

WAICC Good Friday 2020

In the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, 11am, April 10th



Do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you.
Isaiah 41:10b-c

The Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council invites you to follow the included prayers as you either walk in your neighbourhood or stay at home. Whichever you choose, please consider starting at 11 am on Good Friday to be in solidarity with each other.

Traditionally, Christians have come together on Good Friday to remember the death of Jesus. This year, this is not possible, but perhaps more than ever we need to acknowledge the suffering and fear that exists all around us and to pray for hope, compassion and courage.

*The cross of Jesus' crucifixion is a universal symbol of human suffering. Please take a cross with you on your walk or put one in front of you while you read and pray. You can make a simple cross out of twigs and string such as in the photo or use the attached cross-shaped finger labyrinth. **Please upload a photo of yourself with your cross in WAICC's photo gallery--***
<https://www.waicc.org/upload-photos>*--to show others you were praying with them.*

For those walking, weather permitting: Think of 6 or 7 places where you might stop to read and pray. Along the way, you might also pray for people in their homes.

For those staying at home: Pick a quiet space perhaps with a view. To use the labyrinth, do the opening prayer and song; then put your finger at the start and move it along the path until you reach the number 1. Do the reading and prayer for that stop before moving to the next. Or you can colour the parts of the path in between prayer stops.

Note re songs: If you are not comfortable singing the suggested songs or not familiar with their tunes, please read the words prayerfully or pick your own songs to sing.

WAICC Good Friday Prayers 2020

Opening Prayer: God, we open the door of our hearts to you. In your mercy, lighten our fears. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song: *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield;
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's Destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee;
I will ever give to Thee.

Stop #1: Jesus' Betrayal and Questioning by the High Priest

(John 18:1-5b; 12-14; 19, 24)

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people. The high priest questioned

Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Silent Reflection

Prayer: God, we pray for those who feel betrayed and abandoned because of COVID-19. We lift up those whose businesses are in jeopardy, those who are now unemployed and those who are homeless. Help us support them as they search for the assistance and shelter they need. Amen.

Stop #2: Simon Peter's Denials

(John 18:15-18; 25b-27)

Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter. He replied, "I am not." It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. So they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Silent Reflection

Prayer: God, we pray for those who feel confused by the abrupt change of events. We pray as well for the effect of self-isolation on people's mental health. We lift up those coping with confusion, loneliness, depression, drug addiction and suicidal thoughts. Help us give them hope and the assurance that you are with them. Amen.

Stop #3: Jesus Before Pilate

(John 18:28-38a)

Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

"What is truth?" retorted Pilate.

Silent Reflection

Prayer: God, we thank you for our leaders and medical officers who have had to tell us difficult truths. May everyone heed their words. At this time, we also lift up all healthcare workers: help us do our part to protect them and support them. Guide them as they make difficult decisions for those in their care. Amen.

Stop #4: Jesus Flogged and Tormented

(John 18:38b-19:4)

With this Pilate went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

Silent Reflection

Prayer: God, we are concerned for those who are experiencing domestic violence and child abuse because of family members needing to stay home together. Guard those in danger and help us give them ways to escape from this violence. Help us bring healing to them. Amen.

Stop #5: Jesus Sentenced to Death

(John 19:12b-16a)

But the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

Silent Reflection

Prayer: God, ultimately you are our judge. May we not take for granted the privileges we enjoy even in this time of scarcity and difficulty. Help us work for a more just and equitable world where resources are shared across local and global communities during the pandemic and always. As members of a mostly colonial community, guide us also in our work towards reconciliation. Amen.

Stop #6: The Crucifixion of Jesus

(John 19:16b-18; 28-30)

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. 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.

Silent Reflection

Prayer: God, we lift up those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 directly or indirectly. May they sense your presence and your love as they grieve. Help us bring them comfort and strength. Amen.

If you have any other concerns or fears, please pray about them now or at your next stop.

Closing Scripture Readings:

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you; I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Contemporary Reading: Lockdown

(by Capuchin Franciscan Brother Richard Hendrick, Facebook, March 13th, 2020)

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading fliers with her number

through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Song: *Amazing Grace*

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace, my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come.
'Tis grace that brought us safe thus far,
And grace will lead us home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
This word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Closing Prayer: God, together we have prayed the way of the cross in a turbulent age as a witness to what Jesus lived and died for. You are kind and forgiving, abounding in love to all who call upon you. You hear the cry of those in need. Awaken new life in us as we yearn to do your will and help those in need. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Please enjoy something comforting to eat now such as a hot cross bun.
Consider calling a friend or family member.*

On Easter Sunday, we invite you to ring a bell at 11 am in solidarity with other local Christians.

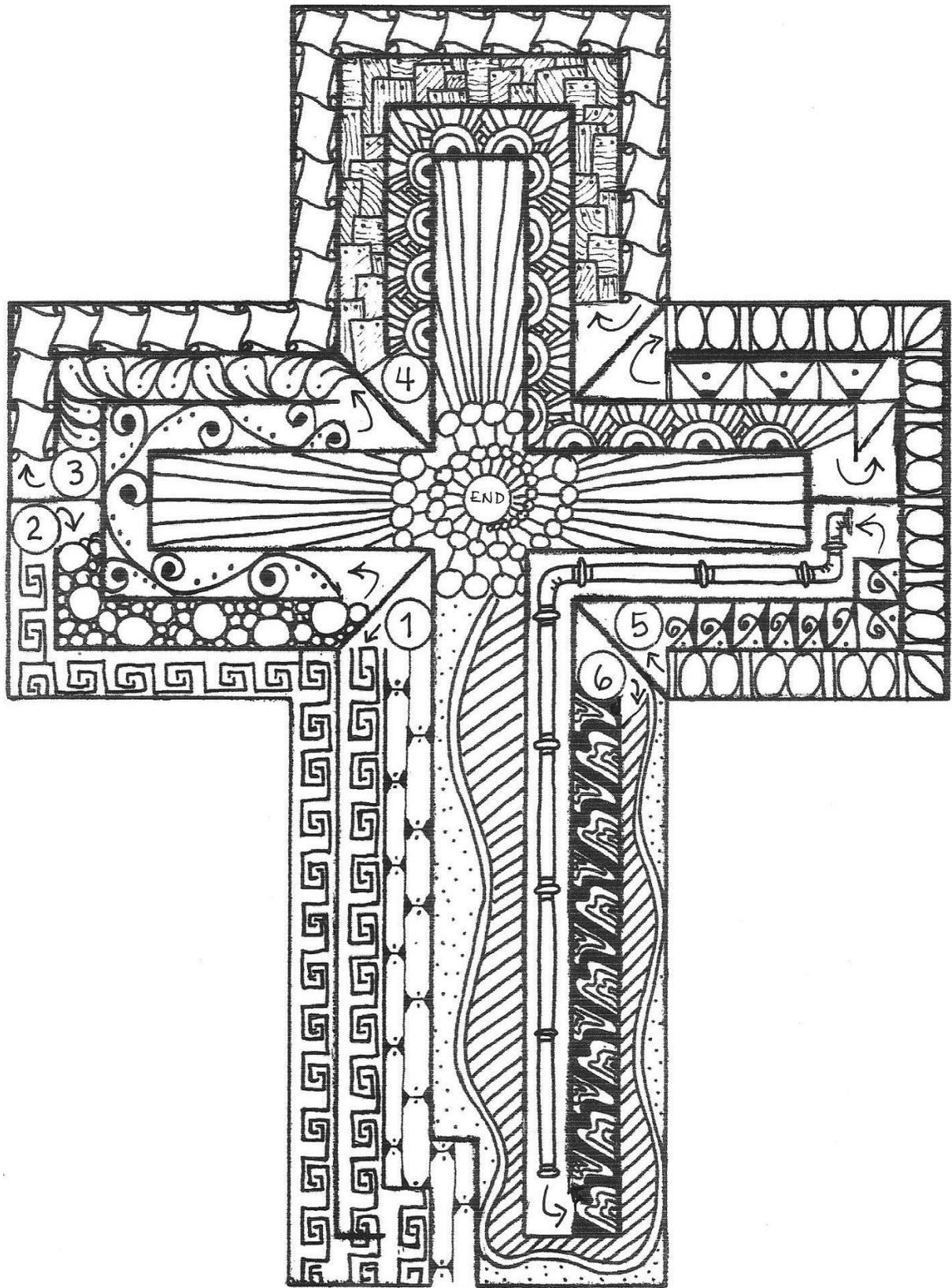
If possible, please share a photo of yourself with your cross or your bell or of any signs of life you see over the weekend. Go to <https://www.waicc.org/upload-photos> for more information and to post your photo.

Whatever you do, may you feel God's presence with you and know that you are not alone this day and the days that follow as this uncertain time continues.

Scripture from the New International Version except for Isaiah 41:10 from the Holman Christian Standard. Twig cross thanks to the Duyan family (Orchard Valley United). Finger labyrinth from "Prayers & Stations of the Cross" (Trinity-All Saints' Anglican, Bala, ON), adapted.

Prayer Resource prepared by Andy Pitter (Orchard Valley) with direction and support from Rev. Sandra Fyfe (St John's Anglican, Wolfville), Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson (North America Interfaith Network), Rev. Dr. Marjorie Lewis (Manning Memorial Chapel, Acadia), Rev. Dr. Roger Prentice (Wolfville Baptist rep), Rev. Dr. Scott Kindred-Barnes (Wolfville Baptist minister), Rev. Dr. Don Flowers (Port Williams Baptist), Nancy Harbers (St Francis Roman Catholic), Gary Hillier (Quakers), and Rev. Don Sellsted (Orchard Valley).

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