



Resource Centre

From our Churches

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Into Human Hands

Called to the Cross, Shaped by the Cross
A Service for Good Friday

Explanation

This Good Friday service was designed to tie in with the theme of worship followed by many Mennonite churches throughout the 2011 Lent season: "Becoming Human: Called and Shaped by Jesus". The service proceeds back and forth between readings, songs, and prayers accompanied by candles being extinguished (7 smaller candles plus a Christ candle). You may choose to use one or more Scripture reader. The Scripture readers can also be the ones to extinguish the candles. The prayers of confession that accompany each extinguishing could be read from within the midst of the congregation by someone holding a microphone.

The hymns listed have been chosen from the Hymnal: A Worship Book, Sing the Story and Sing the Journey, but many others could be chosen in their place. There are many songs in this service; consider using soloists or small groups at some points.

Opening Words

Throughout the season of Lent, we have been walking with Jesus to this moment, to this day. We have reflected on how we are being called by Jesus and shaped by Jesus to fulfill that calling. As we walk through Jesus' life with him, we cannot ignore Good Friday. We come here today to remember not only Jesus' life, but the hour of his death. Today we are called to the cross and invited to consider how our lives are shaped by that cross that today evokes pain, but that on Sunday will stand empty.

As all of Jesus' followers were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." And they were greatly distressed (cf. Mt 17:22-23).

Today we bring our own humanity to this time of worship and remember, with grief and confession, the human responses to Jesus in his darkest and most vulnerable hour.

Prayer

Most holy God,
We open our hands to you,
bringing every inch of ourselves to you.

This day we remember the hands that hurt your beloved son.
And we confess the times when our hands, or words, or actions, have also caused
pain.

Wait with us in this sad hour.

Watch with us.

And walk with us into your promise

We pray in the name of the crucified One, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn: What wondrous love is this (vv 1, 2) – HWB 530

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-46

Hymn: Stay with me – HWB 242

Scripture: Matthew 26:47-50

Candle of Betrayal

(These prayers can be read by a voice from within the congregation)

Lord Jesus Christ,
In human voices you heard betrayal.

(Candle is extinguished)

Have mercy on us.

Hymn: Were you there *when a friend betrayed our Lord?* – tune of HWB 257 (1 verse)

Scripture: Matthew 26:51-56a

Candle of Violence

Lord Jesus Christ,
In human hands you found violence.

(Candle is extinguished)

Have mercy on us.

Hymn: Were you there *when he put away the sword?* – tune of HWB 257 (1 verse)

Scripture: Matthew 26:56b

Candle of Abandonment

Lord Jesus Christ,
From human hearts you experienced abandonment.

(Candle is extinguished)

Have mercy on us.

Hymn: Were you there *when they left him all alone?* – tune of HWB 257 (1 verse)

Scripture: Matthew 26:57-68

Candle of Arrogance

Lord Jesus Christ,
In human words, you heard arrogance.

(Candle is extinguished)

Have mercy on us.

Hymn: Kyrie (HWB 152 or 144 or SS 68 or SJ 47)

Scripture: Matthew 26:69-75

Candle of Shame

Lord Jesus Christ,
In human eyes, you saw shame.

(Candle is extinguished)

Have mercy on us.

Hymn: When we are tempted – SS 81

Scripture: Matthew 27:1-5, 11-26

Candle of Denied Blame

Lord Jesus Christ,
In human intentions, you saw blame being denied.

(Candle is extinguished)

Have mercy on us.

Scripture: Matthew 27:27-31

Hymn: O sacred Head, now wounded – HWB 252

Scripture: Matthew 27:32-43

Candle of Disdain

Lord Jesus Christ,
In human actions, you experienced deep disdain.

(Candle is extinguished)

Have mercy on us.

Hymn: Have mercy on us, Lord – SS 67

Scripture: Luke 23:39-43

Hymn: Jesus remember me – HWB 247

Scripture: Matthew 27:45-50

Christ Candle

(Candle is extinguished)

(Moment of silence)

Scripture: Matthew 27:51-54

Hymn: When I survey – HWB 260

Called to the Table, Called to the Cross

Commemorating the Lord's Supper and Praying by the Cross

Before the cross, we consider the inhumanity hidden within us. Because of the forgiveness and strength that we receive at Christ's table, we shed that inhumanity and become fully human, made in God's image to love and serve.

Instructions: *If possible, you may wish to give people an opportunity, after coming forward to receive communion, to pause to pray at a cross on the way back to their seats. You can even invite them to feel the shape of it with their hands, and to consider prayerfully how the love that Jesus demonstrated is shaping them.*

Scripture: Matthew 27:55-61

Words of Sending

The women went home after seeing where Jesus' body had been laid, to prepare for the Sabbath. We will also leave this place now, and carry the events of this day with us as we prepare for what we know will come on Sunday morning.

Go forth as God's loved and forgiven people and wait in hope for the revelation of God's power and glory.

Close with Jude 24-25

Leave in silence