

ENTERING THE PASSION OF JESUS

“The Garden: Risking Temptation” Week Six of Lent April 5, 2020

Lighting the Sixth Lenten Candle

We light this sixth Lenten candle to shine a light on ourselves in the story of the passion of Jesus.

**May this light illumine our path as we walk alongside Jesus
and others who walked with him, that together we may experience expanded
insight and transformation along the way.**

Entering the Story Crossing the Threshold

Peggy: During Lent, we have taken six weeks to move through one week—the last week of Jesus’ human life. This has allowed us to expand time—to “freeze frame” important moments and dig deeper into our faith story, and our own stories. This morning marks the end of Lent and the beginning of our commemoration of Holy Week, and so let us speed up time a bit as we first remember the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem.



Opening Responsive Hymn/Song

All Glory, Laud and Honor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhbYS31TYbs>

We found our place in the parade and considered OUR place in the picture—our role as supporters of Jesus’ mission in the world. And then we found ourselves during the chaos and throngs of people in Jerusalem for the Passover. We stopped there...



suspending the action for a moment, wondering how we could join Jesus in clearing out our own lives and hearts, our own places of worship, to make them a more welcoming place for the love of God to reside fully.



We followed Jesus as he continued to teach in the city and among the people at the temple. His teachings filled our hearts as they filled those long ago, and we remembered the call to proclaim justice in the midst of injustice wherever we find it.



We joined the disciples at a table of extravagant affection and overflowing love, and then another supper in which all our assumptions about the way the world works were turned upside-down.



This week, we join Jesus in the Garden



Gethsemane is the moment when a chain of events begins that cannot be halted. Once Jesus is taken into custody, there is no going back. So we pause a moment with him in the garden just before his arrest, and we feel with him the temptations that arise when facing difficult circumstances—to run, hide, use whatever power we have to change things, fight it, perhaps even bargain with God. We walk among the sleepy disciples who just can't grasp what is about to happen.

Enter
Enter the story
Enter the place you belong
Not just looking on
For this is *your* story
Enter the story

Prayer of Confession

Here we are, Jesus.
We find ourselves alongside you in a garden of grief
that so many of this world endure.
We are tired. We don't know what to do next.
And so, we sleep sometimes,
hoping to awake from a bad dream.
Forgive us, O God.
Help us face this hour
knowing you are always here.
You only ask the same of us... to be present, to be awake.
God of Love you enter our story again and again.
May we have the courage to enter fully into the story
of your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Enter
Enter the passion
Enter the place we belong
Not just looking on
For this is *our* passion
Enter the passion
[tag] Enter the story...
Enter the passion...
Enter his passion.

Assurance of Pardon and Entering the Passion of Jesus

Know this: We can open to let the story remind us
that no matter what we face, or how we struggle to meet the demand of the moment,
second chances are possible.
You are embraced and freed,
encouraged and loved
by a God who wants you to live fully.
Let us enter the passion of Christ.

Getting Perspective

Telling the Story

Holy Creator

**We will dare to join the journey.
We will walk your loving way.
We will live your sacred story,
Through the things we do and say.
Amen.**

Time with the Gospel

Mark 14: 32-36

(Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane)

Let's enter the story. Jesus and his disciples walked to a place called Gethsemane—a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives. He told his disciples, "Sit here while I go pray."

Peter and two others walked with Jesus a little way. Then Jesus told them, "Stay here and keep watch." Then Jesus went to a spot, lay down face-first and said to God, "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering away from me. However, not what I want, but what you want."

Jesus stood up and walked over to the disciples. He found them sleeping. "Couldn't you stay awake with me for one hour?" he asked.

Two more times he walked over by himself. Two more times he lay down face-first to pray. Two more times he stood up and walked back to find the disciples sleeping.

One of Jesus' closest friends, Judas Iscariot, led soldiers to the garden. As they marched in, Jesus could have tried to run. But Jesus stood and said, "Friend, do what you have come to do."

Jesus could have done things the easy way and tried to run when he had the chance. But he did not give in. Instead, he chose to do things God's way, and it would change the world! Jesus could pray any place, any time. Still, even Jesus had special places

where he felt especially close with God, and the garden of Gethsemane was one of those places.

Prayer after Reading
Loving God,
Help us live your story,
By daring to celebrate Jesus
Wherever we are.
Hosanna.
Amen.

Listening to the Story

Ephesians 6:11-17

Reader: Jesus' defense in those moments in the garden was prayer—not the sword that one of his disciples wanted to use to protect him, but prayer was his source of power—that God's will would sustain him through the next day. Jesus knows what is about to go down, and he will not use violence in these last hours. The Letter to the Ephesians offers us the alternative “armor” with which we can gird ourselves to work for what is right.

“Put on God’s armor so that you can make a stand against the tricks of the devil. We aren’t fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens. Therefore, pick up the full armor of God so that you can stand your ground on the evil day and after you have done everything possible to still stand. So, stand with the belt of truth around your waist, justice as your breastplate, and put shoes on your feet so that you are ready to spread the good news of peace. Above all, carry the shield of faith so that you can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is God’s word.”

Anthem

(this would have been the anthem on Sunday)

Be Strong in the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbIvLYjfnD4>

Dwelling in the Story - Tableau

(A kind of “midrash” based on the Garden)



Dramatist: Too much wine, perhaps. Or maybe I'm so sleepy because I'm just so very tired. This week is taking its toll on me. Watching our every step, wondering when the other shoe will drop, afraid that the commotion stirred up about Jesus will result in something terrible. I've been on edge ever since we got here.

But oh my, that parade! Who would have thought that this man I met on the shores of my fishing spot would turn out to be three years of non-stop surprises?! The entrance into Jerusalem was more amazing than all of it combined. I felt sure that I was part of something that was going to change everything! Now I'm not so sure. Not everyone, it turned out, was so pleased about Jesus' arrival here. And we've been under scrutiny for days.

Then tonight at the table, Jesus revealed that one of us was about to hand him over. I'm noticing who is missing here in the Garden, and I'm wondering if maybe he was right.

My gut turns over with the thought of it. I do not want to face that these people who have become my family could turn against one another under pressure. Fear threatens our very bonds!

So why put ourselves out here in the open? I need to stay awake, keep watch! I've got my sword. I know Jesus told me not to bring it but come on! All he seems to think we need to do is pray. He asked us to pray with him. Yes, I pray, I'm praying, I'll fervently pray! But is it enough? How can God help us if soldiers arrive? And yet... I'm so sleepy.

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Reflection: The Gardens of CoVid-19

<https://youtu.be/zbARRioLktM>

Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIE9iikIZk>

Zooming In

The Body of Christ Prays

A Prayer adapted from Bishop Larry Duffy

God of Love, we the people of St. David's United turn to you with prayerful hearts and with confidence in your loving presence among us now and in every moment of our lives. We are people of hope, trusting in your care and protection. May we be comforted by your love in these anxious times.

Generous and Gracious God, fill us with compassion and concern for others, young and old; that we may look after each other in these challenging times, especially those among us who are vulnerable. May Jesus' example of serving, forgiving, freeing, and loving, inspire us to do the same. May calm, gentleness, and wisdom ease our fears, anxiety, and grief.

Healing God, may those who are sick with the Coronavirus find healing. Be with their family and friends. We pray the members of our congregation and others who are isolated and lonely, that they may know your love through our endeavors to connect with them. We know you are with us in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

God of Comfort, we pray for all people who have lost a loved one in these times and pray for the vulnerable, elderly, and homeless.

God of Strength and Determination, strengthen those who serve us with such love and graciousness in the medical profession and in all healthcare facilities. We give thanks for their continued work in the service of people. We ask you to bless them, support them and guide them with your abundant goodness.

God of Wisdom, may your wisdom guide the leaders in healthcare and governance; enabling them to make the right decisions for the wellbeing of people.

O God of Creation and God of life, we, your people here at St. David's, seek your protection and love. May peace be with us and enfold us today, tomorrow and during the time ahead. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Closure to prayer

**Love us into fullness, and we will be strong;
Jesus, walk beside us, fill our hearts with song.
Entering the World's Story**

Benediction

We put a frame around a bit of life
sectioned off a scene,
looked long into a face,
to see what we could see,
to know what we could know.

Just as we have done with the art and story today,
zoom in your focus on the art and story of life all through the week.
The Divine Artist offers us such poignant beauty each day
in our own stories,
in the stories around us,
in the heartbreak, fear and pain, the anxiety and the joy.
May God's love, comfort and hope frame your hearts and lives
during these days of social distancing,
concern, discernment and determination.

May you be blessed by the sacred frames
that surround the moments of your life
that you dare not miss.
Amen.

Sung Blessing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4C9zVg5X_A