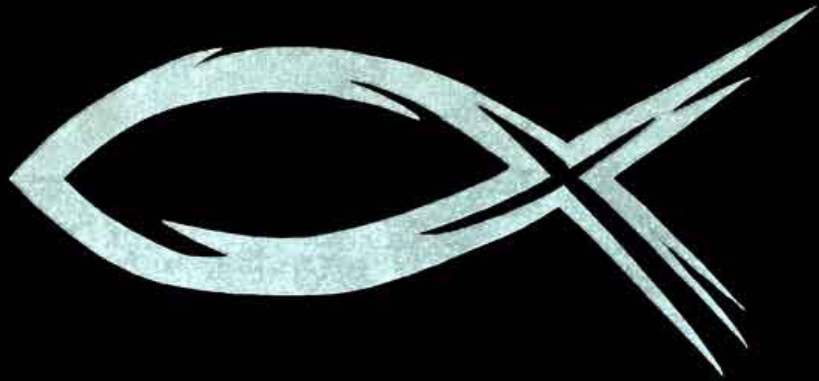


# GOOD FRIDAY

## 9 April 2020



Our Good Friday service is a journey through the stations of the cross with a theme of social justice. We will explore texts from scripture, how they speak to the theme of justice today, and pause to pray at each station. This is a self-guided service using the gospel of John so take your time. It may even help to have a pen and paper ready to make notes.

Accompanying the service is an intergenerational activity that you can do at home very simply. There is also a guided reflection on the website on the verse we have been using in our communications with you, Isaiah 41:10.

Before we begin the stories, understand that this is a sad story. Good Friday is the day Christians remember the death of Jesus at the hands of the Roman authorities. He died between two men condemned as thieves. They may have been condemned criminals, but they didn't deserve that death any more than Jesus.

The story doesn't end here though. Life is always a mixture of light and dark, joy and sadness. We hold onto the good memories in order to get through the challenging times. After the sadness of Good Friday, there is the waiting and watching time of the Saturday when the Jewish people were celebrating the Sabbath and the women were not allowed to tend to Jesus' body. But then comes dawn on Easter Sunday, when the stone has been rolled away, the tomb is empty, and Jesus is risen.

However you understand the story of Easter, we hope you engage with the justice themes that weave their way through the stations. If you are feeling anxious or emotional following the service, please speak to Rev Claire, Megan or Scott. Claire will be available for a zoom discussion on Good Friday at 2-3pm.

Isaiah 41:10

*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 uphold you with my victorious right hand.*

We will begin with a poem by Roddy Hamilton to centre ourselves and focus our minds.

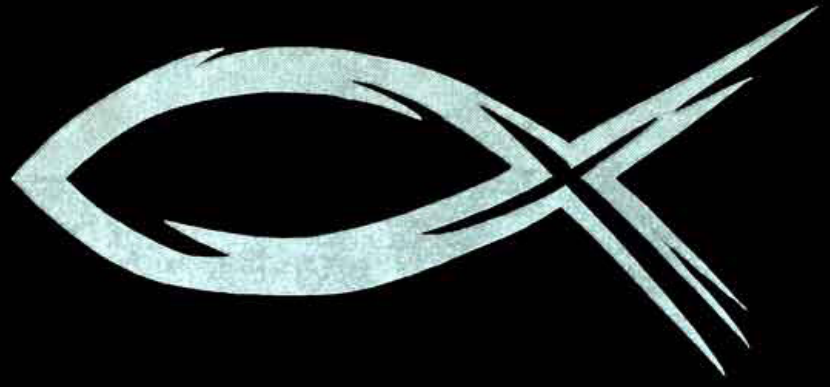
### A Story of Love by Roddy Hamilton

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...."  
John 3:16

gather round  
I have a story to tell  
of one who reached inside himself  
and took a handful of love  
like a pile of stardust  
and said: this is for you  
it is all you need  
it is all you will ever need  
there is enough here  
to change the whole world  
take it

many laughed at him  
mocked him  
and ignored the invitation

but some dared to take it  
and those who did  
noticed something about this love  
they found they could do what the gift-giver could do  
they could stand with the lost  
welcome the traveller  
eat with the hungry  
they found themselves doing what the man first did to them  
give something of themselves to others  
they became like the man  
offering themselves  
and as they offered themselves  
others took the invitation  
and many still do  
and many still trust  
it is enough to change the whole world



## STATION 1: HOSANNA!

We begin with the ringing of Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

### JOHN 12:12-19

“ The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord— the King of Israel!” Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: “Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him. So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. The Pharisees then said to one another, “You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!”

### REFLECTION

How did the people turn so viciously?

They misunderstood who Jesus was – they wanted to be freed from the invasion of Rome just as previous kings and prophets had done in Israel’s history. But Jesus was a man of peace riding a colt or a donkey.

Were they scared of the authorities and so turned on Jesus before they became victims themselves?

What happened to all those people who had been healed by Jesus, the people he had spent time with, eaten with, those who had followed him around the countryside yearning for his teaching?

### PRAYER

God of grace,

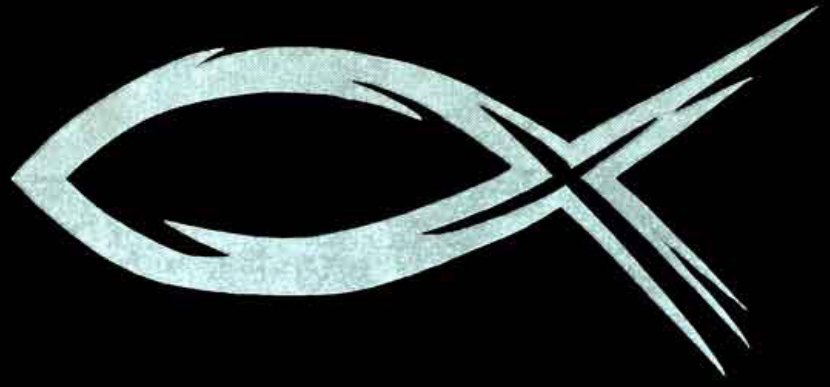
We say we seek your wisdom and yet we allow ourselves to be swept along with popularist leaders and politicians.

We say we are discerning people and yet we allow ourselves to be caught up in the fear generated by the media.

Help us to find those glimpses of light which give us hope

and allow us to acknowledge our fears and work with them.

Amen



## STATION 2: BETRAYAL

### JOHN 18:1-7

Jesus, having prayed this prayer, left with his disciples and crossed over the brook Kidron at a place where there was a garden. He and his disciples entered it.

Judas, his betrayer, knew the place because Jesus and his disciples went there often. So Judas led the way to the garden, and the Roman soldiers and police sent by the high priests and Pharisees followed. They arrived there with lanterns and torches and swords. Jesus, knowing by now everything that was coming down on him, went out and met them. He said, "Who are you after?"

They answered, "Jesus the Nazarene."

He said, "That's me." The soldiers recoiled, totally taken aback. Judas, his betrayer, stood out like a sore thumb.

Jesus asked again, "Who are you after?"

They answered, "Jesus the Nazarene."

### REFLECTION:

Where is everyone?

What about Peter? He will betray Jesus at the courtyard fire 3 times.

Judas executes the ultimate betrayal – why?

The disciples run away when Jesus is arrested.

Who have we betrayed? As a nation? As a global community?

How does this speak to you?

Do you think of climate emergency? Turning back the boats? Playing power games with international aid? Removing people unlawfully from the land? Denying people living with disabilities the basic dignities of life?

### PRAYER:

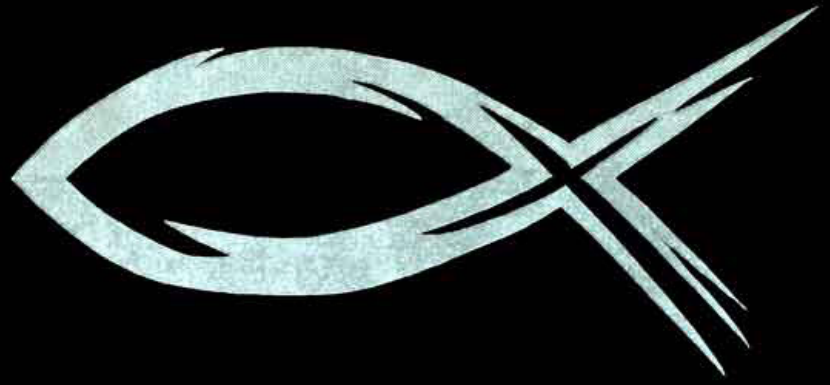
Loving God,

It is easy to point the finger of betrayal at others, much harder to admit our own betrayals.

We remember now the times we have let down others and let down you.

Forgive us, loving God, as people, as a nation, as a world.

Amen



## STATION 3: INJUSTICE

### JOHN 18:33-40

Pilate went back into the palace and called for Jesus. He said, "Are you the 'King of the Jews'?"

Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you this about me?"

Pilate said, "Do I look like a Jew? Your people and your high priests turned you over to me. What did you do?"

"My kingdom," said Jesus, "doesn't consist of what you see around you. If it did, my followers would fight so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. But I'm not that kind of king, not the world's kind of king."

Then Pilate said, "So, are you a king or not?"

Jesus answered, "You tell me. Because I am King, I was born and entered the world so that I could witness to the truth. Everyone who cares for truth, who has any feeling for the truth, recognizes my voice."

Pilate said, "What is truth?"

Then he went back out to the Jews and told them, "I find nothing wrong in this man. It's your custom that I pardon one prisoner at Passover. Do you want me to pardon the 'King of the Jews'?"

They shouted back, "Not this one, but Barabbas!" Barabbas was a Jewish freedom fighter.

### REFLECTION:

No-one can pretend what happened here was just. It was anything but just. Injustice exists around the world in different ways. Some injustice is local, some is global, some is state sanctioned, some is hidden. Jesus stood with those who were treated unjustly. This is where we are called to stand as Christians.

Think about your answers to the last station – go back and read them again.

Where are you called to stand? With whom are you called to stand?

And now consider your motivations for this decision. Is it because the issue also touches you? Do you know someone in the situation? Are you following someone else? Really listen for the spirit to guide you.

### PRAYER:

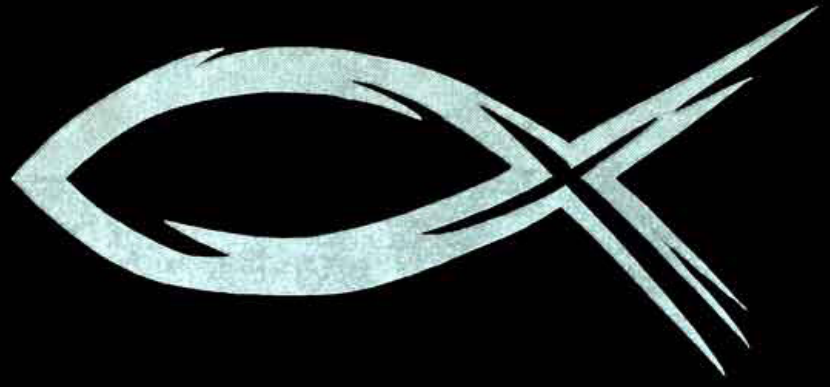
Loving God,

We pray for all survivors of abuse.

We pray for all survivors who have not been able to speak out and still struggle with what happened to them, showing courage in just getting through each day.

Guide us to open our ears and eyes to what's going on around us.

Amen.



## STATION 4: SUFFERING

### JOHN 19:1-6

So Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on his head, threw a purple robe over him, and approached him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they greeted him with slaps in the face.

Pilate went back out again and said to them, "I present him to you, but I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime." Just then Jesus came out wearing the thorn crown and purple robe.

Pilate announced, "Here he is: the Man."

When the high priests and police saw him, they shouted in a frenzy, "Crucify! Crucify!"

### REFLECTION:

The physical suffering of Jesus is unimaginable. But so is the humiliation he endured. Suffering doesn't have to be physically violent to be able to break us. We have seen this in the area of family violence where men and women perpetrate emotional abuse on those they claim to love. But love never hurts. Love is gentle, kind, does not put down other people but builds them up. If it is not like this, it is not love. If this affects you, please seek help from your GP.

### PRAYER:

Loving God,

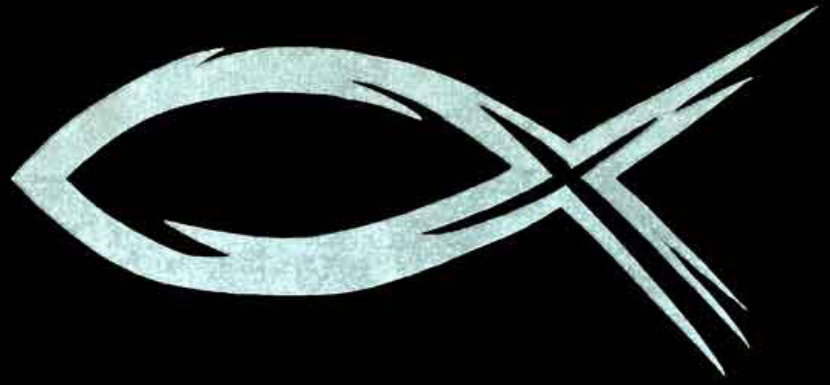
We pray for all those who are suffering,

whether it is physical, emotional, mental or spiritual suffering.

We pray for those who care for them and support them.

Help us to support those who are hurting through the long journey to wellness.

Amen.



## STATION 5: LONELINESS

### JOHN 19:24-27

While the soldiers were looking after themselves, Jesus' mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her. He said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother.

### REFLECTION:

Before covid19, loneliness was identified as one of the developed world's biggest diseases. The UK has a minister assigned by government to look at the impact of loneliness on health and wellbeing. We are all busy living our own lives, in our homes, often just keeping our heads above water. But there are so many people living on their own, for whatever reason, who can't step out to meet people, who can't form relationships with others. Relationships are vital for human wellness and for healthy communities.

How has the physical distancing policy affected you?

How are you able to support others in this safely?

How do we maintain relationships in order that everyone might stay healthy?

Remember, we are all affected in different ways. Please speak to Rev Claire if you need extra support.

### PRAYER:

Loving God,

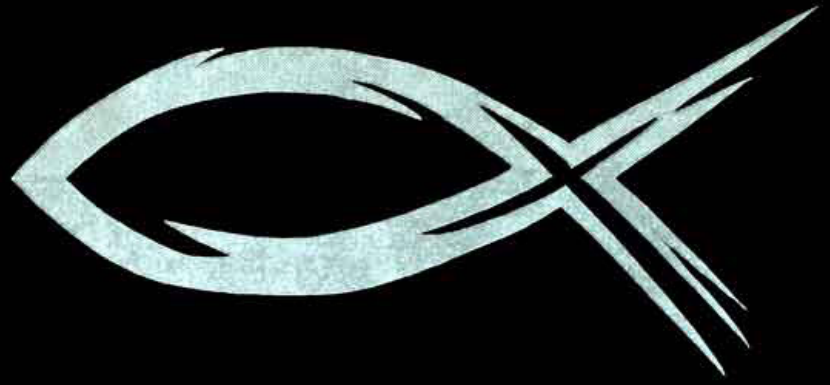
Guide us to those who are feeling lonely.

Guide the lonely to us.

Help us to be open to forming new relationships with people who come into our lives rather than being closed and unwelcoming.

Amen





## STATION 6: VULNERABILITY

### JOHN 19:39-42

Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus at night, came now in broad daylight carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. They took Jesus' body and, following the Jewish burial custom, wrapped it in linen with the spices. There was a garden near the place he was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been placed. So, because it was Sabbath preparation for the Jews and the tomb was convenient, they placed Jesus in it.

### REFLECTION:

When we are well and physically and mentally able, we don't think about our vulnerability, and we often ignore the vulnerability of others. It can make us feel weak, it can embarrass us, it can make us feel uncomfortable. Why? Is it because we don't want to face up to our own vulnerabilities? Is it because we are so good at pretending, we have managed to convince ourselves we are not vulnerable.

### PRAYER:

Loving God,

You made yourself vulnerable for humanity.

You made yourself vulnerable to the taunts and pain inflicted unfairly upon you.

In your vulnerability, you showed the ultimate strength.

Your trusted someone with your physical body, to care for it and thus care for your friends and family.

Help us to find the courage that Nicodemus showed – to bring our own vulnerabilities into the light and so inspire others.

Amen.

This ends the self-guided reflection for Good Friday.

The tomb is closed, the Sabbath begins, the women return to their home. But God is at work, never ceasing, always loving.

Just as the tomb is closed, some of us may feel the same way about our homes at the moment! Remember that God is at work in the world and the story doesn't end here.

Isaiah 41:10

*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 uphold you with my victorious right hand.*