

**CHURCHES TOGETHER
IN HAWKHURST**

**GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
AND WALK OF WITNESS**

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH

29TH. MARCH 2024

11.30 AM

The people are all welcomed.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our special service for Good Friday. Today, along with Maundy Thursday and Easter Eve, which comes tomorrow, have been regarded by Christians as the three most solemn days of the year. More than that, these three days are the hinge on which the whole meaning of life and the purpose of the universe turns. It is Good Friday – a strange name for the day. It may come from a contraction of God's Friday - God's special day - which he had planned from the beginning as the only way to heal and mend the mess we have made of his world. All time is here. All people are here. All places meet at this moment.

Our service is going to be in four stations at different places as we walk in procession to Dunks Hall. We are going to walk with Jesus to

the cross and listen to the story and try and step into that story for ourselves. At each stage of the journey there will be a reading and a song to help us. This is the day death died - the death of death.

Here is the special prayer for Good Friday: We pray together:

Almighty Father, look with mercy on this your family for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed and given up into the hands of sinners and to suffer death upon the cross; who is alive and glorified now with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Let us open our worship by singing the song that captures this amazing story of God's love.

HYMN: MY SONG IS LOVE UNKNOWN.

**My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love for me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.
O who am I, that for my sake,
my Lord should take frail flesh and
die?**

**He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow;
but men made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know,
but O my friend, my friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend!**

We gather outside the church for our walk of witness. We stop on the way at a number of Stations.

**1ST STATION - THE UPPER ROOM -
'THIS IS MY BODY'**

It was Thursday night. For Jesus and his twelve disciples it was their Passover meal - a special meal which enables the people of God to remember how God led them out of slavery through the water to freedom. It is an upstairs room, around a low table, candlelit, and with the guests reclining on couches. They had celebrated a meal like this many times in their lives - and at least twice with Jesus himself - but tonight in Jerusalem, this year, this week, it was different. Here is the table all set; with the lamb, the bitter herbs, the salt water and the special bread. Listen to the story. Death passed over them because of the blood on the doorposts all those years ago. Death would pass over them again because of Jesus' death on a wooden post. Jesus is broken like the bread so that in the end death will not be able to break us. He must die so we can live. They shared the bread. We have often shared food together to show that we want to belong to Jesus through his cross. After they sang a hymn they went out and it was night.

HYMN: MY SONG IS LOVE UNKNOWN

**Sometimes they strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King;
then 'Crucify!' is all their breath,**

and for his death they thirst and cry.

**2ND. STATION - THE MIDNIGHT GARDEN
-'WATCH AND PRAY'**

It was midnight in a garden of olive trees. For Jesus and his twelve disciple, now eleven, this was a favourite place - a place for rest, for getting away from the crowd, for prayer; a place of olive trees on a hillside in a secluded garden. They were tired. Listen to what happened as they came to that garden. In the shadow of the trees Jesus knelt in the shadow of death and he accepted it. It was going to hurt but it was to show us that death is only a shadow. A shadow is as dark as the bright light that is blocked by whatever gets in its way. Jesus was going to show us that there is a bright light beyond the shadow of death. To get there He must go through the darkness for us and show us the way. He said 'yes' to death so that it could have no power over him. He said 'I will' to death so it can no longer call the tune. He said '*Your will be done*' so that he might deliver us from the fear of death. The Garden of Gethsemane was the place where they crushed the olives. When we take an olive and crush it slowly in our hands and eat it, we remind ourselves that he was crushed for us and that he swallowed death on our behalf. As for his disciples they ran away from the garden breaking the twigs in their hurry to disappear.

HYMN: MY SONG IS LOVE UNKNOWN

**Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these
themselves displease, and 'gainst
him rise.**

**3RD. STATION - THE CROWDED COURT-
ROOM - 'I AM HE'**

It was early morning. Jesus had been awake all night hustled from one torch-lit room to another. Tied up, bruised, battered and bedraggled. The High Priest had looked for charges in order to get the death sentence passed, but all that had been heard was a confusion of lies. Jesus is then taken to the Roman governor because only he could give permission for a crucifixion. Listen to the story. This was the place of judgment. Here Jesus was condemned. Here they made a pretend king out of the real King. Jesus took all the anger, accusations and curses that the whole human race has ever heaped upon God and he accepted them. He agreed to be the solution to our problem - the sins, the mistakes and mess of our world. He takes it all without appealing against the injustice. He takes it all without appealing for an army of angels. He takes it all without appealing for our pity. The purple robe and crown of thorns remind us that as our servant King he took all our guilt upon himself willingly, so that he might take it into death for us and destroy it.

HYMN: MY SONG IS LOVE UNKNOWN

**They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away;
a murderer they say,
the Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful he to suffering goes,
that he his foes from thence might
free.**

**4TH. STATION - THE LONELY HILLSIDE -
'FORGIVE THEM'**

It was 9 o'clock in the morning. Jesus had been whipped to within an inch of his life. He had staggered with the cross beam as far as he was able. He'd been nailed to the wood and hung up to die. Listen to what happened. What is going on? This isn't the way heroes conquer their enemies. This looks like a defeat not a victory. This looks like losing not winning. Or is it? Only by beating death at its own game could Jesus win. Only by taking all that death could throw at him and not then becoming as bad as death himself, could Jesus overcome death. Only by absorbing death's poison could he create the antidote to death that he could share with all of us. He did this for us.

HYMN: MY SONG IS LOVE UNKNOWN

**In life, no house, no home
my Lord on earth might have:
in death no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heaven was his
home;
but mine the tomb wherein he lay.**

**Here might I stay and sing,
no story so divine,
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.
This is my Friend, in whose sweet
praise
I all my days could gladly spend.**

READING: JOHN 19:17-END.

The crucifixion of Jesus

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, 'Do not write "The King of the Jews", but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.'

Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written.'

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

'Let's not tear it,' they said to one another. 'Let's decide by lot who will get it.'

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, 'They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.'

So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing near by, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The death of Jesus

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his

testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken,' and, as another scripture says, 'They will look on the one they have pierced.'

The burial of Jesus

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about thirty-five kilograms. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was near by, they laid Jesus there.

PRAYERS:

All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have been rescued, Lord, by the lamb sacrificed for us. On this day of terrible mystery and darkness, we look for signs of hope.

We marvel at the pity of your Son for his mother and brother, at the acceptance of his destiny and the fulfilment of his mission.

We are deeply grateful, Father God, that you enabled Jesus to go through his ordeal without your intervention and shared the grief of those around him.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

This is a time of challenge for your Church, loving God.

We give thanks that you have graciously steered it through to this day, despite the twin challenges of the world outside and quarrels within. Bring us together at the foot of the cross in common purpose, so that we may share in the fruits of the salvation of the resurrection.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Create in the world a yearning for the liberation that comes out of the suffering of your Son on the cross, redeeming God.

We ask that in hills and valleys, islands and continents, there can be a true appreciation of the diversity of your creation.

May neighbours seek to know each other rather than distrust one another.

And may the bonds of peace hold sway over the seeds of conflict.

We ask especially for reconciliation
in . . .

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

In our own community we pray for .

..

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Release the sick and suffering from
the burden of pain, we ask, Lord,
and bring them hope of recovery.

Give to those who care for them a
touch of the love your Son showed
on the cross and help them in their
compassion.

We pray especially for . . .

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

May those who have died in the
hope of Christ rest in the peace of
your presence.

Give to mourners the love of friends
and the support of your Church.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

BLESSING:

Christ crucified draw you to himself
that you may find in him a sure

ground for faith, a firm support for
hope and the assurance of sins for-
given. And the blessing of God al-
mighty, the Father, the Son and the
Holy Spirit be amongst you and re-
main with you and with those whom
you love, this day and always.

Amen.

**HYMN: WHEN I SURVEY THE WON-
DROUS CROSS**

**When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
save in the death of Christ, my God:
all the vain things that charm me
most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.**

**See from his head, his hands, his
feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down;
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**Were the whole realm of nature
mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.**

**Please join us for the final Lent
Lunch at the
Baptist Church Hall**