffer. Open our hearts to understand their pain, and help us to see the opportunities you place before us to share your love and grace with those who are hurting. In Jesus’ loving name. Amen.

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STATION 5: CHOICE, unlimited *“Jesus is Judged by Pilate”*

Read: Matthew 27:15-24

¹⁵ Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶ At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷ So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” ¹⁸ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹ While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹ The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²² Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” ²³ Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” ²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”

Reflection: by Patricia Appelbaum

This station is about Pilate’s judgement of Jesus. But in Matthew’s Gospel, Pilate seems to be trying very hard not to make a judgement. He doesn’t quite find Jesus guilty. He offers to release him, sort of. He even gets a supernatural message that Jesus is innocent, but he doesn’t make that judgement, either. Instead, he abdicates his power—his great power—to the crowd.

Jesus, meanwhile, has almost no power. He has abdicated any divine power, so he’s just some ordinary guy in the hands of unfriendly authorities. And the crowd is even worse than the officials. What Jesus can do, and does, is to keep his dignity. Indeed, the next thing they’ll try is to take his dignity away. But he doesn’t give in to their distorted visions of him.

Many of us don’t like the word “judgement,” and it’s true that judgements can be shallow or unjust. But sometimes we are called to make a judgment—in favor of what is right, maybe against what the crowd says. The people of CHOICE Unlimited often face thoughtless judgements, as well as unfriendly authorities and nasty crowds. And yet, like Jesus, they maintain their dignity, and no one can take it away.

Prayer:

O God, you alone are the righteous Judge: give us wisdom and humility in the judgments we must make; courage and strength to do what is right; and respect for our own and for one another’s dignity. Amen.

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STATION 6: Condemned Apartments (Corner of 16th & E. Superior) *“Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns”*

Read: Matthew 27:27-30

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰ They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head.

Reflection: by Shar Valentine



Just as Jesus suffered and was humiliated, so are many in our community who are homeless or who live in blighted buildings or apartments that aren’t maintained to a healthy standard. This station shows a condemned apartment building in our neighborhood. It is a reminder to all of us to care for the poor.

Duluth has hundreds of children who are homeless or have food insecurity. Help us remember these children and families, especially now in this health crisis. Please give generously of your time, talents, and resources. These families need our support now more than ever. Please support our local food banks, the Damiano Center, CHUM, and Union Gospel Mission.

Prayer:

Merciful God, though not guilty of a crime, Jesus was mocked, whipped, and crowned with thorns. Remembering the sufferings of Jesus, give us courage to face our hardships in life and acknowledge the hardships of others. Amen.

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STATION 7: St. Paul's Episcopal Church *"Jesus Bears the Cross"*

Read: Matthew 27:31

³¹ After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Reflection: by Don Streufert

In this station I see four images: Jesus, civil authorities, the temple authorities, and the crowd.

The civil authorities—the guards, the Roman soldiers—have just completed their sarcastic bullying of Jesus. They have stripped him and adorned him with: a crown of thorns; a scepter they used to beat him; and a dirty, soiled, bloody, purple robe.

The temple hierarchy—the “church” of that day—I imagine is smug. They successfully instigated this capital punishment, this public spectacle, this put down and removal of the “King of the Jews”.

The crowd is jeering. Aroused by the “church’s” leaders and eager with them for a gruesome execution. They, as we, are confounded by the change from Sunday’s “Glory, Laud, and Honor” to Friday’s “Crucify Him”.

Jesus: Bruised skin. Purple fingers. Dust-coated mouth. Heavy air hangs on him like another layer of skin. At noon the sun casts hardly a shadow. This wood is so heavy. How can wood be this heavy?

Marked with these images as we stand at station seven before a church in Duluth, I hear the words of our dismissal at FLC: “Go forth to be the body of Christ in the world.” Which of the above images do we choose as the “body of Christ in Duluth MN, standing on East Superior Street and North 17th Ave?”

We are blessed with the grace not to have to choose any of these images. At this point in the stations, the cross is not evident. We are not yet marked with the Cross of Christ. It is only anticipated. Tradition tells us Jesus carried the burden—the cross bar—of his crucifixion is not yet constructed. At this point in the journey, our options for being the body of Christ in the world are: a fatigued and faltering carrier of his instrument of execution; a group of clerics having manipulated both governor and the crowd; a crowd experiencing scorn probably for both the condemned and the process by which it was done; and a contingent of the Roman Army obeying orders. By the Grace of God: We go forth to be the body of Christ in the World. We go marked with the cross of Christ.

Prayer:

Let each of these Stations illuminate and impress upon us how the “body of Christ in the world” is “marked with the cross of Christ”. When we are confronted with wrong, with scorn, with hate, hostility, and self-gratifying manipulation, help us to experience the Church in the world today as “marked with the cross of Christ”. Help us to be part of the body of Christ in the world: trusted and trusting, loved and loving, cared for and caring, suffering yet not beyond Your Grace. We pray in Christ’s Name. Amen.

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STATION 8: Loaves & Fishes

“Jesus is Helped by Simon of Cyrene”

Read: Matthew 27:32

³² As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.

Reflection: by Mark Hakes



Just two chapters earlier, in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus tells us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, care for the sick, and visit the imprisoned. We're called to do these things as individuals. It's not enough for us to write a check or attend another meeting. Jesus is telling us to literally go and do these things. But Jesus is also inviting us to go deeper.

1 John 3:18 says, "...let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action." Dorothy Day, one of the co-founders of the Catholic Worker movement, wrote: *"What we would like to do is change the world—make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, of the poor, of the destitute—the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words—we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the*

pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing we can do but love, and, dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as our friend."

Don't ask yourself when the last time you served a meal at Damiano was. Instead, when was the last time you ate a meal at Damiano and got to know the people sitting with you at the table? Don't ask when you last helped with a clothing drive, but instead when did you last listen to the story of a homeless man warming himself at the transit center? Jesus isn't telling us simply to do, but to also be in relationship and then to allow that relationship to move us into action.

The Way of Jesus constantly urges us to see the injustices present in our community; to recognize the oppressive structures that cause people to go hungry, experience homelessness, endure prejudicial treatment and then to begin dismantling them. Jesus calls us to carry each other's burdens, just as Simon of Cyrene did for him.

Prayer:

Sheltering God, we stop here to notice our friends who are forced to carry their belongings, everything they possess from place to place. We give thanks for the many people among us and in this community that offer those who find themselves homeless: shelter, food, and hospitality. May we strive to not forget people's humanity, to remember to give them more than just our leftovers, and to work to lift every burden. Amen.

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STATION 9: Bethany Crisis Nursery, Lutheran Social Services *“Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem”*

Read: Luke 23: 27-31

²⁷ A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. ²⁸ But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

Reflection: by Barb LaMaster

We find the women grieving for this man that they loved deeply. He had done nothing but good! How could he be condemned??? He does not defend himself, but instead warns them of the suffering they themselves and their children will face.

How can we relate? Do we agonize over our children? Over the children of the world? Jesus’ prophetic voice speaks of the judgment to come: “the children...the children”.

We don’t have to look far to see the results of our world’s actions on those vulnerable ones: the children. The news brings us pictures of the tragedy in Lesbos, in Syria, at the border, even in Duluth.

“Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for the children.”
Right here in our own community, we can support the work of LSS and the Bethany Crisis Nursery, where children are lovingly cared for and led into a better way of life.

May we hear His voice challenging us to serve the children in new ways. May we respond to that nudge.

Prayer:

Holy Jesus, we wail for the injustice and terrible suffering of your death on the cross. We wail for the children of neglect and abuse, but also those families that have fallen through the cracks by no fault of their own. We pray for them and we give thanks for Lutheran Social Services and the Bethany Crisis Nursery. Nudge our hearts into ways we might help. Amen.

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STATION 10: Lake Superior “Jesus is Crucified”

Read: Matthew 27:33-36

³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; ³⁶ then they sat down there and kept watch over him.

Reflection: by John Sippola



We all have our favorite Lake Superior place: Brighton Beach & Park Point are favorites for many Duluthians. One of mine is a secret fishing hole on the Manitou River—way up north of Grand Marais. As many of you know, Gitchi Manitou is an Ojibwe word that means Spirit. The Lake Superior waters are Great Spirit waters; God-given waters. These water not only nourish and sustain our bodies every day, they also feed and nurture our spirits. They are sources of spiritual as well as physical life.

About 15 years ago, I went fishing in a secret place in the Upper Manitou. Baba, our golden retriever, accompanied me, and we hiked for over an hour. I was looking for a spring-fed stream that would lead me to an old aluminum canoe hidden in the underbrush near the river. I eventually found the stream flowing through a rusty culvert. But, to my utter dismay, I noticed a thick, gooey, oily-looking substance floating on the surface. I desperately started looking for Baba. I knew that he would get sick if he drank the polluted water, and I was afraid he would die if the substance turned out to be anti-freeze. I yelled his name. When I saw him coming through the woods, I breathed a sigh of relief.

“There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.”

Prayer:

Let us pray: Gitchi Manitou, Great Spirit, the Source, and Giver of Life, we confess that we continue to pollute the waters with harmful substances. We poison your arteries and sicken and kill the very life you have called us to nurture and preserve. When we permit such pollution, we disgrace ourselves, betray you, and allow you to be crucified anew. Have mercy on us. Forgive us. And by the power of your Great Spirit, give us courageous faith to be good stewards of Gitchi Gami by refusing to permit the pollution of the Big-Sea-Waters with substances that harm and kill. In the name of the One who was crucified and died for us, we pray. Amen.

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STATION 11: National Bank of Commerce ***“Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief”***

Read: Luke 23:32-43

³² Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³ 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. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵ 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!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Reflection: by Daniel Grainger

No names—just two criminals. Their entire identity fused to their misdeeds for all time, and their misdeeds nailed into their hands and feet. What on earth did they steal? Apparently, nothing of significance, otherwise we might have known their names. No, I suspect their crucifixion with Jesus was less a just punishment and more of a gross appropriation of power by those with ‘power’ to add insult to injury to Jesus. These criminals, too, were victims of cast lots—the misfortune of being found guilty in the wrong place at the wrong time. Taken, tortured, and executed all to make an example of someone else—to show what can happen when one person disrupts the system: other people get hurt.

No name—just “the poor”. Their entire identity linked to their lack of wealth. What on earth did they do? Certainly, THEY made mistakes, or bad choices, or have uncontrolled additions, or poor mental health. No, their poverty, I suspect, was less a failure to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and more of a gross appropriation of wealth by those with power to rig the financial system to hide their greed. The poor—the beloved—have had the misfortune of being born into a broken world. Feared, neglected, and shamed all to validate this lie: prosperity is paradise for those who deserve it.

Prayer:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”.

May those who suffered on the crosses next to you disturb us from apathy in the face of injustice. Help us to know the poor by their names—to witness to their humanity—and grant us courage to see your cross for the hard truth it tells about greed. Remember us, O God, when you come into your reign, for the sake of the crucified. Amen.

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STATION 12: First Lutheran Church “Jesus Speaks to His Mother & the Disciple”

Read: John 19:25-27

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Reflection: by Tamara Diedrich & Sofia Aronson



In these verses, we hear Jesus saying goodbye to his mother and a good friend, and (imagine) him worrying about how they will survive his death without him there to help. Jesus sees how his death will affect them personally and has, what feels like, a very human reaction as a son and friend. The fear of being powerless to protect the people we love is easy to relate to. Jesus’ response is selfless; take care of each other. Love each other. Be family.

Currently, with quarantine rules separating us from people we love, knowing that they might need us more now than ever, Jesus’ words feel especially relevant. We may not be able to be there in person to help our family and friends, but we can look to love and to take care of people, however we are able. Jesus asked the disciple and his mother to care for one another—to become family for one another—we too, as the body of Christ, are given to each other to comfort, care for, and celebrate.

Prayer:

Dear God, we hear your call to take care of, and become family to, each other. Please look over the healthcare providers, grocery store employees, teachers, daycare providers, delivery & truck drivers, and others who are risking their health to care for our neighbors. We pray that they stay safe. Help us recognize the other ways in which we can take care of each other while under social isolation, like sewing masks, donating food, or just calling to check in. Give us the courage to reach out when we need help. Thank you, God, for your great gifts of family, friends, and fellowship. Amen.

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STATION 13: St. Luke's Hospice Center *"Jesus Dies on the Cross"*

Read: Matthew 27: 45-50

⁴⁵ From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶ And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸ At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." ⁵⁰ Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

Reflection: by Nicole Feralin-Krause

The pairing of hospice and the death of Jesus seem to be obvious. Though the 2nd floor is where the unit is, it's also where oncology patients are hospitalized. There are many conversations with God when treatments for cancer fail, there are feelings of being abandoned by God just as Jesus experienced. So with hospice and at times oncology; yes, there is death, grief, and sadness, but there's also a lot of healing and hope on the 2nd floor. It can feel like a thin place, a holy place. Even as the afternoon darkness felt strange, it brought a sense of intimacy. And as we know, this is not the end of the story, there's more to come. And instead of hope for a cure, there's hope for resolution of relationships, hope for a peaceful passing, and many patients have a remarkable sense of faith about what's on the other side of this thin place.



Prayer:

Lamb of God, as we follow your journey, may we be reminded in our sorrow, fear, and grief that this is not the end, you have something more in store for us. As we trust in the path ahead, may we find hope and signs of your enduring presence and love. Amen.

***We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
By your cross you have redeemed the world.***

STATION 14: Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum “Jesus is Placed in the Tomb”

Read: Matthew 27: 57-61

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Reflection: by Pastor Dianne O. Loufman



The Karpeles Museum is a museum of manuscripts—a holding place for historical writings from the past. A rich couple, David and Marsha Karpeles, chose to use their wealth to help preserve the past. Joseph of Arimathea was also rich and offered his own newly carved out tomb for the body of Jesus.

The Karpeles Museum, as many museums, are places that store objects of historical significance; they hold them on behalf of a civilization so that the past can be remembered and celebrated and learned from. Without museums, many treasures from the past would be forgotten.

When Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Jesus’ body and placed it in the tomb, I imagine it was like placing a manuscript in the Karpeles Museum. Jesus now was someone from and about another time—a time that with his crucifixion has passed. The tomb would be a place to visit as Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are doing—a place to

remember what once was.

Many people today think of Jesus in that way: as a historical figure from the past who died. His story is one to tell about the past and to visit, like a museum, now and again. Tombs and museums and manuscripts are about dead people and dead things. They are about what was, not about what is or what will be.

Prayer:

Holy Friend, we had thought and dreamed and imagined such a different ending—one of victory and joy. Now we are filled with sorrow. Now we have hit a dead end. We bury you but fear to walk away lest we also forget you. Be with us in our grief. Amen.

***We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
By your cross you have redeemed the world.***

Jesus, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

*Let us follow the way of the cross
in life and in death. Amen.*

First Lutheran Church, dedicated to the mission of Jesus Christ, welcomes YOU into this community of faith, where we share life in its entirety, with all its joys and sorrows. We believe all people are created in the image of God and are offered God's love, grace, and forgiveness, regardless of religious tradition, age, gender identity, race, education, economic status, sexual orientation, family structure, mental or physical abilities. We acknowledge the indigenous culture of this land.

We extend a special welcome in Christ's love.

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