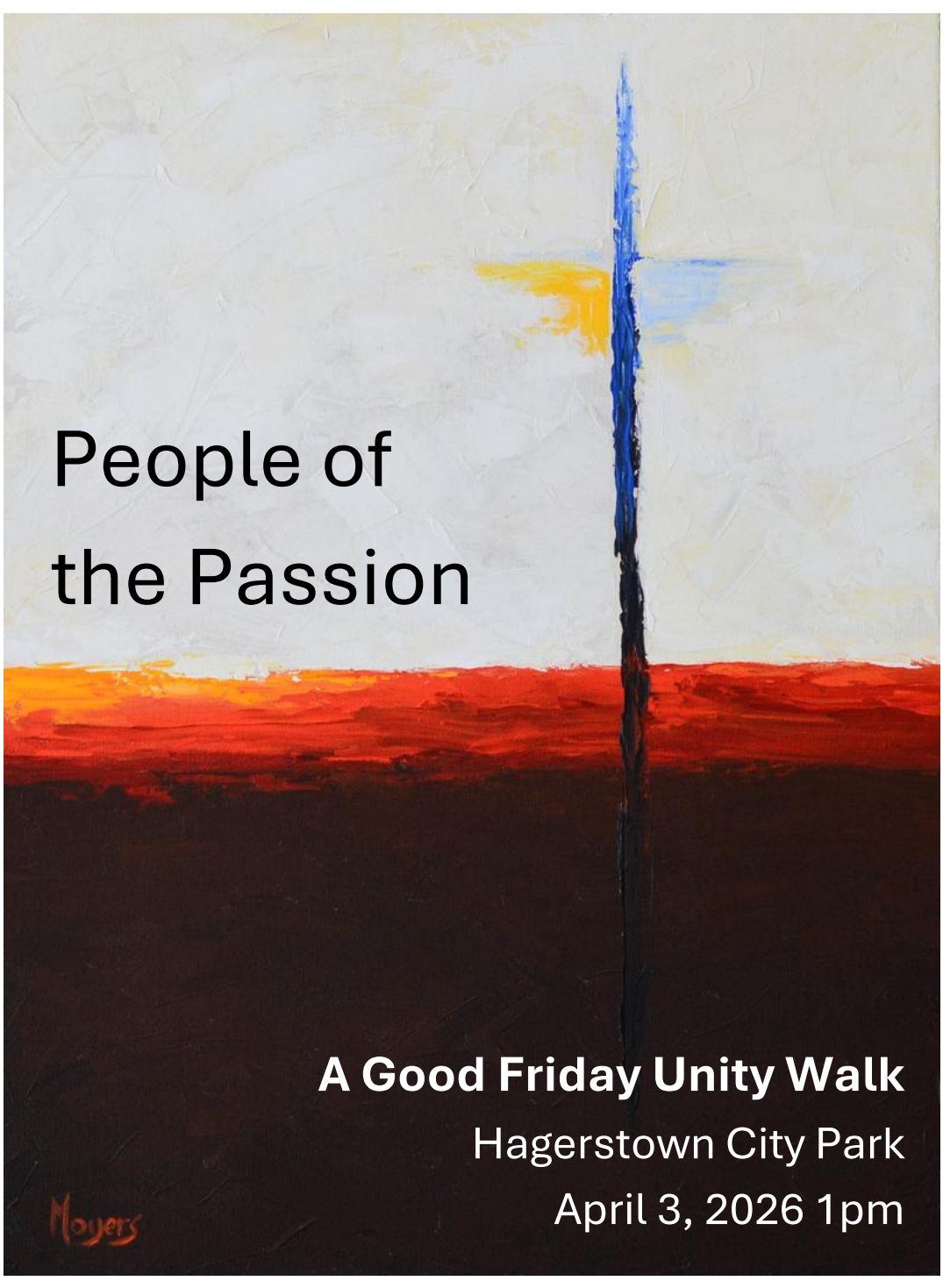


An abstract painting featuring a vertical blue line that runs from the top to the bottom of the canvas. A horizontal yellow line intersects this vertical line in the upper-middle section. Below the yellow line, a thick, horizontal band of red and orange stretches across the width of the painting, suggesting a horizon. The bottom portion of the painting is a solid, dark brown or black. The overall texture is visible, with brushstrokes and impasto techniques used throughout.

People of the Passion

A Good Friday Unity Walk

Hagerstown City Park

April 3, 2026 1pm

Moyers

Station 1: Mary of Bethany

Matthew 26:6-13

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

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Dear Mary, you have done a beautiful thing. Though some will say otherwise and speculate about the cost, the extravagance, or the way the smell overpowered the room, it was a beautiful thing. Your perfume running down his hair and soaking into his shirt was a tangible sign of love that must have lingered in Jesus' nose for days. Perhaps even on the cross he caught a whiff of your gift amid the odors of suffering and death. Perhaps it gave him hope, even if only for an instant. Dear Mary, may our love overflow like yours. May the scent of generosity fill the rooms of our lives and linger on the clothes of those we meet. May the aroma of abundant love sustain us when nothing else can.



Lombardo, Antonio, approximately 1458-1516. Mary Magdalene.

## **Prayer of Extravagance**

Leader: Mary poured out costly perfume in love...

God, what love do you invite us to pour out? (silent prayer)

May our lives be poured out in love.

**People: May our lives be poured out in love.**

Leader: We walk the way of the cross.

**People: Lead us in the way of love.**

## Station 2: Peter, James and John

### **Matthew 26:36-46**

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

~~~~~

Dear Peter, James and John, you were the few Jesus wanted closest on this night of fear. He needed you – just to be there, just to sit in solidarity, just to stay awake. But you couldn't stay present with him. Your spirit was willing but your eyes were just so heavy... Perhaps you could hear some of his feverish pleas. Perhaps you read in his posture the intensity of his emotional turmoil. Perhaps this was what made you wish to close your eyes – so that you would not have to see any more of your friend's pain – which you could not fix. Dear tired disciples, we know the weight of heavy eyelids – the weariness, worry, grief. We know how hard it can be to see and hear and stay present in that darkness. May we all find the grace to be here now and try, even if we must try again and again, to pray with those in need.



Le Breton, Jacques ; Gaudin, Jean. Christ on Gethsemane with Three Apostles Sleeping.

Prayer of the Heart

Leader: Like the disciples, we want to be faithful, yet we know our weakness.

Where do I overestimate my strength?

Where do I need grace? (silent prayer)

Lord, strengthen us when we are weak.

People: Lord, strengthen us when we are weak.

Leader: We walk the way of the cross.

People: Lead us in the way of love.

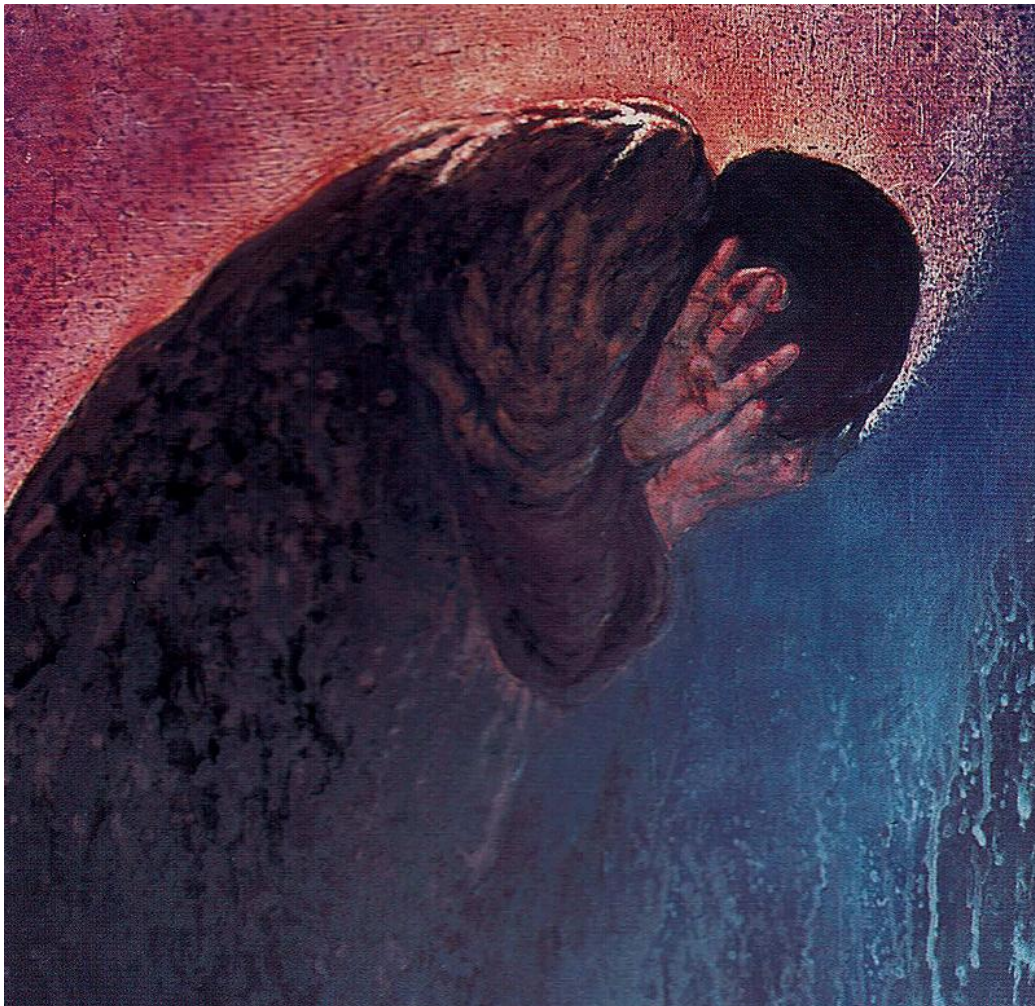
Station 3: Judas

Matthew 26:47-49, 27:3-6

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. . . . When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money."

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Dear Judas, Matthew tells us that you repented. Though you betrayed him, you came to regret it and even tried to reverse what you had done. You spoke the truth: "I have sinned." But it was too late. The blood money you returned had already done its work. And this is the pain of regret: that we cannot change the past. Even our best attempts at repair cannot undo the hurt we have caused. The only question is what we will do next. Did it seem to you the most faithful course— if not to save Jesus, then to die as well? Or was it simply too unbearable to watch any more dominos fall as a result of your actions? Dear guilt-ridden Judas, I wish you knew the end of the story. You were right that you had sinned. And so do we all. But I wish you knew what God can do, even with our worst choices.



Wesley, Frank, 1923-2002. Peter's Denial

### **Prayer of Repentance and Mercy**

Leader: We cannot undo the past, but we can bring it to God.

What regret or failure do I bring before God? (silent prayer)

God of mercy, receive us and remake us.

**People: God of mercy, receive us and remake us.**

Leader: We walk the way of the cross.

**People: Lead us in the way of love.**

## Station 4: Pilate's wife

### **Matthew 27:15-23**

Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

~~~~~

Dear wife of the governor, in the rush and confusion of the trial-by-mob, you somehow saw with clarity. You recognized trouble on the horizon and warned of it. But like so many prophets (and so many women), your voice was ignored. You were not Jesus' follower. You did not know him or his teachings. You did not even worship his God. But something in you sought the truth. Something in you was open to divine revelation. Something... and your dream told of it. This man is innocent. This man is different. You didn't have to know Jesus to know truth when you heard it. Dear unnamed voice of reason, when the world is in an uproar, may we listen as you did. May we see with prophetic vision and heed wisdom's warnings.



Alphonse François (1814-1888), *Le Rêve de la femme de Pilate* ("The dream of Pilate's wife").

Prayer of Listening for Truth

Leader: Pilate's wife listened when truth spoke through a dream.

God, where are you asking us to listen more carefully? (silent prayer)

Speak, Lord, Your servants are listening.

People: Speak, Lord. Your servants are listening.

Leader: We walk the way of the cross.

People: Lead us in the way of love.

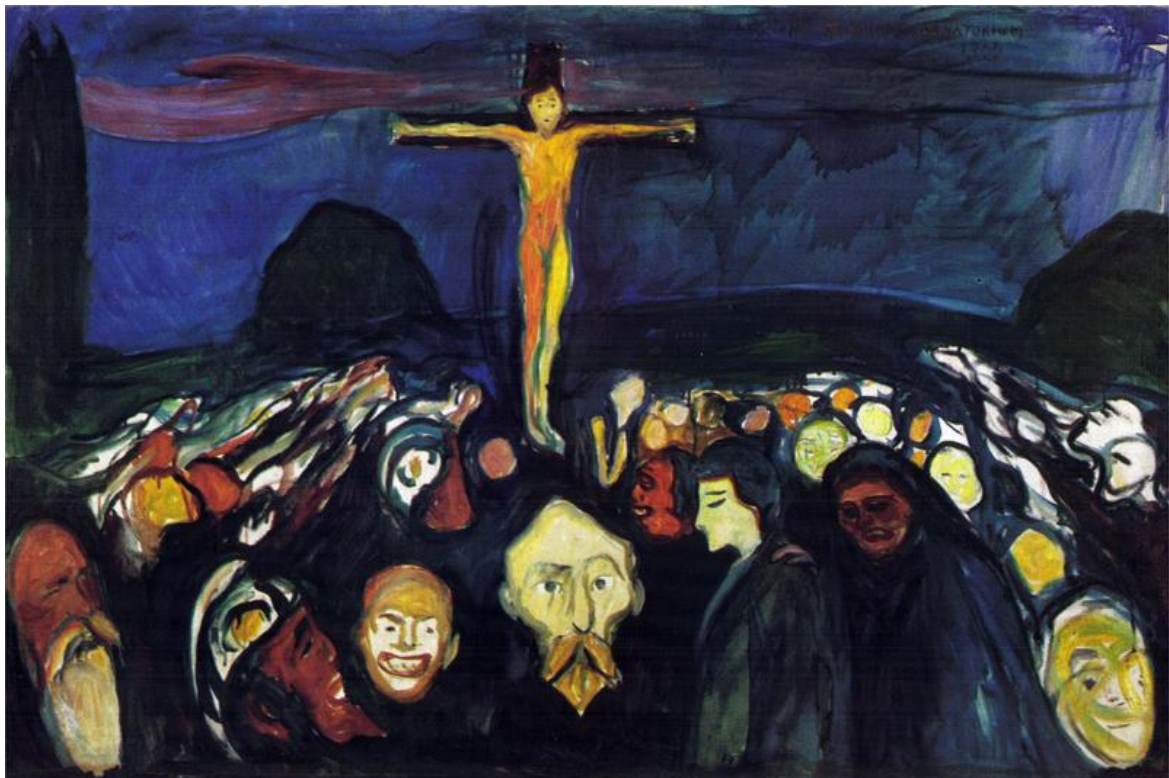
Station 5: Chief Priests

Matthew 27:38-44

Two rebels were crucified with Jesus, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

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Dear chief priests, we do not wish to put ourselves into your shoes. We would rather villainize you and say we would never do such a thing. We would never be so callous. We would never act as you did – so convinced of our own rightness as to manipulate crowds and demand the government do our bidding. We would never fall prey to such jealousy or prioritize comfort over integrity. We would not wield theology like a weapon and rationalize violence in order to push our agenda. We would certainly never deceive ourselves so completely that we could laugh at the suffering of others... Would we? Could we? Have we? Dear religious powers-that-be, we tremblingly admit that we are not so different from you. That you are in us and we are in you. But... we hope and pray that we might choose a different path.



Munch, Edvard, 1863-1944. Golgotha.

## Stone Prayer

Leader: Sometimes our hearts become hard.

Where have I chosen comfort over compassion? (silent prayer)

God, soften our hearts.

**People: God, soften our hearts.**

Leader: We walk the way of the cross.

**People: Lead us in the way of love.**

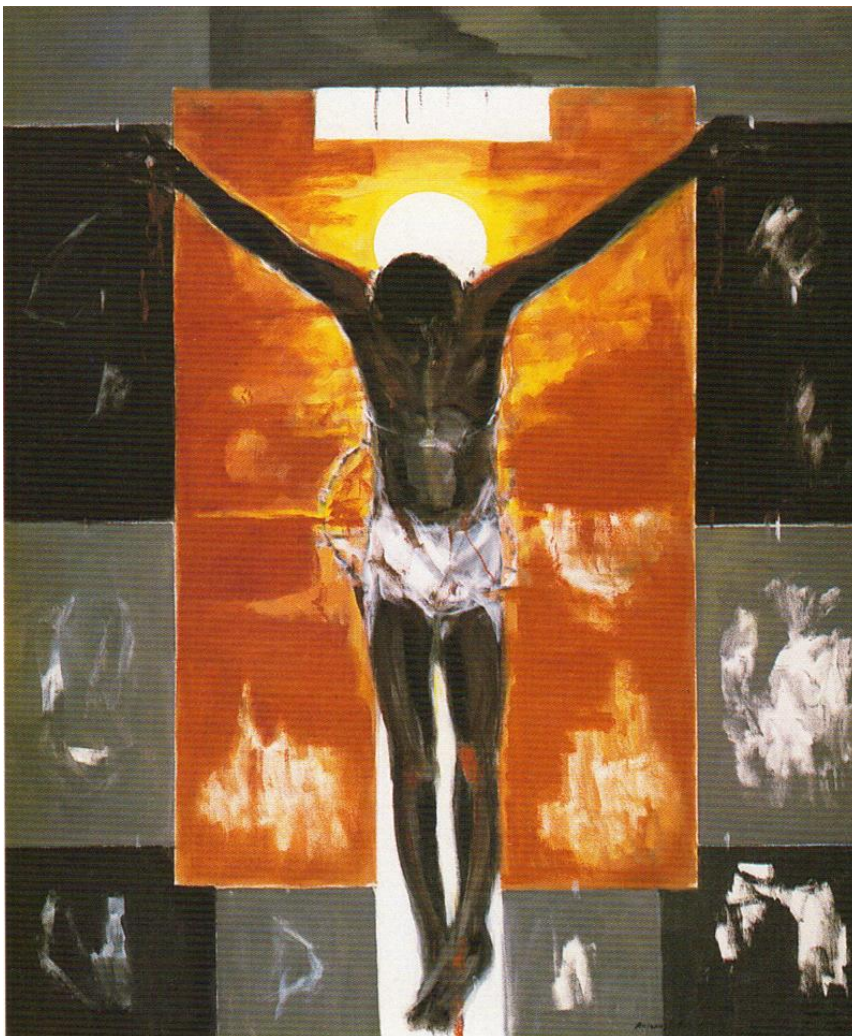
## Station 6: God

### Matthew 27:45-54

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”* (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

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Dear father God, mother God, loving parent God, the agony you must feel in this moment! the heartbreak and anger! “This is my beloved child,” you said of Jesus. And now your beloved child is suffering so. What must it be like for you to hear his last lament, “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and witness the cruelty we are capable of – we who are also yours... Grief-stricken God, was it your anguish which tore the curtain of the temple in two as a person tears their clothing in grief? Was it your thundering sobs that shook the ground and split rocks? Your despair that darkened the sky? For your beloved child breathed his last and only then did we begin to realize that this was God’s son.



Ruiz Anglada, Martin. Cristo Negro.

Prayer of Lament (breath prayer)

Leader: "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"

(inhale) My God... (exhale) ...Why have you forsaken me?

God hears the prayers we cannot finish.

People: God hears the prayers we cannot finish.

Leader: We walk the way of the cross.

People: Lead us in the way of love.

Station 7: Silence

Matthew 27:57-61

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

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Dear silence of Jesus' tomb, when there were no words to express all that had happened, you were there. When Jesus' broken body was tenderly wrapped in cloth and laid on a stony bed, when the great stone door was shut, when night fell and darkness came... Silence. As two Marys watched, as tears fell, as they and Joseph made their way back to their homes... Silence. And there was rest, at last. No more angry crowds shouting. No more cries of pain. No more mocking voices or cracking whips or booming thunder. Silence. Darkness. Rest. And the Spirit did not stir. And the wind did not blow. And the earth did not quake that night. Dear graveside silence, you voiced that which words could not – of depth of loss, and the time needed for the seed of healing to germinate. Dear, holy silence, cradle this grief.



Kossowski, Adam. Stations of the Cross

### Shared Silence (two minutes)

Leader: Let the silence be our prayer. (silent prayer)

Into your hands, O God, we place our grief and our hope.

**People: Into your hands, O God, we place our grief and our hope.**

Leader: We walk the way of the cross.

**People: Lead us in the way of love...**

**Planning team:** Gabe Dodd, Troy Gandy, Ashlee Harris, Kathy Powderly, Anna Ressler, Howard Wittington

**Reflections written by:** Pastor Anna Ressler

**Prayers written by:** Rev. Gabe Dodd

**Readers and Musicians:**

- Station 1: Robinwood Church
- Station 2: Ebenezer AME
- Station 3: Impact Ministries
- Station 4: Zion UCC (readings), Hebron Mennonite (choir)
- Station 5: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Station 6: St. Andrews UMC (readings), Julian Patrick Tete Wabo (solo)
- Station 7: Hub City Vineyard

**Thank you to Hagerstown City Park** for use of their space

**Bulletin cover art:** Moyers, Mike. *What Wondrous Love is This*.

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