

The Gathering

The ministers enter in silence.

A single candle is lit

This is the light of Christ. **Blessed be God for ever.**

The Collect

Eternal God,

In the cross of Jesus we see the cost of our sin

and the depth of your love:

in humble hope and fear

may we place at his feet

all that we have and all that we are,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray;

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

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,

the power and the glory,

for ever and ever,

Amen.

First Station: Jesus is condemned to death



Bible Reading – Mark 15:1–5,11–15

Jesus was taken in chains to Pilate. The chief priests were accusing Jesus of many things, so Pilate questioned him. ‘Aren’t you going to answer?’ he said. ‘Listen to all their accusations.’ Jesus refused to say a word and Pilate was amazed.

Pilate spoke to the crowd. ‘What do you want me to do with this one you call King of the Jews?’ They shouted back, ‘Crucify him!’ ‘But what crime has he committed?’ Pilate asked. They shouted all the louder, ‘Crucify him!’

Pilate wanted to please the crowd, so he set Barabbas free for them. Then he had Jesus whipped and handed him over to be crucified.

Meditation

Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed.

It was a good question.

Jesus had annoyed the religious leaders,
of that there was no doubt.

He had been critical of social and religious structures.

He had healed the villagers;

he had told stories to the crowds;

he was probably a threat to public law and order;

but was that enough to condemn him, to end his life?

But he would not defend himself –

the storyteller was silent now

and the crowd was noisy,

and Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

Prayer

For those on trial this week and for those appointed to judge them:

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

Holy God,

holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us. Amen.

Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross



Bible reading – Mark 15:16–20

The soldiers took Jesus inside, to the courtyard of the governor's palace and called together the rest of the company. They put a purple robe on Jesus, made a crown out of thorn branches, and put it on his head. Then they began to salute him:

'Long live the King of the Jews.' They beat him over the head with a stick, spat on him, fell on their knees and bowed to him.

When they had finished mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Meditation

Soldiers

taking the chance for a bit of fun.

They had a heavy day ahead.

Soon they would have to put on their public face –
disciplined, controlled, efficient.

But for now a bit of a lark with the lads
with no risk of recrimination.

Dead men tell no stories,
and Jesus was going to his death.

Prayer

For those appointed to keep public order,
and for those tempted to abuse their power:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

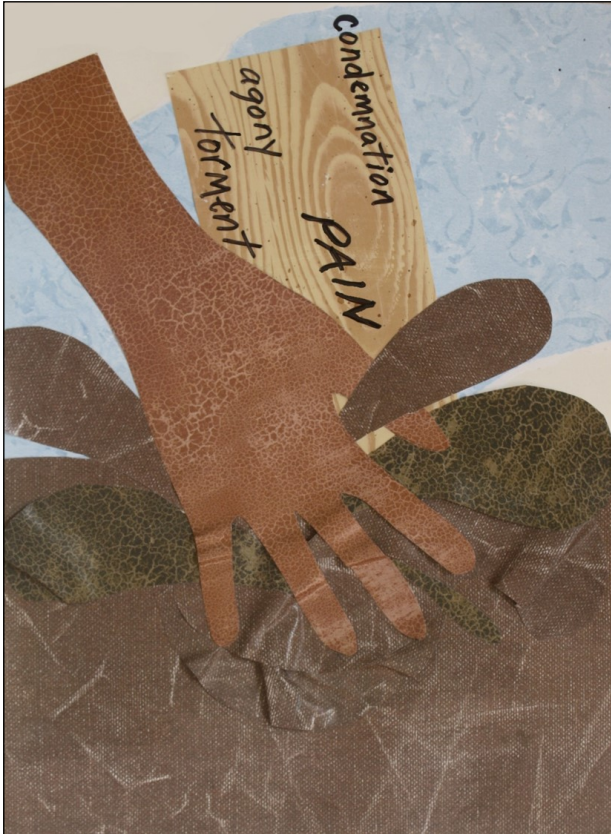
Holy God,

holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us. Amen.

Third Station: Jesus falls the first time



Bible reading – Isaiah 53:1

Who would have believed what we now tell?
Who could have seen God's hand in this?

Meditation

Jesus was exhausted.
He was in pain.
He was going to his death.
The cross was heavy and he fell.
He was flesh and blood like us,
he was struggling.

Prayer

For those who are tired or in pain:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you
Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.

Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother



Bible reading – Luke 2:22,25,34,35

The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, 'This child is chosen by God for the destruction and salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart.'

Meditation

She was going to be there at his end –
she who had been there with God at his beginning.

She was his mother.

She had fed him and cradled him
and watched over his growing.

Whatever he had said and done,
he was still her son
and she would not desert him now.

Whatever pain of his she could embrace she would.
And in the meeting of their eyes
there was love,
suffering and shining.

Prayer

For parents whose children are in pain or in trouble:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.**

Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus to carry his cross



Bible reading – Mark 15:21

On their way through Jerusalem they met a man named Simon, who was coming into the city from the country, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

Meditation

Simon from Cyrene,
father of Alexander and Rufus,
what a tale you had to tell your children!
You helped Jesus,
you gave him your strength on the streets of Jerusalem.
Willing or unwilling,
you, Simon, have become part of his story,
and he part of yours,
for you helped him
when he needed you.
What would we give to be Simon?

Prayer

For a willingness to serve you, in friends and in strangers,
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.**

Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



Bible reading – Matthew 25:35–36,40

I was hungry and you fed me,
thirsty, and you gave me a drink.

I was a stranger and you received me in your homes,
naked and you clothed me;

I was sick and you took care of me,
in prison and you visited me.

Whenever you did this – you did it for me.

Meditation

Wiping faces, dirty faces;
faces full of sweat and tears,
faces covered in chocolate and in jam.
Wiping faces is something we try to do gently and lovingly,
something that soothes and cleanses,
something that brings healing.
Wiping faces is something we do for those who are young,
or old, or in pain, or in trouble,
wanting them to know that they are cherished and loved.
And when we wipe the faces of God's little ones,
we are wiping the face of God.

Prayer

For those whose faces we wipe,
For those we would love to do so at this time but are unable,
and for those who wipe away our tears:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you
Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.

Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time



Bible reading – Isaiah 53:7

Ill-treated and afflicted,
he never said a word.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter house,
like a sheep dumb before its shearers,
he never opened his mouth.

Meditation

I am finding it hard to watch you, Jesus,
to see you struggling,
to see you on the ground.
Into your silence I want to shout:
'Why do they keep on hurting you?
What have you done wrong?'

Prayer

For those who today will struggle and fall:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you
Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.

Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



Bible reading – Luke 23:27,28

A large crowd of people followed Jesus; among them were some women who were weeping and wailing for him. Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Women of Jerusalem, don’t cry for me, but for yourselves and for your children.’

Meditation

Weep for the mothers and children of Jerusalem,
for Israeli and Palestinian,
for Jew and Moslem and Christian,
for the strangers in their midst.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
Pray that her people may live together in justice.
Pray that all people may live together in peace.

Prayer

For those who live in places of conflict and danger;
for peacemakers and peacekeepers in every land:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you
Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.

Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time



Bible reading – Isaiah 53:4–5

He endured the suffering that should have been ours,
the pain we should have borne.

All the while we thought that his suffering
was punishment sent by God;
but because of our sins he was wounded,
beaten because of the evil we did.

We are healed by the punishment he suffered,
made whole by the blows he received.

Meditation

I am not sure if I can watch this much longer.

In his pain I see my pain,
in his falling I feel myself falling,
in his cross ... in his cross

I am included.

He carried it for me –
for me, and my enemies, and my friends.

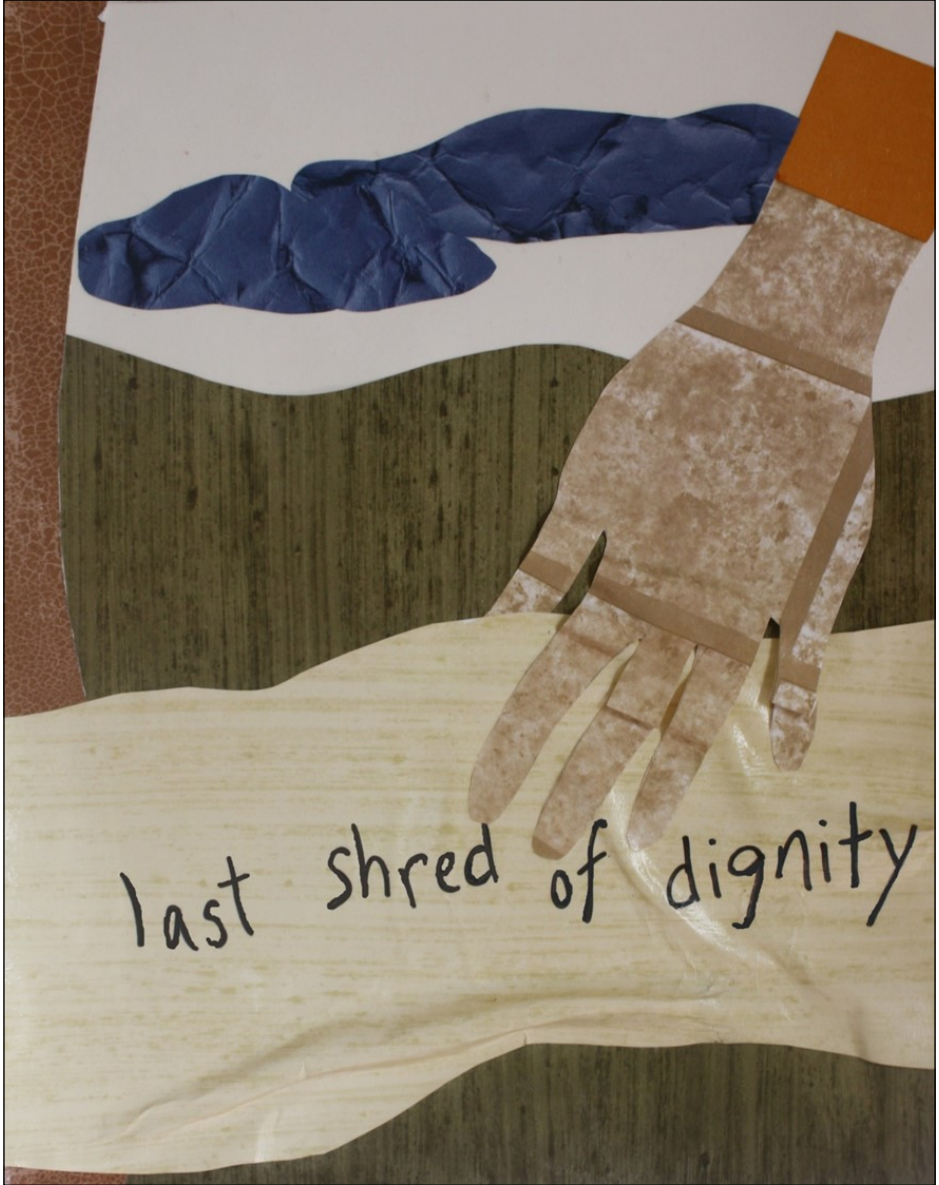
Prayer

For those whom I love,
for those whom I struggle to love,
for those who find me difficult:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.**

Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his clothes



Bible reading – Mark 15:22–24

They took Jesus to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. They tried to give him wine mixed with a drug called myrrh, but Jesus would not drink it. Then they crucified him and divided his clothing among themselves, throwing dice to see who would get each piece of clothing.

Meditation

Stripped now –
of clothing
of disciples
of friends.

Alone,
naked and vulnerable,
with nothing to protect you from the pain to come.

Prayer

For those deserted by friends,
for those who are alone and vulnerable:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.**

Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross



Bible reading – Luke 23:35,49

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him; the people stayed there watching him, the leaders jeered at him and the soldiers mocked him. Some women, his friends from Galilee, looked on at a distance.

Meditation

We look on from a distance:

a distance of time and space and culture,
a distance of a Sunday afternoon in Britain in Lent.

And for us it hurts to watch Jesus dying,
even at a distance.

It hurts to know that we are being rescued.

It hurts to know how much we are valued and loved.

Prayer

For the depth of your love for us, we thank you.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

Holy God,

holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us. Amen.

Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross



Bible reading – Luke 23:44–46

It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock. And the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father in your hands I place my spirit.'

He said this and died.

Meditation

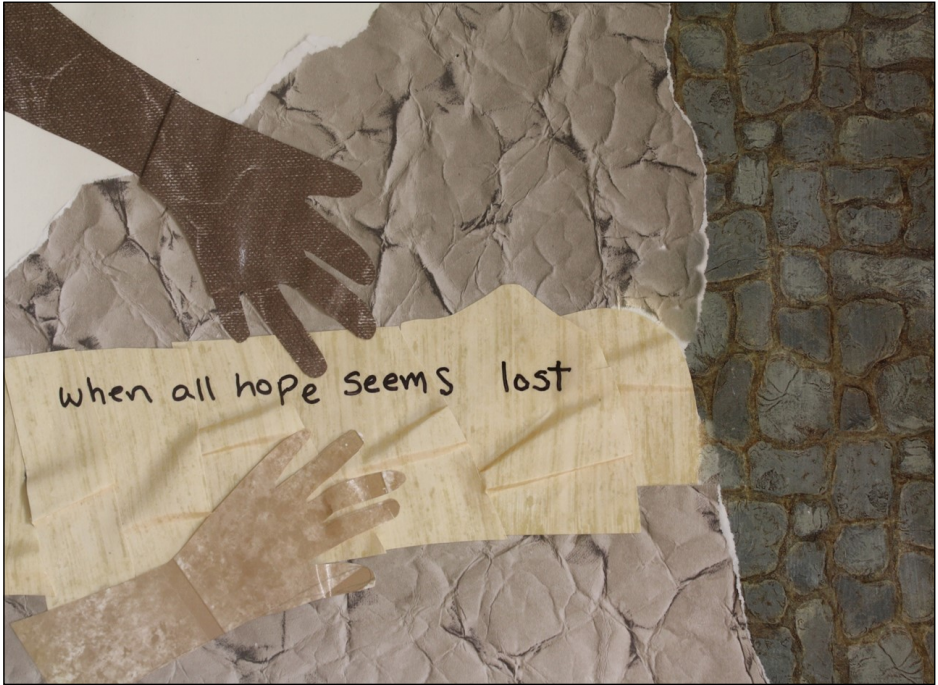
In your hands he placed himself:
all that he was,
all that he had ever been,
all his beauty,
all his obedience,
all his loving.
In God's hands he placed himself.
He was returning to his father,
he was going home.

Prayer

For all who have died today,
for all who love them and will miss them:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you
Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross



Bible reading – Mark 15:42–46

And when evening came, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Joseph took the body down and wrapped it in a linen sheet.

Meditation

Jesus is dead and lies in the arms of his mother.

Death is hard and final

and yet, whatever happens on this earth,
children never die to their mothers.

In the memory of those who loved them, loved ones remain.

And for us, and for all God's people,
our hope is safe in God.

From swaddling bands to grave clothes,
all the days of our living and dying,
we are cradled and wrapped in love.

Prayer

For our families and friends who have died,
for ourselves as we carry their stories:

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

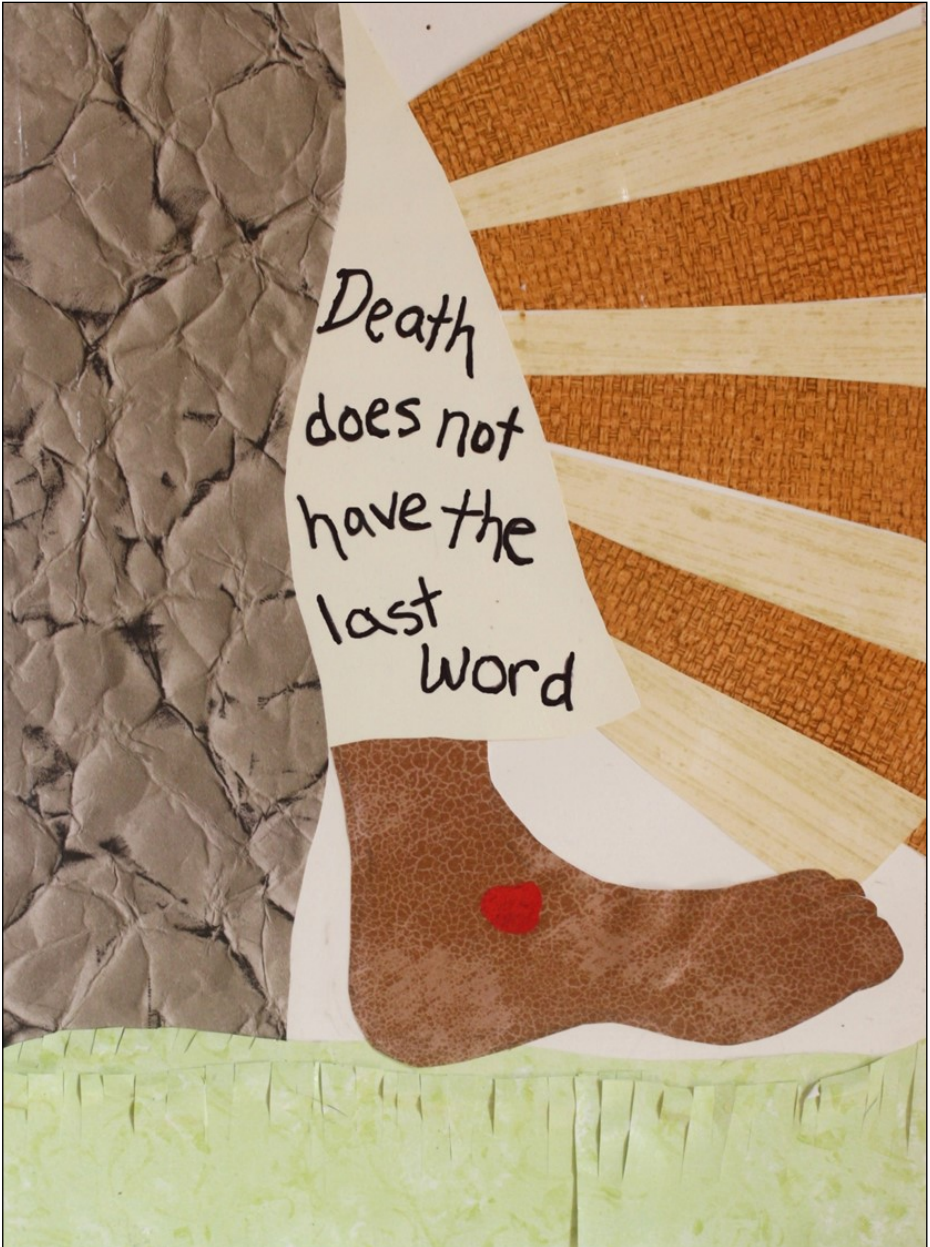
Holy God,

holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us. Amen.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb



Bible reading – Mark 15:46–47

Joseph placed the body in a tomb which had been dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching and saw where the body of Jesus was placed.

Meditation

The door is shut now,
and the world sighs and waits.
And we wait in night's darkness,
longing for the morning,
longing for the light.

Prayer

For all who are waiting.
For all who are longing for light:
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you
Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.

The Conclusion

We go on our way
and Jesus goes ahead of us;
we do not need to be afraid.

God is love –
and love is more powerful
than fear or death or evil,
and we are greatly loved.
And we are grateful.

Thanks be to God for redeeming the world in love. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

Praise be to God for the proof of his love for us.

Praise be to God that he has reconciled us to himself.

With Jesus we can say:

‘Father, into your hands we commit our lives.’

In your hands our lives are safe, come what may.

We know that your forgiveness is greater than our sinfulness
and the bad side of us is in your hands.

Even though there may be difficulties and dangers ahead,
we are in your hands.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us. Amen.**

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

*The candle is blown out.
All depart in silence.*

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