



*The entombment of Christ – Caravaggio, 1603*

Congregational responses are printed in bold type

**WELCOME**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Surely, he has borne our griefs  
**and carried our sorrows.**

Yet we esteemed him stricken,  
**smitten by God, and afflicted.**

Isaiah 53

**HYMN: TIS 342**

When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the death of Christ my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were a present far too small:  
love so amazing, so divine  
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts  
1674-1748

## PRAYERS OF GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

*On this day the earth stands still,  
the sun withholds its rays,  
and all is quiet.*

*As we contemplate the death of God.  
God crucified, dead and buried.*

*Let us pray:*

O God of heaven and earth,  
God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,  
God of the prophets,  
God for whom we long  
but who we trust will not come too close.

We do not expect you to enter into our human reality  
in such a way,  
through the shame and humiliation of the cross,  
through its utter degradation.  
Surely you could have chosen a better way,  
a less confronting way O God?

But you did not.  
The humiliation, the abandonment  
of the one you call Son  
confronts us with ourselves.

Confronts us with our systems of punishments and rewards,  
our systems of racial and national and other purities,  
our measures of success,  
our thoughts about what is wise,  
and what is foolishness.  
Confronts with our readiness still to crucify,  
both far away and closer to home.

But you will not be mocked, O God.  
In Christ you hang before us on the tree.  
You mock us,  
and our systems of so-called justice,  
our firmly-fixed ideas about you,  
our sense of what is important,  
and you confront us with our true need,  
and offer us redemption from these things.

O God on this day, as we remember the Passion of our Lord,  
grant us your grace,  
that we may come to comprehend more deeply  
this self-giving we find in him,  
this one who called you Father  
and invites us to do so too.

May we know the divine peace which he knew  
and so also be known as Jesus' disciples,  
and sons and daughters of God.

In his name we pray. **Amen**

### **SERVICE OF THE WORD**

Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet;  
**A light to our path**

Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah 52. 13 – 53. 12

Epistle: Hebrews 10. 16-25

The word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Mark. 14. 43 – 15. 47

*The reading of the Passion will be interspersed with the singing of  
the hymn My love is love unknown.*

My song is love unknown,  
my Saviour's love to me,  
love to the loveless shown,  
that they might lovely be.  
O who am I  
that for my sake  
my Lord should take  
frail flesh, and die?

He came from his blest throne  
salvation to bestow:  
but all made strange, and none  
the longed-for Christ would know.  
But O my friend!  
my friend indeed,  
who at my need  
his life did spend.

Sometimes they strew his way  
and his sweet praises sing,  
resounding all the day  
hosannas to their King.  
Then 'Crucify!'  
is all their breath  
and for his death  
they thirst and cry.

Why, what has my Lord done?  
What makes this rage and spite?  
He made the lame to run,  
he gave the blind their sight.  
Sweet injuries!  
Yet they at these  
themselves displease,  
and 'gainst him rise.

They rise and needs will have  
my dear Lord made away;  
a murderer they save;  
the Prince of life they slay.  
Yet cheerful he  
to suffering goes,  
that he his foes  
from thence might free.

The Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

In life, no house, no home  
my Lord on earth might have;  
in death, no friendly tomb  
but what a stranger gave.  
What may I say?  
Heaven was his home;  
but mine the tomb  
wherein he lay.

**SERMON**

**HYMN: TIS 356**

Here hangs a man discarded,  
a scarecrow hoisted high,  
a nonsense pointing nowhere  
to all who hurry by.

Can such a clown of sorrows  
still bring a useful word  
where faith and love seem phantoms  
and every hope absurd?

Can he give help or comfort  
to lives by comfort bound,

where drums of dazzling progress  
give strangely hollow sound?

Life emptied of all meaning,  
drained out in bleak distress,  
can share in broken silence  
my deepest emptiness;

and love that freely entered  
the pit of life's despair  
can name our hidden darkness  
and suffer with us there.

Christ, in our darkness risen,  
help all who long for light  
to hold the hand of promise  
and walk into the night.

Brian Arthur Wren  
1936-

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

### **HYMN: TIS 341**

Here might I stay and sing,  
no story so divine;  
never was love, dear King,  
never was grief like thine.  
This is my friend,  
in whose sweet praise  
I all my days  
could gladly spend.

Samuel Crossman  
1624-84 *alt.*

*Please leave in silence.*

*Our service concludes without benediction  
and continues on Sunday morning at 10.00am.*

*Between then and now we contemplate our Lord's passion and what this means for us and our world.*

## **POSTLUDE**

*You can find a copy of today's sermon along with other congregational information on the church website.*

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Three Marys at the foot of the cross ~ 14<sup>th</sup> century, Italian