

A Good Friday Experience 2021

Contemplative and Sensory Prayer Stations



Station Guide

This is our fifth year doing these prayer stations. Last year, Covid-19 had just broken out, and we were only able to hold these prayer stations as a virtual event. This year, some of us will gather in the worship space to experience these stations in person while others are not yet comfortable in person and will still share this experience virtually. Some will not be as comfortable sharing the experiences of touch and taste and will choose to observe instead of experiencing them hands-on. However you are experiencing these—virtually or in-person, hands-on or hands-off, we hope you find this experience meaningful, and we pray you connect in new ways to the story of Christ's death and resurrection.

*A Good Friday Experience 2021:
Contemplative and Sensory Prayer Stations
is a gift to you from Kim & Michelle Mehan*

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Welcome!

This booklet is your guide to the journey through the prayer stations.

The stations are numbered. While you are encouraged to process through the stations in the order presented, please feel free to move about the stations as you please. Take as much, or as little, time as you need. Return to a station that touched you. Skip a station that does not speak to you. This is your time to connect with God and experience Christ's presence in Good Friday.

Each station includes a passage from scripture, reflection questions, a visual and tactile representation of part of Christ's journey during the last week of his life, and suggestions for actions you may take to share in this journey. We encourage you to read through the scripture and the reflection questions. Take the actions suggested. If you are following these virtually, you may wish to find items in your own home to help you share in the experiential part of the stations.

We hope that following this experiential prayer journey will be a meaningful part of your Good Friday this year.

(I) The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. (Mark 11:1-11)



Reflection:

When Jesus came into Jerusalem, the crowd was excited and restless. They had heard of Jesus' teaching and miracles, and longed for a leader who would help them drive the Romans from their land. As Jesus rode through the city, they waved palm branches, which were the sign of kings. They took off their cloaks and laid them, along with the palm branches, onto the dusty, dirty road so that the way would be clean for Christ's travel.



Action:

Pick up a palm branch or a jacket or sweater. Think about people for whom you would take off your cloak to create a clean path of travel: A loved one? A world leader? A church leader?

Now, think of those for whom you would be hesitant to throw down your cloak or palm branches. What would make you want to create a clean path for some people and not for others? What makes some deserving and others not?

Recall that the same people who threw down their branches on Sunday were calling for Jesus' crucifixion on Friday. Are we any different?

Prayer: Pray for those you named above. "Lord God, I recognize that there are people for whom I want to create a clean path, and there are others that I would rather let walk on the dusty path. Help me to see my own biases. Help me to find the good in all humanity."

(2) Jesus Eats with His Disciples

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." (Mark 14: 17-25)

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22: 14-20)



Reflection:

Stories of eating are plentiful in the Gospels: feeding the 5000, dinner with Mary & Martha, and eating with the tax collector are just a few examples. Food and fellowship go together.

This meal, however, is different. Jesus knows it is the last time he will sit with the closest of his friends and share a meal. Jesus does something rather unexpected: he takes bread and tells his disciples that it is his body; he takes wine and tells them it is his blood. What must his disciples have thought? What do we think? What does it mean that we are eating and drinking of Christ?

Action:

Take a wrapped piece of bread

Open and eat the bread

The bread represents both the body and blood of Christ

Prayer: Pray for those who are hungry. "Lord God, may the feast you offer be open to all. May those who are hungry of body and soul find the nourishment that only you can provide."

(3) Jesus Washes The Feet of His Disciples

And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (John 13: 2b-17)



Reflection:

In his final days, Jesus continues to teach His disciples what His life and mission is all about. He does so by taking the form of a servant and washing their feet.

Have you ever been the recipient of such a lavish act of love and service? How did it make you feel?

Imagine what it would be like to receive these lavish acts of love from your Savior. Imagine what it would be like to receive these acts of love from your Savior, who knows you are about to betray Him.

Know that this is the kind of love and service Jesus gives us in His death.

Action:

As you are comfortable, wash the hands of another (or contemplate the washing of another's hands.) Pat them dry. How does it feel to serve another? Awkward? Loving? Painful?

Who is the hardest person for you to love right now? It may be a specific person, or a certain group of people.

Ask God to grant you a servant's heart, that you may love all people, even the person you least like right now, as you have first been loved.

Prayer: Pray for the person, or people, you named above. It can be as simple a prayer as "Lord God, surround _____ with your love today."

(4) Jesus Prays in the Garden

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.' Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' (Matthew 26: 36-41)

Reflection:

Are we different from the disciples? Would we not fall asleep when we are tired? Would we stay awake to pray?

Is Jesus not like us? Even he is asking to not go through this trial—his death—even though he knows he must. What trials do you face that you have prayed would pass from you?



Action:

Take a prayer square. Hold it. Stretch it. Squeeze it. How does this tactile expression of prayer help you to feel God's presence? How does it make you feel that someone prayed for you in this moment as s/he crafted this prayer square?

Use one of the prayer labyrinths. (More information on labyrinths can be found on the flyers on the tables.) Take one of the labyrinths to a quiet place in the worship space or find one that is set up. Walk the path of the labyrinth with your finger, using this time to focus on your prayer. How does this experience of prayer make you feel? Feel to take one of the paper labyrinths with you to use.

Please take a prayer square with you as you feel moved. Take one to share with someone you know who is need of prayer.

Prayer: Pray with Christ. What cups have you asked God to pass from you? Have you received the response you desired? "Lord God, I do not wish to face _____. Please let this cup pass from me. Yet, it is your will, not mine, that should be. If I must face it, walk with me, guide me, comfort me, and protect me."

(5) The Crown of Thorns

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matthew 27:28- 29)

And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. (Mark 15: 17-19)

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. (John 19:1-3)



Reflection:

Jesus received a crown of thorns and a royal-looking robe, both of which served to humiliate him. He was also brutally whipped and spat upon. He accepted these things for our sake.

Is there anyone in your life for whom you would be willing to experience this same pain and humiliation?

Know that the love you feel for that person is the same kind of love Jesus—our Savior, God's Son—feels for you.

Action:

Find the thorns. Think about the pain that it can induce. Feel the silk. Note the contrast between the soft and smooth texture with the sharp thorns. How do we experience these contrasts in our own life with Christ? What are the thorns? What is the silk?

Prayer: Thank Jesus for enduring the pain on the cross. "Lord God, your love for me, and for this world, caused you to endure pain, suffering, and humiliation. Thank you for bearing these things on my behalf."

(6) The Cross & The Nails

Then (Pilate) handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. (John 19:16-18)



Reflection:

Jesus took his cross upon his shoulders, and carried it through the streets alone.

Consider how Jesus might have felt carrying this cross through the crowded streets. Lonely? Angry? Bitter? Determined?

Recall a time when you felt all alone and weighed down by burdens. One of the gifts given to us in Jesus' life and death is the assurance that He has experienced the highest of highs (life with God) and lowest of lows (crucifixion, betrayal, suffering). Even when we feel lonely and weighed down, we can trust that Jesus is present. He does not flee in times of trouble, but stays by our side, offering comfort, hope, and love.



Action:

Stand, kneel, or sit, at the foot of the cross. Feel its texture.

Pick up a nail. Feel its weight and point. How would it feel for the nail to be thrust through your wrists?

Hammer one of the nails into the cross. Think of the weight of your own sinfulness. Imagine yourself nailing Christ to the cross.

Contemplate the cross and think of a specific burden in your life. See Jesus taking the burden of your sin off your back and placing it upon himself.

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for God's gracious gift through Christ: "Lord God, thank you for the gift of your Son, and His ever-present love and care. Help me to trust in His faithfulness and love, even when it feels as though I'm all alone. Amen".

Take a nail with you to remind you of the burden Christ took upon himself for you.

Prayer: Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for God's gracious gift through Christ: "Lord God, thank you for the gift of your Son and His ever-present love and care. Help me to trust in His faithfulness and love, even when it feels as though I'm all alone."

(7) Christ's Seven Last Words

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "This is your mother." (John 19:26-27)

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)

"I thirst." (John 19:28)

"It is finished." (John 19:30)

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46)



Reflection:

As Jesus hangs upon the cross, he speaks. He speaks of forgiving those who put him to death. He speaks of his own needs. He speaks of the forgiveness of those hung with him. In the gospels, he speaks a total of seven times—known to many as the Seven Last Words.

How do these Seven Last Words speak to you?

Action:

Watch some or all of the images clipped from "The Passion of the Christ" and given a black & white makeover. Though several of these words are read at other stations, here we see them coming from the mouth of Christ—hanging on the cross, breathing his last.

How does watching these images differ from the other experiences you have had tonight—touching the crown of thorns versus seeing it on his head, seeing Christ speak of his thirst versus tasting the sour wine for yourself. Is one experience more powerful than another? Do they complement one another to give you a more complete understanding? Why do you think you feel the way you do about the experiences?

Prayer: We pray for all those experiencing life differently today, "Lord God, it seems each day we wake up to more hard news: politics, health crises, natural disasters, and more. We don't know what to do or where to turn, except to turn to you. May your words speak to us now like they have never spoken to us before."

(8) The Sour Wine

When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. (Matthew 27:47-48)

And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' (Mark 15:36)

The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" (Luke 23:36-37)

(Jesus said) 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. (John 19:28b-29)



Reflection:

Just the night before, Jesus offered his disciples a drink. "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 26: 27 -28) Now, Jesus is hanging from the cross, and he is thirsty. He asks for a drink. What is he offered to quench his thirst? Bitter wine. Vinegar. As if he had not endured enough. He took on more bitterness, and he continued to reach out in love to all those around him.

Have you had a time when you were already feeling low and someone said or did something that hurt even more? How did you treat others when you were already down? Did you show love and humility? Christ did. When it seemed as if it couldn't get worse—that he was humiliated and beaten and stripped of his clothes and his humanity—he was given a taste of bitter wine to further humiliate him. Christ still spoke of love even in the midst of all his suffering and humiliation.

Action: Dip a Q-tip into the vinegar. Take a moment to breathe in the scent. Then place a drop on your tongue.

Remember the bitter times you've had in your life.

Prayer: Pray that God will carry you through the tough times that will come and prevent you from becoming bitter toward others. "Lord God, I know you have experienced the best and the worst of this world. Help me to endure in times of trial, and to always share your love with others, no matter what comes."

(9) The Distracting Dice

And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots.
(Matthew 27:35)

And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. (Mark 15:24)

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. (Luke 23:34)

So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." (John 19:24)



Reflection:

The soldiers gambled for Jesus' robe, ignoring the Son of God who hung above them. They were easily distracted from the very important thing happening right in front of them.

What in your life serves to distract you from the work and presence of God?



Action:

Roll a single die.

Whatever number comes up, silently name that many distractions that keep you from focusing on God.

Prayer: Confess these distractions to God, and ask that God would empower you to focus on Christ instead: "Lord God, I know that I am easily distracted from you and your will. I confess these distractions to you, and pray for your forgiveness and direction."

(10) The Tomb

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. (Matthew 27:57-61)

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:38-42)

Reflection:

Jesus has traveled from the cheering crowds to the jeering crowds and is now in silence. An empty tomb. Hewn of stone. Dark. Cold. How has this journey made you feel? Hold this place, even while knowing that Sunday is coming.



Action:

Pick a stone from the table. Hold it. Feel its surface, its weight. Is it hot or cold? What happens to it as you hold it?

What must the tomb be like? Heavy stone covering the entrance. Cold and hard inside. Dark. Is this dark cold hard the end?

We wait for Sunday....

Prayer: Pray for those who feel as if they are in the tomb, perhaps even yourself as we remain sheltered-in-place, “Lord God, comfort those who are lonely and feel cold and dark.”

(11) The Spices

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. (Mark 16:1)

Reflection:

Christ died on Friday. There was no time to prepare his body for the tomb, for it was the Sabbath. But the women were ready to go early Sunday morning and prepare the body—the body that was already in the tomb. They were bringing the spices—the same spices that were delivered to the baby Jesus by wise men from afar. The spices that would try to hide the stench of death.

How do we try to hide the stench of death? How often do you hear that someone has passed away? Gone home? Gone to meet their Lord? How often do we try to avoid discussion of death? How many of us have been left ill-prepared for the death of a loved one because we simply don't want to discuss it?

Practice saying the words died and dead. Jesus died. Your loved one is dead. Death is a part of life. The good news is that in Christ, we have the promise that death is not the final word. But covering the stench does not make it go away.



Action:

Close your eyes and breathe in the scent of the frankincense and myrrh. At Jesus' birth, the wise men brought these spices from the East. But these are the spices of death. They are the spices in which the body is covered to keep the stench of death at bay.

What are the scent of these spices covering in your life? What would you like them to cover? What would happen if you dealt with the stench instead of covering it?

Prayer: Say a prayer for the dead and dying among us. "Lord God, in these difficult times when we cannot gather together to mourn, be with all those who are mourning that they may not be alone in their grief but find comfort in the virtual arms of others and in your arms."

MISSION STATEMENT

**With the birth of Jesus in our hearts
we carry light and love to the world.**

OUR VALUES STATEMENT

We recognize that we are not here by chance but are gathered together to be the church of God in Christ. We recognize that God is making us, through grace, into a fellowship that embodies and expresses the spirit of Christ. In this fellowship *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of us are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28)*. We therefore welcome equally all people, regardless of religious office, position, possessions, education, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental ability, physical ability or other distinctions. (Adopted 9/7/07)

**NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEEKI WACHEE
A CONGREGATION OF THE FLORIDA-BAHAMAS SYNOD OF
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