

Ipswich Methodist Circuit

Stations of the Cross

Holy Week 2021
29th March – 3rd April



Isaiah says God's servant will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted (Isaiah 52:13). When Jesus was lifted up on the cross at Golgotha, God highly exalted him. Christ is here to lift you up. Experience at your own pace the Way of the Cross through a series of images and readings depicting the Passion Story with accompanying questions for contemplation. We invite you to reflect on the love Jesus modeled for us in his willingness to die on the cross, forever illuminating a path of reconciliation for all humanity. During this time of contemplation, wait and pray for a sign that Christ, who was lifted up and glorified on Good Friday, can lift up your hopes and dreams.

The Stations of the Cross commemorate Christ's last day on earth as a man. The 14 devotions, or stations, focus on specific events of Christ's last day, beginning with Jesus being sentenced to death by Pilate. Eight of the fourteen stations come generally from Scriptures, with the remaining ones being drawn from tradition and legends.

Photography by Rev. Joan Pell in Quebec, Canada:

Stations 7,10: Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré

Stations 1,5,9,12: Grounds of Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré

Stations 2,4,6,14: St. Joseph's Oratory, Montreal

Stations 3,8,13: Grounds of St. Joseph's Oratory, Montreal

Station 11: Grounds of Sanctuaire Notre-Dame-du-Cap, Trois-Rivières

Instructions

1. Optional: Play some quiet music while you walk the Way of the Cross.
2. Start by praying the opening prayer. Then proceed to the first station.
3. At each station, focus on the picture to recall and ponder that specific event from Christ's last day, read the scripture and meditate on the reflection in the leaflet. When you are ready, pray a short prayer of your own, and then proceed to the next station, until you have visited all 14 stations on your mini pilgrimage.
4. Finish by praying the closing prayer.

Opening Prayer

God of life and love, be with me now as I take this journey on the Way of the Cross. As I recall the sacred story of Jesus' life and of his suffering and death on the cross, may I also remember that Jesus lived, died and rose so that we might understand more about you and your mercy and your love of humanity. In your graciousness, bless this holy time as I make this solemn pilgrimage. Amen.

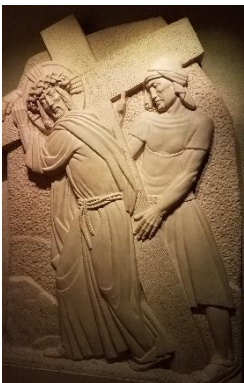
First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death



At daybreak, the chief priests—with the elders, legal experts, and the whole Sanhedrin—formed a plan. They bound Jesus, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus replied, “That’s what you say.” The chief priests were accusing him of many things. Pilate asked him again, “Aren’t you going to answer? What about all these accusations?” But Jesus gave no more answers, so that Pilate marveled. ... Pilate replied, “Then what do you want me to do with the one you call king of the Jews?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Why? What wrong has he done?” They shouted even louder, “Crucify him!” ... Pilate had Jesus whipped, then handed him over to be crucified. *Mark 15:1-5, 12-15*

Contemplate: Not everyone accepted Jesus as the Messiah. When God is doing a new thing, how often do we miss God’s inbreaking into our lives? As we live through this pandemic, what new thing is God trying to birth in you? What old patterns of thinking, feeling and living might God be stretching for you?

Second Station: Jesus Accepts His Cross



The soldiers took Jesus prisoner. Carrying his cross by himself, he went out to a place called Skull Place (in Aramaic, Golgotha). *John 19:17*

Contemplate: Jesus also called us to pick up our crosses and to follow him. Serving others can mean speaking up on their behalf even in the face of opposition and at the expense of personal suffering. We have seen how the coronavirus has disproportionately affected the poor and minority ethnic groups, and with the way vaccines are being rolled out around the world. What are you being called to speak up about or support?

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time



It was certainly our sickness that he carried, and our sufferings that he bore, but we thought him afflicted, struck down by God and tormented. He was pierced because of our rebellions and crushed because of our crimes. He bore the punishment that made us whole; by his wounds we are healed. *Isaiah 53:4-5*

Jesus strains and falls under the weight of a cross that he did not deserve to bear.

Contemplate: Think about a time when you were in temporary physical pain. How did it feel when the pain disappeared? Can you bring that relief to someone else?

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother



Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home. *John 19:25-27*

Contemplate: Think about a relationship that has sustained you throughout much of your life, whether a family relationship or a friendship. How might you honor that person?

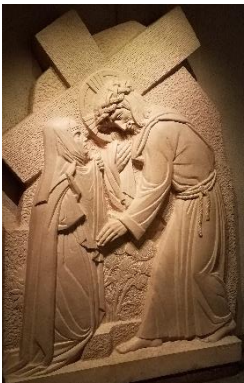
Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus



Simon, a man from Cyrene, Alexander and Rufus' father, was coming in from the countryside. They forced him to carry his [Jesus'] cross. *Mark 15:21*

Contemplate: Think about an instance in which someone else, through word or action, lessened your burden. What is one burden you could lift from a someone's shoulders? Who do you know whose health has deteriorated during the pandemic that you could visit and encourage as restrictions are lifted?

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



Then the king will reply to them, 'I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.' *Matt 25:40*

According to legend, Veronica is a woman of Jerusalem who offers Jesus a profound, if simple, kindness on his sorrowful journey through Jerusalem. She wipes the sweat from his brow. Miraculously, an imprint of Jesus' face remains on the cloth.

Contemplate: Think about a spontaneous act of compassion you have witnessed. Put yourself in the place of the person receiving compassion, then in the place of the person showing compassion. Which is more challenging for you?

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time



[In the Garden of Gethsemane.] Jesus prayed that, if possible, he might be spared the time of suffering. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible. Take this cup of suffering away from me. However—not what I want but what you want." *Mark 14:35b-36*

Jesus, the Son of God, falls again. He is not allowed to rest, but instead is hit and pushed, and compelled to continue. It is in this moment that we can recognize His great love for us.

Contemplate: Have you ever begged God to take something from you and your prayer was not answered in the way you expected? Does time make you think differently about the experience?

Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem



A huge crowd of people followed Jesus, including women, who were mourning and wailing for him. Jesus turned to the women and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t cry for me. Rather, cry for yourselves and your children. The time will come when they will say, ‘Happy are those who are unable to become pregnant, the wombs that never gave birth, and the breasts that never nursed a child.’ Then *they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’* If they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” *Luke 23:27-31*

Contemplate: Jesus, in the depths of his own pain stopped to offer a word to some women. Whose pain can you see? Find a way to offer them some words of encouragement. Ask God to open your eyes to those whose pain or contributions to the world you are overlooking.

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls for the Last Time



I’m no longer in the world, but they are in the world, even as I’m coming to you. Holy Father, watch over them in your name, the name you gave me, that they will be one just as we are one. *John 17:11*

After a painful journey, Christ finally arrives at the foot of Mount Calvary, only to fall once again. Even though he is crushed for a third time by the weight of the cross, His love for us remains.

Contemplate: Think about a news story that has focused on people in an impossible or desperate situation. What prayers can you offer?

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Clothing



The soldiers led Jesus away into the courtyard of the palace known as the governor’s headquarters, and they called together the whole company of soldiers. They dressed him up in a purple robe and twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on him. They saluted him, “Hey! King of the Jews!” Again and again, they struck his head with a stick. They spit on him and knelt before him to honor him. When they finished mocking him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. ... They divided up his clothes, drawing lots for them to determine who would take what. *Mark 15:16-20, 24b*

Contemplate: Have you ever lost your dignity? Or been harassed, teased or bullied? Take a moment to sit with Jesus in his pain. Think about the daily lives of those who have lost their dignity, through a loss of income in this pandemic. What is one small way in which you could help them recover their dignity? Perhaps consider a gift to one of the charities like FIND that are struggling to meet demand.

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross



They also led two other criminals to be executed with Jesus. When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." *Luke 23:32-34*

Contemplate: Jesus' courage and compassion for us is immeasurable. Ask for God's forgiveness for any wounds that you have inflicted on those that you love.

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross



From noon until three in the afternoon the whole earth was dark. At three, Jesus cried out with a loud shout, "*Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani*," which means, "My God, my God, why have you left me?" After hearing him, some standing there said, "Look! He's calling Elijah!" Someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, and put it on a pole. He offered it to Jesus to drink, saying, "Let's see if Elijah will come to take him down." But Jesus let out a loud cry and died. The curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion, who stood facing Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "This man was certainly God's Son." *Mark 15:33-39*

Contemplate: Jesus was lifted up and glorified, He gave all he had for us. Jesus loves you. Take some deep breaths. As you breathe in, say *Jesus loves me*. As you breathe out, say *Thank you Jesus*.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross



Since it was late in the afternoon on Preparation Day, just before the Sabbath, Joseph from Arimathea dared to approach Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. (Joseph was a prominent council member who also eagerly anticipated the coming of God's kingdom.) Pilate wondered if Jesus was already dead. He called the centurion and asked him whether Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that Jesus was dead, Pilate gave the dead body to Joseph. He bought a linen cloth, took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped him in the cloth, ... *Mark 15:42-46a*

Contemplate: Think about a loved one you have lost. What actions keep their memory alive?

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb



... and laid him in a tomb that had been carved out of rock. He rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was buried. *Mark 15:46b-47*

Contemplate: By the cross, Christ has redeemed the world. What hope is in your heart for your future and the world's future? Offer it up in prayer.

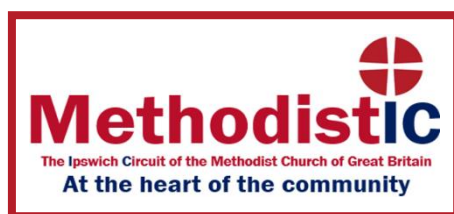
Closing Prayer

Loving God, we believe that in Jesus' life, death and resurrection we have the great sign of hope for the world. In this world, people love with compassion, forgive without regret, and work for justice without counting the cost. May we go this day blessed by your great love, inspired by the selfless love of Jesus, and enlivened with the hope of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God's promises were not broken on Good Friday with Jesus' death.
The Promise was fulfilled on Easter Sunday with his resurrection!
We are Easter people of hope, resurrection and new life.
*May you be blessed this Easter season and every season of your life.
God loves you and so do we.*

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Common English Bible



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Celebrate Easter with us at our video service on Easter Day
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