



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

**Ministers:** All the People – wherever and however they gather

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**Good Friday – April 10, 2020**

**Prelude**

**Candle of Temptation**      Mark 14: 10-11

*10-11 Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve followers of Jesus, went to the cabal of high priests, determined to betray him. They couldn't believe their ears, and promised to pay him well. He started looking for just the right moment to hand Jesus over.*



We reflect on the temptations of this world which test our reliance and trust in God. Like Jesus, we are faced with the reality of making choices. Jesus could have chosen wealth and power; Jesus could have but on the mantle of kingship like his ancestor David. Instead he chose to be a servant.

***We think of the pressures on our lives to choose popularity, wealth, comfort, and power. We ask for the courage to make choices that Jesus would have us make.***

We extinguish the first candle as we think of those times we have been drawn away from God. Each time we give in to temptation, we diminish the light of God in our world.

***God of grace and forgiveness, strengthen and encourage us as we face temptations. Help us to take time to think and pray, times to be quiet with you as we make the choice of faithful discipleship.***

Hymn

Were You There

VU 144 v.1

*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?*



*26 They sang a hymn and then went directly to Mount Olives.*

*27-28 Jesus told them, “You’re all going to feel that your world is falling apart and that it’s my fault. There’s a Scripture that says, I will strike the shepherd; The sheep will go helter-skelter. “But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you, leading the way to Galilee.”*

*29 Peter blurted out, “Even if everyone else is ashamed of you when things fall to pieces, I won’t be.”*

*30 Jesus said, “Don’t be so sure. Today, this very night in fact, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”*

*31 He blustered in protest, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you.” All the others said the same thing.*

We reflect on the how difficult it is to face the truth. We think of the disciples who made a difficult choice to leave everything behind and journey with Jesus, having faith in him. Yet when faced with Jesus’ prediction of their unfaithfulness this same faith gave way to fear of accepting the truth.

***Like Jesus, you call us to name our fears and to face them, knowing you are ever present with us.***

We extinguish this candle remembering that Jesus chose danger and suffering despite his own fears.

***God of strength and patience, we confess that there are times we have made safe choices, rather than risk your call to serve. Help us to focus ourselves and trust in you. May your constant love be with us as we confront our fear, and put our hope in you.***

Hymn

Were You There

VU 144 v.2

*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?*

**Candle of Abandonment**      Mark 14: 43-50



*43-47 No sooner were the words out of his mouth when Judas, the one out of the Twelve, showed up, and with him a gang of ruffians, sent by the high priests, religion scholars, and leaders, brandishing swords and clubs. The betrayer had worked out a signal with them: “The one I kiss, that’s the one—seize him. Make sure he doesn’t get away.” He went straight to Jesus and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. The others then grabbed him and roughed him up. One of the men standing there unsheathed his sword, swung, and came down on the Chief Priest’s servant, lopping off the man’s ear.*

*48-50 Jesus said to them, “What is this, coming after me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I’ve been sitting in the Temple teaching, and you never so much as lifted a hand against me. What you in fact have done is confirm the prophetic writings.” All the disciples cut and ran.*

We reflect on the despair Jesus must have felt when his followers abandoned him after Judas’ betrayal. Jesus faced both trial and sentencing with only God by his side. Remind us of the times we have had to face challenges alone, when we too, have called out to God to be with us.

***In our hearts we know that with God, we are never alone.***

We extinguish this candle recalling the abandonment of Jesus in the hour of greatest need. We recall the strength it must have taken for Jesus to face this persecution on his own.

***Loving God, be with us and strengthen us with your life giving power so that we may serve you faithfully on our journey.***



Hymn

Were You There

VU 144 v.3

*Were you there when the sun refused to shine?  
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?  
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,  
tremble, tremble.  
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?*

## Candle of Despair

Mark 14: 66- 72

*66-67 While all this was going on, Peter was down in the courtyard. One of the Chief Priest's servant girls came in and, seeing Peter warming himself there, looked hard at him and said, "You were with the Nazarene, Jesus."*

*68 He denied it: "I don't know what you're talking about." He went out on the porch. A rooster crowed.*

*69-70 The girl spotted him and began telling the people standing around, "He's one of them." He denied it again.*



*After a little while, the bystanders brought it up again. "You've got to be one of them. You've got 'Galilean' written all over you."*

*71-72 Now Peter got really nervous and swore, "I never laid eyes on this man you're talking about." Just then the rooster crowed a second time. Peter remembered how Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows twice, you'll deny me three times." He collapsed in tears.*

We reflect on ways that human nature causes us to embrace self-protection rather than the truth.

***Like Peter, we know that when the truth of denial comes to rest upon us, our heart is filled with despair.***

We extinguish this candle recognizing times of despair in our own lives.

***God of grace and mercy, even when we stray, you are there. Surround us with love and forgiveness as we take the next step***

Hymn

Were You There

VU 144 v.4

*Were you there when they pierced him in the side?*

*Were you there when they pierced him in the side?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,*

*tremble, tremble.*

*Were you there when they pierced him in the side?*

## Candle of Confusion

Mark 15: 1-5

*At dawn's first light, the high priests, with the religious leaders and scholars, arranged a conference with the entire Jewish Council. After tying Jesus securely, they took him out and presented him to Pilate.*

*2-3 Pilate asked him, "Are you the 'King of the Jews'?"*

*He answered, "If you say so." The high priests let loose a barrage of accusations.*

*4-5 Pilate asked again, "Aren't you going to answer anything? That's quite a list of accusations." Still, he said nothing. Pilate was impressed, really impressed.*



We reflect on questions asked to which there seem no answer. Like Pilate, there are times that we look for the logical reasons to do the unthinkable.

***We are human, and we need to search for understanding of Jesus' teachings for our own time.***

We extinguish this candle for the times there are no easy answers, just hard questions.

***Grant us Patience God, as we follow Jesus to the cross; patience as we live in the tension of unanswered questions.***

Hymn

Were You There

VU 144 v.5

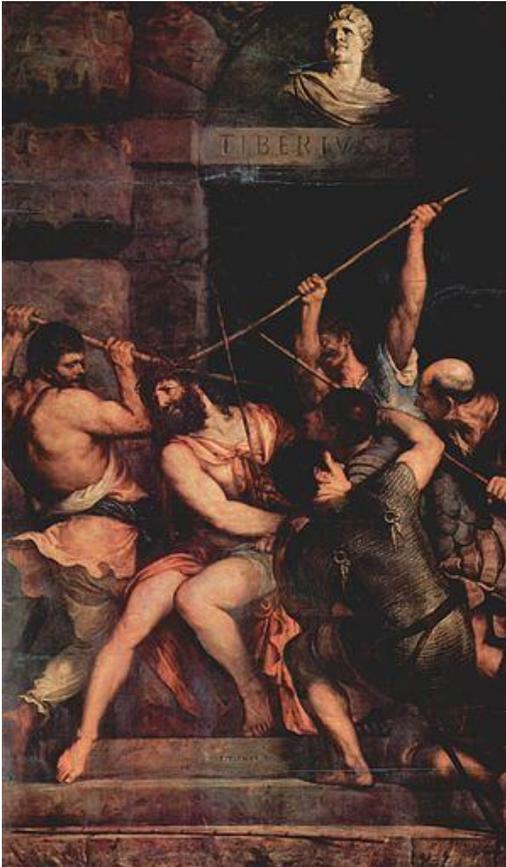
*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,*

*tremble, tremble.*

*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*



*16-20 The soldiers took Jesus into the palace and called together the entire brigade. They dressed him up in purple and put a crown plaited from a thornbush on his head. Then they began their mockery: “Bravo, King of the Jews!”*

*They banged on his head with a club, spit on him, and knelt down in mock worship. After they had had their fun, they took off the purple cape and put his own clothes back on him. Then they marched out to nail him to the cross.*

We reflect upon the feelings that Jesus’ followers must have faced as they watched from afar, following him to the cross; watching him suffer and die.

*We begin to understand how Mary, Peter, James, John, and Jesus other friends felt, as we recall our own grief.*

We extinguish this candle for our own grief and for the grief of generations who have lived the death of Christ on the cross.

*We lift our grief to you, O God. We ask for your compassion and solace. As we remember Jesus’ death, help us to be present in this moment.*

## Hymn

## O Come and Mourn with Me Awhile (v.1,2,4)

VU 136

- 1 O come and mourn with me awhile;  
O come now to the Saviour's side;  
O come, together let us mourn:  
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.*
- 2 Have we no tears to shed for him,  
while soldiers scoff and foes deride?  
Ah! Look how patiently he hangs:  
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.*
- 4 O love of God! O sin-filled world!  
In this dread act your strength is tried,  
and victory remains with love:  
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.*

## Christ Candle

Mark 15: 25-39

*25-30 They nailed him up at nine o'clock in the morning. The charge against him—THE KING OF THE JEWS—was printed on a poster. Along with him, they crucified two criminals, one to his right, the other to his left. People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament: "You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days—so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you're really God's Son, come down from that cross!"*

*31-32 The high priests, along with the religion scholars, were right there mixing it up with the rest of them, having a great time poking fun at Jesus: "He saved others—but he can't save himself! Messiah, is he? King of Israel? Then let him climb down from that cross. We'll all become believers then!"*

*33-34 At noon the sky became extremely dark. The darkness lasted three hours. At three o'clock, Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"*

*35-36 Some of the bystanders who heard him said, "Listen, he's calling for Elijah." Someone ran off, soaked a sponge in sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down."*



*37-39 But Jesus, with a loud cry, gave his last breath. At that moment the Temple curtain ripped right down the middle. When the Roman captain standing guard in front of him saw that he had quit breathing, he said, "This has to be the Son of God!"*

Today is the darkest day of the year. Today we remember all unloving actions which try to blot out the light of God.

***And like Jesus own followers, we face our broken promises, our wandering, our lack of trust, our fear and wavering commitment. Today we experience the darkness of Christ's death, and the separation between God and humanity it portrays.***

It is finished. Jesus has completed his life on earth.

**Music**

**Jesus, Remember Me**

**VU 148**

*Jesus Remember Me When you come into your kingdom. (x2)*

**Silence**

## Source for Art

1. *"Judas Sells Jesus for Thirty Pieces of Silver"* **Bartolo di Fredi**, Italy, 14<sup>th</sup> Century
2. *"Christ on the Mount of Olives"* **Mabuse**, Germany, c.1507
3. *"The Betrayal of Christ"* **Master of Alkmaar**, Netherlands, c.1507
4. *"The Capture of Christ"* **Gregoire Guerard**, France, c.1520
5. *"The Denial of St. Peter"* **Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio**, Rome, c.1610
6. *"Ecce Homo" (Behold the Man)* **Antonio Ciseri**, Florence, c. 1860
7. *"The Crowning with Thorns"* **Tiziano Vecilli (Titian)** Italy, c.1542
8. *"The Crucifixion"* **Fra Angelico Guido di Pietro**, Italy, c.1420