**Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases…**

**…yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.**

The passion of the Christ  
according to Saint Matthew

The Passion according to St Matthew

*A Service Order for Passion Sunday or Good Friday*

*About this service*

This service order around the passion narrative of Matthew is based on those which have been used for a number of years at the Congregation of Mark the Evangelist (Uniting Church, North Melbourne) and is shared in the hope that it might be of use to others. If used on Passion Sunday, it would be useful for worshipful preparation for Holy Week or, if used on Good Friday, as a culmination of that week. The service has a strong penitential feel, with a repeated Kyrie/Trisagion punctuating the narrative.

The text of Matthew used in this order is the NRSV, reproduced here in accordance with the copyright requirements of its publisher.

The service is rather ‘wordy’, and Matthew’s passion narrative is somewhat longer than the other Gospels’; a few suggestions for ‘dramatic’ action to engage other senses are included in the order but you might consider others – perhaps including printed or projected images – as well as how the less literarily engaged (children, etc.) might be enabled to participate.

The service is similar in many respects to the previously published [The Passion according to St Luke – A Service Order](http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/illuminating-liturgy-the-passion-according-to-st-luke-a-service-order/). The text, of course, is different and – in some places – significantly so. Many of the interspersed hymns and psalms are the same as those in the Luke order, although several options are provided. A weakness in this is the ‘repetitiveness’ of the service from year to year; a strength is the familiarity brought by regularly hearing the different narratives in a similar liturgical structure with recognisable prayers and familiar hymns. It is up to local worship leaders to adapt the service to find an appropriate balance of new and old for local tastes and needs.

It is assumed that the service will include a Eucharist; the basic elements of this part of the service are included in the order. Even if this does not fall on a Holy Communion Sunday/Friday for your local context, consider making an exception here for the significance of the occasion.

*The Voices*

The narrative is arranged to be read by four voices. This is the simplest arrangement for reading, collapsing several different speakers in Matthew’s text into DISCIPLES and OPPONENTS. If you have the space and the speakers, some of the smaller parts could be allocated to other readers.

The voices are:

NARRATOR: Most of the background detail (approximately 63 appearances); the narrative section headings should not be read. The Narrator also reads PILATE to save having a fifth reader with only a few lines.

JESUS: The words of Jesus (approximately 20 [longer] appearances)

DISCIPLES: Peter and the others, the confessing centurion (approximately 8 appearances)

OPPONENTS: Religious leaders, Judas, others (approximately 27 appearances)

*Preparing for the service*

* Start the preparation early! In particular, if you want to order music resources for the service, allow sufficient time for them to come (see ‘*Music Resources*’ below).
* Decide which of the options in the service you will take and delete what is not needed to give yourself a clear working text.
* Suggested prayers and other comments are made in a light grey font; use or adapt these as you see fit.
* Pew sheets or projection pages should only include the headings for the readings and other guides to the flow of the service; delete the narrative text, the red-text directions and the suggested liturgist’s prayers for the purpose of printed pew sheets or projected guides.
* The text of the service order in this document has been formatted with a font size suitable for pew sheet printing at a ‘two pages per (A4) sheet’ setting.
* Assign the voices in the narrative to readers.
* There are a few suggestions for dramatic actions interspersed in the text; assign responsibility for these if you are going to use them, and add others as seems appropriate to you, and gather such items as will be required (a musical triangle, coins, hammer, etc.)
* Each reader will need the full text of the passion narrative.
* A practice reading before the service would be ideal, to allow the readers to get used to the flow of the text; some modifications of the text might be appropriate (e.g., using a name in place of an ambiguous ‘he’). A rehearsal will also allow you to check where people need to stand in order best to be heard. It might be worth considering having NARRATOR and JESUS stand at the same location/microphone; this may improve the sense of drama and dialogue Jesus has with DISCIPLES and OPPONENTS standing at another, distant speaking point. In a few places the text has been greyed-out, usually where it is unnecessary for a dramatic reading.
* The reading of the passion narrative is punctuated by a series of prayers and hymns or psalms. Suggested prayers are included in light grey font in the document; these are intended to be read by the worship leader/liturgist. The final section of the narrative is somewhat longer the earlier ones.
* A general text for the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving is supplied, built around themes and language borrowed from the ‘Servant Songs’ of Isaiah 40-55. The general intercessions (‘Prayers of the People’) are incorporated into the Great Prayer for this service. If you don’t include Holy Communion, these prayers will need to be inserted at an appropriate point; they might also be included by expanding the suggested prayerful responses at the various stages of the narrative.
* Allowing for periods of silence is an important part of a service like this. The worship leader should consider where periods of silence might be appropriate; one possibility would be at the beginning of each of the short prayers interspersed through the narrative.
* Used ‘as is’, the service will run for 70-75 minutes; Matthew’s passion narrative is longer than that of Mark and Luke. The time will vary, of course, according to whether you include Holy Communion, and the length of hymns and prayers and periods of silence you might include.

*Music Resources*

* Online resources: most of the online resources suggested in the service notes in this document can be found by a link in the text itself (that is, [cmd/ctrl+]click on the text to see the online resource).
* The hymns and musical settings in the order are only suggestions; their appropriateness will depend largely on the tastes and musical abilities of your congregation. Feel free to change this as you think necessary.
* Several of the hymns and psalms would lend themselves to being sung by a choir if you have one. The service would also be a good opportunity to convene a small *ad hoc* choir if you don’t usually have one.
* It might be worth convening a session with the congregation a week or two before the service in order to learn a new piece or two in preparation for this service (hymn, communion setting, Trisagion, etc.).
* Music in the service is from:
  + TIS: *Together in Song* (HarperCollins*Religious,* 1999);
  + PCS: *The Psalter: Psalms and Canticles for Singing* (Westminster/John Knox, 1993);
  + WTC: *The Way of the Cross* (RSCM, 2007).
  + The music for the Trisagion included in the order of service is available free for worship use [here](http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/illuminating-liturgy-a-trisagion-for-lent/).

Of course, some of the music will be available in other resources, and substitutions can be made from your local resources.

Introduction to the Service

This service order is set around the passion narrative of The Gospel according to Matthew. The reading of the narrative is broken up by a number of psalms, hymns and prayers as meditative responses to the story, with a ‘Lord, have mercy’ refrain inviting us into confession as we find ourselves caught up in the story of Jesus. Congregational responses are printed in ***bold italics***.

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[Musical Prelude]

*The Word Spoken: Scripture*

Introduction

Service Note: If the service will not include the Eucharist, the above heading should be changed to ‘A Service of the Word’.

Insert here advice as to how the service will commence (‘stand for procession’, etc., according to local custom)

The worship leader or another reader could read the following introduction from Isaiah.

A shorter alternative to the Isaiah 53 text could be:

The stone that the builders rejected

***has become the chief cornerstone.***

This is the Lord’s doing;

***it is marvellous in our eyes.*** *Psalm 118.22-23*

Blessed is the kingdom of the Father

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

***Amen.***

From Isaiah 53…

Who has believed what we have heard?  
   And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
   and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
   nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.  
3 He was despised and rejected by others;  
   a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;  
and as one from whom others hide their faces[\*](javascript:void(0);)  
   he was despised, and we held him of no account.

4 Surely he has borne our infirmities  
   and carried our diseases;  
yet we accounted him stricken,  
   struck down by God, and afflicted.  
5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
   crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,  
   and by his bruises we are healed.  
6 All we like sheep have gone astray;  
   we have all turned to our own way,  
and the Lord has laid on him  
   the iniquity of us all.

…12 Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,  
   and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;  
because he poured out himself to death,  
   and was numbered with the transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
   and made intercession for the transgressors.

*Isaiah 53*

Service Note: The following introduction and prayer to be said by the worship leader:

We gather to reflect together on a remarkable thing:

that God has taken the broken and rejected body of one of us – Jesus of Nazareth – and now uses it for the healing of the world.

What a God, who does such a thing!

The mystery of God is not that God is invisible, or merely too big for our thoughts,

but that God is able to reach into the brokenness of our lives

and to haul newness and life out of what is dying.

*[Let us pray…]*

Prayer of Invocation

Is it truly so, gracious God,

that we have an interest in the death of Jesus?

Is it truly so that we, who caused the pain of the righteous one

are actually healed by what he endured from us?

Is it truly so that Jesus’ death at our hands can become a source of life for us, because you will that it be so?

We believe that it is.

And so we gather again to hear the story of divine wisdom in what sounds like foolishness.

In our songs, in our prayers, in our thoughts together and the thoughts we keep to ourselves, be present to us.

Help us to see ever more clearly.

Help us to understand ever more thoroughly.

Help us to discover ourselves gathered up in your loving arms

as once again we hear the story

of the Christ who died for us.

This we ask in his name. Amen.

**Hymn** 341 My song is love unknown (vv 1-3, 6,7)

* *Or* TIS 332 The royal banners forward go
* *Or* TIS 331 Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle

With the Children

Service Note: This provides an opportunity to explain the nature and purpose of this service

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…instead of that picture of the Bible as a book held in the hands of a solitary reader alone in a room, have in your mind another kind of picture, one in which somebody is proclaiming God’s story to a gathering of diverse people – and all of them asking themselves, and asking one another, ‘How do we find ourselves in this? How are we going to be renewed together by this reading?’

Rowan Williams

*The Passion of the Christ according to St Matthew*

*Matthew 26.3-27.54*

NARRATOR 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. 5 But they said,

OPPONENTS: ‘Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.’

The Anointing at Bethany

NARRATOR: 6 Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. 8 But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said,

OPPONENTS: ‘Why this waste? 9 For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.’

NARRATOR: 10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them,

JESUS:        ‘Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. 11 For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. 12 By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. 13 Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.’

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

NARRATOR: 14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, ‘What will you give me if I betray him to you?’ They paid him thirty pieces of silver.

Action: Scatter a handful of coins over the Communion Table

16 And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

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Psalm 22.10-15

Service Note: This could be read responsively (as below) or sung, with possible settings including TIS 9 and PCS 15 or 16.

10 On you I was cast from my birth,  
 ***and since my mother bore me you have been my God.***11 Do not be far from me,  
 ***for trouble is near  
    and there is no one to help.***

12 Many bulls encircle me,  
 ***strong bulls of Bashan surround me;***13 they open wide their mouths at me,  
 ***like a ravening and roaring lion.***

14 I am poured out like water,  
   ***and all my bones are out of joint;*** my heart is like wax;  
    ***it is melted within my breast;***  
15 my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
   and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
 ***you lay me in the dust of death.*** *NRSV*

Prayer

We give you thanks, passionate God, for your prodigal love in Jesus.

In him came one with healing hands,

although he would himself

be made to suffer.

In him came the Word which gives life,

although he was met with

words which brought death.

Forgive us our confused hearing of your word,

our uncertain hearing of your call to life.

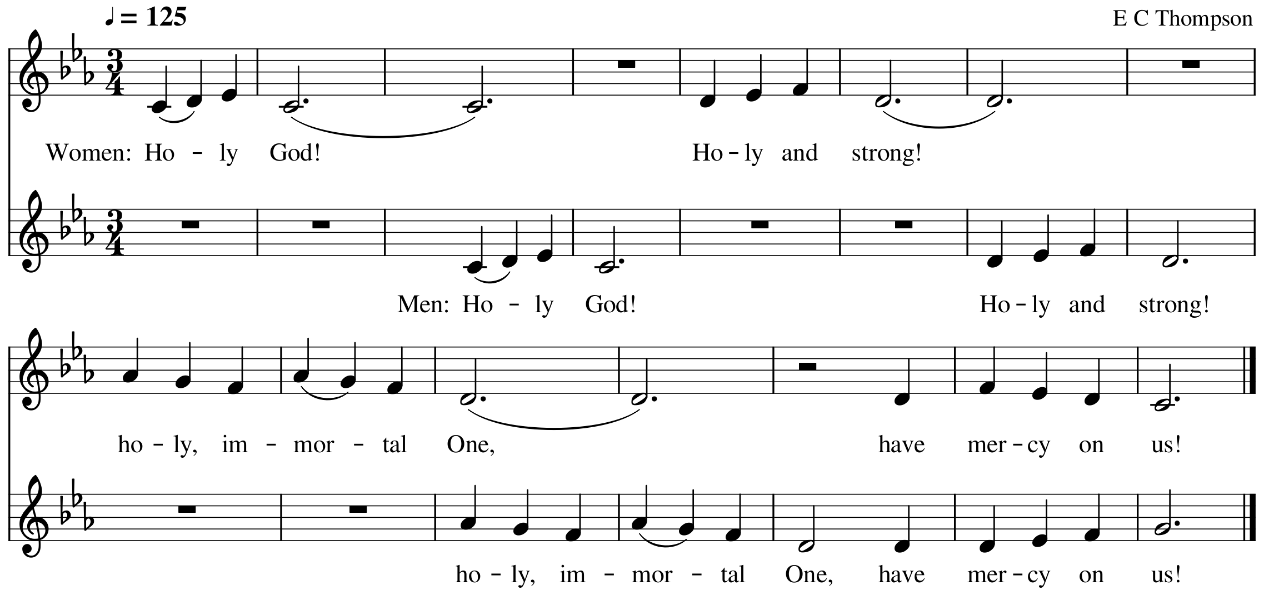
Strengthen us when trouble is near

and it seems there is no one to help.

Passionate God, have mercy on us.

Service Note: A Kyrie or Trisagion is appropriate for each of the prayer interludes – the same sung response each time. Possibilities include one of the several Kyries in TIS (see the Communion Settings, TIS 756+). TIS 736 is also a simple Kyrie, perhaps for this purpose sung through just once but alternating the ‘Kyrie’ and ‘Christe’ for the three musical phrases. A Trisagion is provided below; the accompaniment can be found on the *Illuminating Faith* [web pages](http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/illuminating-liturgy-a-trisagion-for-lent/). Another simple Trisagion can be found in WTC, p.3.

Service Note: The words of the Kyrie/Trisagion should be printed at each prayer point.



*(Sung:)*

Holy God, (holy God)

holy and strong, (holy and strong)

holy, immortal One, (holy, immortal One)

have mercy on us!

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The Passover with the Disciples

NARRATOR: 17 On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying,

DISCIPLES: ‘Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?’

JESUS: 18 ~~He said,~~ ‘Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’ ‘

NARRATOR: 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

Action: Bring forth and place the Communion elements on Table

20 When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; 21 and while they were eating, he said,

JESUS: ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.’

NARRATOR: 22 And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another,

DISCIPLES: ‘Surely not I, Lord?’

NARRATOR: 23 He answered,

JESUS: ‘The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.’

NARRATOR: 25 Judas, who betrayed him, said,

OPPONENTS: ‘Surely not I, Rabbi?’

JESUS: He replied, ‘You have said so.’

The Institution of the Lord’s Supper

NARRATOR: 26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said,

JESUS: ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’

NARRATOR: 27 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying,

JESUS: ‘Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’

Peter’s Denial Foretold

NARRATOR: 30 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus said to them,

JESUS: ‘You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written,

‘I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

32 But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.’

NARRATOR: 33Peter said to him,

DISCIPLES: ‘Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.’

NARRATOR: 34 Jesus said to him,

JESUS: ‘Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.’

NARRATOR: 35 Peter said to him,

DISCIPLES: ‘Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.’

Action: Sound a musical triangle three times

NARRATOR: And so said all the disciples.

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Prayer

We give you thanks, gifting God, that in Jesus you have given us yourself, even given up your body for us.

When Christ offered us the bread and the cup as the signs of his life soon to be given up, he gave us also the signs by which our relationship to you was now to stand.

Forgive us when, indifferent to your giving of yourself to us, we hesitate to give ourselves for you.

Forgive us when, hearing you speak our name, we refuse to speak yours in return.

Strengthen us when the call comes

to give ourselves for you

in response to the needs of others.

Gifting God, have mercy on us.

Service Note: Insert the words of the Kyrie or Trisagion here, if not using the suggested setting

*(Sung:)*

Holy God, (holy God)

holy and strong, (holy and strong)

holy, immortal One, (holy, immortal One)

have mercy on us!

--------------------

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

NARRATOR: 36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples,

JESUS: ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’

NARRATOR: 37 He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. 38 Then he said to them,

JESUS: ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.’

NARRATOR: 39 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed,

JESUS: ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.’

NARRATOR: 40 Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter,

JESUS: ‘So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? 41 Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’

NARRATOR: 42 Again he went away for the second time and prayed,

JESUS: ‘My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.’

MICHAEL : 43 Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. 45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them,

JESUS: ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.’

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

NARRATOR: 47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying,

OPPONENTS: ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.’

NARRATOR: 49 At once he came up to Jesus and said,

OPPONENTS: ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’

NARRATOR: and kissed him. 50 Jesus said to him,

JESUS: ‘Friend, do what you are here to do.’

NARRATOR: Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. 51 Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him,

JESUS: ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?’

~~At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,~~ ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. 56 But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.’

NARRATOR: 55 Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

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Psalm 69.6-15

Service Note: Options include TIS 39 or a responsive reading (below)

6 Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me,

   O Lord God of hosts;

***do not let those who seek you be dishonoured because of me,***

***O God of Israel.***

7 It is for your sake that I have borne reproach,

***that shame has covered my face.***

8 I have become a stranger to my kindred,

***an alien to my mother’s children.***

9 It is zeal for your house that has consumed me;

***the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.***

10 When I humbled my soul with fasting,[\*](javascript:void(0);)

***they insulted me for doing so.***

11 When I made sackcloth my clothing,

***I became a byword to them.***

12 I am the subject of gossip for those who sit in the gate,

***and the drunkards make songs about me.***

13 But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord.

***At an acceptable time, O God,***

***in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me.***

With your faithful help 14rescue me

***from sinking in the mire;***

let me be delivered from my enemies

***and from the deep waters.***

15 Do not let the flood sweep over me,

***or the deep swallow me up,***

***or the Pit close its mouth over me.*** *NRSV*

Prayer

We give you thanks, faithful God,

that your Son Jesus remained obedient to your call.

Not relishing the thought of death, he nevertheless remained true.

Forgive us, that though we are called simply to watch and wait while Jesus prays, even this can be too much for us sometimes.

Forgive us when you seem to us powerless before other gods and authorities, and we take up swords to defend you, or we flee the powers and abandon you in terror.

Strengthen us in the face of all

which threatens to overwhelm us.

Faithful God, have mercy on us.

Service Note: Insert the words of the Kyrie or Trisagion here, if not using the suggested setting

Holy God, (holy God)

holy and strong, (holy and strong)

holy, immortal One, (holy, immortal One)

have mercy on us!

--------------------

Jesus before the Council

NARRATOR: 57 Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. 58 But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, 60 but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward 61 and said,

OPPONENTS: ‘This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ ‘

NARRATOR: 62 The high priest stood up and said,

OPPONENTS: ‘Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?’

NARRATOR: 63 But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him,

OPPONENTS: ‘I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.’

NARRATOR: 64 Jesus said to him,

JESUS: ‘You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.’

NARRATOR: 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,

OPPONENTS: ‘He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66 What is your verdict?’

NARRATOR: They answered, ‘He deserves death.’ 67 Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, 68 saying,

OPPONENTS: ‘Prophesy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?’

Peter Denies Jesus

NARRATOR: 69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said,

OPPONENTS: ‘You also were with Jesus the Galilean.’

NARRATOR: 70 But he denied it before all of them, saying,

DISCIPLES: ‘I do not know what you are talking about.’

Action: Sound triangle once

NARRATOR: 71 When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders,

OPPONENTS: ‘This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.’

NARRATOR: 72 Again he denied it with an oath,

DISCIPLES: ‘I do not know the man.’

Action: Sound triangle twice

NARRATOR: 73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter,

OPPONENTS: ‘Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.’

NARRATOR: 74 Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath,

DISCIPLES: ‘I do not know the man!’

Action: Sound triangle three times

NARRATOR: At that moment the cock crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: ‘Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.

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**Hymn** 340 Before the cock crew.

Service Note: An alternative could be the hymn, ‘Drop, drop slow tears,’ sung by either congregration or choir. A free version of the music is [here](http://www.cpdl.org/wiki/images/0/08/DROP.pdf).

Prayer

We give you thanks, God of truth, for Jesus’ testimony to the truth in the country towns and in the halls of power.

Where our voice would vary and falter with the changing circumstances, his was steady and even, pointing always to your coming kingdom.

Forgive us when, given the chance, we fail in our testimony to you.

Forgive us when it seems that to be known as yours is undesirable, and to seem not to be yours is the way we prefer it.

Strengthen us when the time comes

to speak the truth, whatever the cost.

God of truth, have mercy on us.

Service Note: Insert the words of the Kyrie or Trisagion here, if not using the suggested setting

Holy God, (holy God)

holy and strong, (holy and strong)

holy, immortal One, (holy, immortal One)

have mercy on us!

--------------------

Jesus before Pilate

NARRATOR: **27** When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. 2 They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

The Suicide of Judas

NARRATOR: 3 When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. 4 He said,

OPPONENTS: ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’

NARRATOR: But they said, ‘What is that to us? See to it yourself.’ 5

Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. 6 But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.’

7 After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. 8 For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah,

‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, 10 and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.’

Pilate Questions Jesus

NARRATOR: 11 Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him,

OPPONENTS: ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’

NARRATOR: Jesus said,

JESUS: ‘You say so.’

NARRATOR: 12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. 13 Then Pilate said to him,

OPPONENTS: ‘Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?’

NARRATOR: 14 But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Barabbas or Jesus?

NARRATOR: 15 Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. 17 So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them,

OPPONENTS: ‘Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?’

NARRATOR: 18 For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. 19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, ‘Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.’

20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. 21 The governor again said to them,

OPPONENTS: ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’

NARRATOR: And they said, ‘Barabbas.’

OPPONENTS: 22 Pilate said to them, ‘Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’

NARRATOR: All of them said, ‘Let him be crucified!’

23 Then he asked,

OPPONENTS: ‘Why, what evil has he done?’

NARRATOR: But they shouted all the more, ‘Let him be crucified!’

Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified

NARRATOR: 24 So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,

OPPONENTS: ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’

NARRATOR: 25 Then the people as a whole answered,

OPPONENTS:  ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’

NARRATOR: 26 So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

NARRATOR: 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 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,

OPPONENTS: ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’

NARRATOR: 30 They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. 31 After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

NARRATOR: 32 As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), 34 they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. 35 And when they had crucified him, …

Action: ‘Knocks’ loudly with a hammer four times on wood (block, floor) for the four nails

…they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; 36 then they sat down there and kept watch over him. 37 Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, ‘This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.’

38 Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads 40 and saying,

OPPONENTS: ‘You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’

NARRATOR: 41 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying,

OPPONENTS: 42 ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’ ‘

NARRATOR: 44 The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

NARRATOR: 45 From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 46 And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice,

JESUS: ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’

NARRATOR: that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

47 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,

OPPONENTS: ‘This man is calling for Elijah.’

NARRATOR: 48 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. 49 But the others said,

OPPONENTS: ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.’

NARRATOR: 50 Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. 54 Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said,

DISCIPLES: ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’

**Hymn** 497 Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Service Note: This hymn provides a transition to the Eucharist. If the Eucharist is not being celebrated, an alternative such as TIS 324 (‘When I survey the wondrous cross’) would be appropriate, followed by general intercessions/Prayers of the People). Other possibilities include TIS 256 ‘From heaven you came’ and TIS 357 ‘When his time was over’.

* *Or* If the service does not include the Eucharist, Hymn TIS 332 The royal banners forward go would also be appropriate, if not already used to open the service.

The following is a fifth prayer response, for the case where the Eucharist is not being celebrated:

We give you thanks, Great God our Father,

that Jesus stood firm to the very end.

Though mocked as a king, the royal robe and crown of thorns are more kingly than anything by which we might bedeck ourselves.

We were there when they crucified him;

we were there when they nailed him to the tree;

we were there when they pierced him in the side.

Hardly a way to treat a king…

Service Note: ‘...to treat a king…’ is the cue for a final sung Kyrie/Trisagion, after which the service (if without Eucharist) moves to the general intercessions (the prayers of the people); the text for the Kyrie/Trisagion should be included here.

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*The Visible Word: Eucharist*

The Invitation

Jesus says,

I am the bread of life.

Those who come to me shall not hunger,

and those who believe in me shall never thirst.

No one who comes to me will I cast out. John 6.35

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

***And also with you.***

Lift up your hearts.

***We lift them to the Lord.***

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God,

The world began when you

marked off the heavens with a span,

measured the waters in the hollow of your hand

and gave breath to the people upon it.

By grace you formed a Servant people

to declare your praise.

You took them by the hand and kept them,

yet their sin grew large

and their iniquities became a weariness to you.

In your deep desire to set things right

you sent another Servant

whom you upheld

and in whom your heart delighted.

You put your spirit upon him

and gave him as light to your people

and to the nations.

He was made to suffer,

a man of sorrows, wounded for others’ transgressions.

Yet you counted him among the great

and made him a great intercession

for transgressors.

Therefore, we join together with choirs of angels

and the faithful of every age,

to sing the eternal hymn:

Service Note: This layout includes the responses (said or sung) in typical form: Santus/Benedictus, ‘Christ has died’, ‘Glory and honour’ and the Agnus Dei; these responses will need to be adapted if fewer responses or a particular musical setting is used.

Service Note: Liturgist to incorporate general intercessions into the Great Prayer here, or locate them elsewhere if the Eucharist is not celebrated in the service

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

***Hosanna in the highest.***

*(The prayer continues…)*

We give thanks to you, God our Father, that,

at his last supper, the Lord Jesus took bread,

and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,

‘This is my body, which is for you;

do this for the remembrance of me.’

In the same way,

he took the cup after supper and said,

‘this cup is the new covenant in my blood;

do this for the remembrance of me.’

With this bread and cup

we celebrate Jesus’ death and resurrection,

and look to his coming again.

Great is the mystery of faith.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

(The prayer continues…)

God of all power, send your Holy Spirit upon us

and upon this bread and wine,

that this may be a true remembrance:

a sharing in Christ, body and blood.

And grant that, being joined together in Christ Jesus,

we may become united in faith

and in all things

become mature in the one who is our head.

Blessing and honour, glory and power

are yours forever more.

Service Note: If the general intercessions (prayers of the people) are to be incorporated into the Great Prayer, they should be inserted here, leading into the Lord’s Prayer. The following is a brief model:

Gracious God, it is in this unity with Christ that we are bold to bring before you our prayers for ourselves, this world, and your church.

And so…

we pray for the unity of the Church in witness and proclamation of the Gospel…

We pray for […this congregation, its members and ministries]

*Lord, in your mercy,* ***hear our prayer.***

We pray for the peace and stability of all peoples  
and for the leaders of the nations.

We pray for [particular places and events]

*Lord, in your mercy,* ***hear our prayer.***

We pray for a blessing on our homes;  
for our relations and friends and all whom we love …  
*Lord, in your mercy,* ***hear our prayer.***

We pray for the sick and suffering and all who minister to their needs …

We pray for [particular persons in need within congregation, etc.]  
*Lord, in your mercy,* ***hear our prayer.***

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,

to your protection, O God,

and joining our prayers with the prayers of Jesus,

we are confident to pray as he has taught us…

The Lord’s Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,***

***hallowed be your name,your kingdom come,your will be done,***

***on earth as in heaven.***

***Give us today our daily bread.Forgive us our sins,***

***as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial***

***and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours***

***now and for ever. Amen.***

The Breaking of the Bread

Service Note: as the bread is broken and the cup is lifted up:

Though broken by us,

Christ is given for us:

food for sinners,

bread of joy.

Though poured out by us,

Christ is caught in the cup of life,

given to revive

the faint-hearted.

The gifts of God, for the people of God…

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sin, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

The Communion

**Offering and prayers of the people**

**Hymn** 342 When I survey the wondrous cross

* *Or* If not used previously: 353 The glory of our king was seen
* *Or*  349 In the cross of Christ I glory
* *Or* 351Lift high the cross
* *Or ‘It is a thing most wonderful’ (*[*various sources*](https://hymnary.org/text/it_is_a_thing_most_wonderful)*)*

Blessing and Dismissal

May Christ our crucified Saviour draw you to himself,

that you may find in him the assurance of sins forgiven

and the gift of eternal life; . .

and the blessing of God…

**[Musical Postlude]**

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