

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church
Good Friday, April 18, 2025, Year C



Worship Assistants

Assisting Minister: Roland Christian

Reader: Michelle Oakland

Ushers: M Scholes, D Brack, N Johnson

Video Tech: Yvonne Pamperin

Today's service is a continuation of the story from the night before. Because we are in Year C, we will hear the Good Friday texts anew from Luke instead of John. Take time to center yourself to prepare for worship.

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

WORD

Hymn

On a Hill Far Away (The Old Rugged Cross)

1 On a hill far a - way stood an old rug-ged cross,
 2 Oh, that old rug-ged cross so de-spised by the world,
 3 In the old rug-ged cross, stained with blood so di-vine,
 4 To the old rug-ged cross I will ev - er be true,

the em - blem of suf - f'ring and shame;
 has a won - drous at - trac - tion for me;
 a won - drous beau - ty I see;
 its shame and re - proach glad - ly bear;

and I love that old cross where the dear - est and best
 for the dear Lamb of God left his glo - ry a - bove,
 for 'twas on that old cross Je - sus suf - fered and died,
 Christ will call me some day to my home far a - way,

for a world of lost sin - ners was slain.
 to . . . bear it to dark Cal - va - ry.
 to . . . par - don and sanc - ti - fy me,
 where his glo - ry for - ev - er I'll share.

Refrain
 So I'll cher - ish the old rug - ged cross, till my
 tro - phies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rug - ged
 cross, and ex - change it some day for a crown.

Text: George Bennard, 1873-1958

Music: THE OLD RUGGED CROSS, George Bennard, 1873-1958

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus: Luke 22:47-62

While he 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 Man?" 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 though I were a rebel? 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 him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house.

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 female servant, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him." But he 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, "Man, 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, "Man, 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 he went out and wept bitterly.

Hymn

Go to Dark Gethsemane

Cranberry 347 vss. 1-2



1 Go to dark Geth-sem - a - ne, all who feel the tempt - er's pow'r;
2 Fol - low to the judg-ment hall, view the Lord of life ar - raigned;
3 Cal - v'ry's mourn-ful moun-tain climb; there, a - dor - ing at his feet,
4 Ear - ly has - ten to the tomb where they laid his breath - less clay;



your Re-deem - er's con - flict see. Watch with him one bit - ter hour;
oh, the worm-wood and the gall! Oh, the pangs his soul sus-tained!
mark that mir - a - cle of time, God's own sac - ri - fice com-plete.
all is sol - i - tude and gloom. Who has tak - en him a - way?



turn not from his griefs a - way; learn from Je - sus Christ to pray.
Shun not suf - f'ring, shame, or loss; learn from him to bear the cross.
"It is fin - ished!" hear him cry; learn from Je - sus Christ to die.
Christ is ris'n! He meets our eyes. Sav - ior, teach us so to rise.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854

Music: GETHSEMANE, Richard Redhead, 1820–1901

Jesus Before the Council, Pilate & Herod: Luke 22:63-23:12

Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it who struck you?" They kept heaping many other insults on him. When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!"

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man inciting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to Caesar 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."

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by vehemently accusing him. Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.

Hymn

Ah, Holy Jesus

Cranberry 349 vss. 1-2



1 Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how hast thou of - fend - ed that we to
2 Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on thee? A - las, my
3 Lo, the Good Shep - herd for the sheep is of - fered; the slave hath
4 For me, kind Je - sus, was thine in - car - na - tion, thy mor - tal
5 There - fore, kind Je - sus, since I can - not pay thee, I do a -



judge thee have in hate pre - tend - ed? By foes de - rid - ed,
trea - son, Je - sus, hath un - done thee. 'Twas I, Lord Je - sus,
sin - ned, and the Son hath suf - fered; for our a - tone - ment,
sor - row, and thy life's ob - la - tion; thy death of an - guish
dore thee, and will ev - er pray thee; think on thy pit - y



by thine own re - ject - ed, O most af - flict - ed.
I it was de - nied thee; I cru - ci - fied thee.
while we noth - ing heed - ed, God in - ter - ced - ed.
and thy bit - ter pas - sion, for my sal - va - tion.
and thy love un - swerv - ing, not my de - serv - ing.

Jesus is Sentenced to Death: Luke 23:13-25

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 inciting 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.

Hymn

A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

Cranberry 340 vss. 1-2



1 A lamb goes un - com - plain-ing forth to save a world of sin - ners.
2 This lamb is Christ, our great-est friend, the Lamb of God, our Sav - ior,
3 Our Sav - ior an - swered from his heart that he would take the bur - den:
4 Of death I am no more a - fraid; your dy - ing is my liv - ing.



He bears the bur - den all a - lone, dies shorn of all his hon - ors,
whom God in mer - cy chose to send to win us reb - els o - ver.
"My Fa - ther's will is my com-mand; I'll do as I am bid - den."
You clothe me in your roy - al robes that you are al - ways giv - ing.



He goes to slaugh - ter, weak and faint, is led to die with -
"Go down, my child," the Fa - ther said, "and free my chil - dren
Oh, won-drous love! Oh, lov - ing might! To right what mor - tals
Your love is dress e - nough for me to wear through all e -



out com-plaint; his spot-less life he of - fers. He bears the shame,
from their dread of death and con-dem - na - tion. The pain-ful stripes
can - not right the Son was sent from heav-en. What love, O Love,
ter - ni - ty be - fore the throne of heav-en, where we shall stand



the stripes, the wrath; his an - guish, mock - er - y,
are hard to bear, but by your death they all
who came to save by lov - ing e - ven to
close by your side, your church, the well - ap - point -



and death for us he glad - ly suf - fers,
can share the joy of your sal - va - tion."
the grave un - til the stone was riv - en.
ed bride, when all the faith - ful gath - er.

The Crucifixion of Jesus: Luke 23:26-49

As they led him 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 women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 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.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Story: Simon of Cyrene

Of course they chose me to carry a criminal's cross. Because of my dark skin and foreign clothes, the soldiers mark me as a man no one will stick up for—at least not against Roman spears.

I'm not surprised by the crowd's silence, but it still stings. No matter how many years I make my Passover pilgrimage to this land, they'll never see me as fully one of them. Wherever I go, I'm a man torn in two: not Cyrenian enough for my homeland; not Jewish enough for Jerusalem.

And now, I'm not even human enough for the Romans, who look at me and see nothing but a body they can force into service. Halfway up the hill, I'm not sure I'm going to make it. Is the beam getting heavier as it digs into my shoulder? But the soldiers' whips and spears warn me what will happen if I stumble or stop. For just a moment, the criminal whose cross I carry turns around and meets my gaze. There's compassion in his eyes, as if he's sorry for my pain—mine!—when we both know the agony he is about to go through!

Just when I think my legs will give out, the criminal pauses, forcing the soldiers to stop too. At last, a moment of rest. He's stopped in front of a throng of crying women. What is he saying?... "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me." He is comforting them, too!

Suddenly, I'm not so ashamed to shoulder a cross for this man, whom the poor and powerless love so well. A poor, battered, exhausted soul, just steps away

from death—and yet, he radiates compassion. And yet, he is loved. Truly that is power, beyond Rome's wildest imagination.

Hymn *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded* **Cranberry 351 vss. 1-2**



1 O sa - cred head, now wound - ed, with grief and shame weighed down,
2 How pale thou art with an - guish, with sore a - buse and scorn;
3 What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank thee, dear - est friend,
4 Lord, be my con - so - la - tion; shield me when I must die;



now scorn - ful - ly sur - round - ed with thorns, thine on - ly crown;
how does thy face now lan - guish, which once was bright as morn!
for this thy dy - ing sor - row, thy pit - y with - out end?
re - mind me of thy pas - sion when my last hour draws nigh.



O sa - cred head, what glo - ry, what bliss till now was thine!
Thy grief and bit - ter pas - sion were all for sin - ners' gain;
Oh, make me thine for - ev - er, and should I faint - ing be,
These eyes, new faith re - ceiv - ing, from thee shall nev - er move;



Yet, though de - spised and gor - y, I joy to call thee mine.
mine, mine was the trans - gres - sion, but thine the dead - ly pain.
Lord, let me nev - er, nev - er out - live my love to thee.
for all who die be - liev - ing die safe - ly in thy love.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676, based on Arnulf of Louvain, d. 1250; tr. composite

Music: HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN, German melody, c. 1500; adapt. Hans Leo Hassler, 1564–1612

The Other Criminals: Luke 23:32-43

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 with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, “Father, 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 him 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 in your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Story: The Criminal on the Cross

Paradise. That's what my companion and I are guilty of: intent to bring paradise to our poor, oppressed people, no matter the cost.

That's not how Rome sees it, of course; they charged us with robbery and sedition.

We'd heard Jesus was back in town, that he'd ridden in like a king of old in challenge to Pilate's grand parade—and we'd thought he must be here to kick off a rebellion. After all his preaching about the nearness of God's kingdom, and calling himself son of God in defiance to Caesar ... what could he possibly be promising but revolution? And how does revolution come about, if not with swords? So we ambushed soldiers to seize their weapons. Clearly, it didn't go as planned. Clearly, Jesus never meant to lead an insurrection after all.

So here we are, about to die with him anyway, and I get why my companion feels betrayed, why he mocks the man we'd pinned our hopes on. Still, I can't bring myself to hate Jesus. All the way through my arrest, my trial, my struggle up this hill, I've been pondering ... Could Jesus know a different path to paradise? A way to hold yourself somewhere between violence and passivity as you fight for justice? A kind of revolution that refuses to use the Empire's weapons and instead creates its own tools for dismantling oppression?

I shouldn't have any hope left: not while hanging here between life and death, with no riot, no liberation, no second chance for me. The Messiah we thought would overturn Rome is slowly suffocating to death beside me.

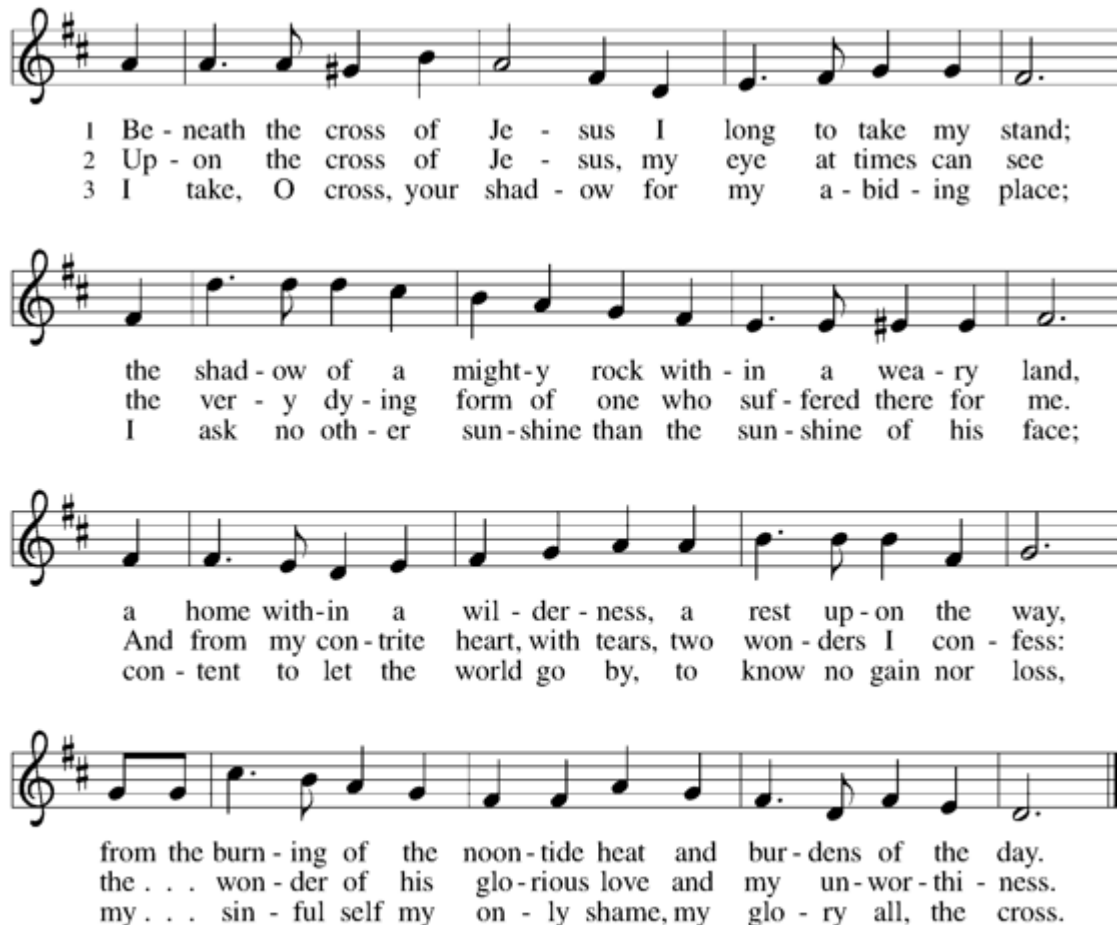
Things are hopeless—and yet, absurdly, I hope.

Today I head for paradise. Tomorrow others will take up the work for a better world—until God's kingdom comes to earth at last.

Hymn

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Cranberry 338



1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see
3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;

the shad - ow of a might-y rock with - in a wea - ry land,
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;

a home with-in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,

from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.
my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830–1869

Music: ST. CHRISTOPHER, Frederick C. Maker, 1844–1927

The Death of Jesus: Luke 23:44-49

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 out with a loud voice, said, "Father, 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 breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

Bethel Choir *On the Cross*

Prayer & Adoration of the Cross

Let us pray, Holy One, we are here.
We don't want to turn away from you this night,
but our hearts are heavy and our burdens are great.
We lay them at the foot of your cross.
On the cross, you bore the weight of all our cares,
and the good news is heavy on our souls.
May we not turn away
from the spectacle and tragedy of your death.

Draw us to the pain of your cross.

When we judge the crowd,
caught up in the frenzy and the fervor,
help us to recognize our own tendency
to follow crowds where we do not want to go.
We offer prayers this day
for people caught up in crowds,
anxiety, fear, and the rush of judgment.
May we be non-anxious witnesses
to the pain of the world,
able to respond in compassion.

Draw us to the peace of your cross.

We see your body, broken, O Lord,
and we remember the brokenness
in our community and our lives.
Bring your healing, O God,
into the broken places, the wounds, the fears,
the injuries we don't know how to heal.
We seek your wholeness, your shalom,

for the people we know to be in need of healing.

Draw us to the healing of your cross.

Your cross is a symbol for the whole church.
for the ways we have divided ourselves
and set up walls where you seek bridges, forgive us.
When the body of Christ is broken,
you are the one who bleeds.
Lead us to understanding,
to acceptance of differences,
and to love our siblings who serve you differently.
Bless your church in this place and around the world,
that we may represent your love to the world.
Bless our siblings in other faith traditions as well,
that in our embrace, the world may see a path toward peace.

Draw us to the unity of your cross.

Your cross embraces all of creation,
and we are mindful that we have focused too narrowly
on our own salvation,
as if we could personally be saved while the world burned.
Lead us into a deeper care for this planet we call home.
Lead us to seek and savor the majestic beauty around us,
from sunset over jagged mountain peaks
to dew on a spider web in the early dawn.
Lead us to care for people impacted by a changing climate,
for people impacted by our disregard
for our effect on the planet.
Be with people in the path of winds, rains, fires, and floods.
As you stretch out your arms on the cross,
reach into lives in need of your rescue.

Draw us to the rescue of your cross.

We hear your voice crying out in pain on the cross
and we remember the voices crying out around us today.
May we pour out our compassion
instead of drowning them out with our indifference.
May we recognize and acknowledge the pain of their lives.

Draw us to the cries of your cross.

Hear our voices now,

as we bring all of our prayers, pain, and hope before you.

Behold the life-giving cross, on which was hung the Savior of the whole world.

Oh, come, let us worship him


We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Hymn

Were You There

Cranberry 353



1 Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
2 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
3 Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
4 Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
5 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?




Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Refrain



Oh, some-times it caus-es me to trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.



Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Text: African American spiritual
Music: WERE YOU THERE, African American spiritual

The Burial of Jesus: Luke 23:50-56

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Closing Litany

After the betrayal, the accusations, the torturous execution, there seemed to be nothing left of Jesus' life's work, his vision of an upside-down kingdom where the last are first. The Empire stomped out his spirit, and that was the end...

Except. There were the women who stayed with Jesus until the very end.

Except. There was the body that had embraced, and fed, and touched so many lives—a body that was still honored, still cared for, still loved.

Except. There was Joseph of Arimathea, who gave up his own tomb to bury the Son of God. A member of the same Jewish council that charged Jesus with blasphemy, Joseph reminds us that Jewish people were and are not a monolith. He voted against a conviction; he risked safety and good standing to recover Jesus' body for the women who cherished him.

And there was ritual, the motions that carried the women through their grief: burial and the anointing of the body, with Sabbath rest in between, giving them space to mourn.

We end tonight in the space between death and resurrection, as the friends and followers of Jesus go home devastated and afraid. We linger with them,

because grief matters. Even when we know a joyful new beginning is soon to come, the grief and pain are still real and deserve to be heard.

Go in peace, and in silence, to wait with those who wait and mourn with those who mourn. **Amen.**

To honor the grief of Jesus' friends, his mother, and the poor, whose lives he'd changed, I invite you to take some time on Holy Saturday to read the following poem, and to sit with your own troubles, fears, and griefs as you remember the day that God lay dead in a tomb, accompanying us even into death.

Easter Worship

9:00 am – Resurrection of Our Lord

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this moment matters

A POEM FOR HOLY SATURDAY

by Avery Arden

they wanted—no, they needed
to touch you one last time.

so they trudged the tomb ward path
with their perfumes and their spices
their strips of cloth to cocoon
your body in
for its final transformation back to dust

their shoulders almost broken with grief,
heavy as the cross
that crushed the life from your flesh.

let me fall in step behind them.
let me take my place in that line
of broken hearts bearing a cross of
grief together.
let me shoulder my share of the burden

and let me not rush
to the first fingers of dawn, frail and
trembling,
reaching past a rolled-back stone
to empty space where your corpse
should be—

no. let me linger in the moment when
your corpse still lies there
and anguish fractures the air
into splinters that cut the lungs.

this moment matters:
your brown body
with the breath pressed out
by the inexorable boot of Empire matters.

and the moment that comes after
cannot ease this one.

it never has, and it never will, for
there are still bodies broken,
breathless, beaten down
by Empire's brutality or else it's apathy.

and you, with us to the last,
still lie among them—
you hold them close
and share their final exhalation
be it in a hospital bed, the street, a cell.

so let me not sprint to sunrise
when your body can still be found
nestled with cold bodies in their graves.

blessed be the hands
that carry the spices and perfumes,
water and cloth!
blessed, blessed be the throats
worn rough with sobs
yet refusing to be silenced,
broadcasting the crime lest some
claim ignorance.

i'll not dishonor them by racing past
to the future reunion of
form to dust, breath to body,
lover to loved
before they're ready.

keep watch! soak in! be present
with them!
this moment is holy.