



**First Parish Church, Congregational  
On the Village Green  
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts**

*Awaken to the Light and Love of God;  
Be a Joyful Beacon to the World*

First Parish Church, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Good Friday  
*"The Seven Last Words of Christ"*  
April 7, 2022, 12 PM

Welcome Rev. Judy Brain

**Invitation to Good Friday Meditations Bethany Woods**

Leader: This day let all stand still, in silence, in sorrow.

**People: Sun and moon be still.**

**Earth be still.**

Leader: Still the waters.

Still the wind.

**People: Let the ground gape in stunned lamentation.**

**Let it weep as it receives what it thinks it will not give up.**

Leader: Let it groan as it gathers the One who was thought forever stilled.

**People: Time be still. Watch and wait.**

Leader: Still.

*Jan Richardson*

**Responsive Prayer of Confession Rev. Judy Brain**

Leader: Associating with Jesus and following his cause was often costly for the disciples. They risked losing friends and even their lives. Sometimes they acted courageously. Other times they lost their courage, leaving Jesus to suffer alone. We are not different, let us confess together.

**People: O God, I am so fragile: my dreams get broken, my relationships get broken, my heart gets broken, my body gets broken.**

Leader: What can I believe, except what Jesus taught: that only what is first broken, like bread, can be shared; that only what is broken is open to you;

**People: So I believe, Lord, help my unbelief; that I may have courage to keep trying when I am tired. That I may have courage to cut free from what I have been and become the person I am meant to be. Amen**

Leader: God's love is boundless and reaches into the unknown and distant places - even the far reaches of our hearts. Be assured that God's mercy is extended to you and God's redemption is very near. In gratitude for forgiveness freely offered, may we pray to be a forgiving people.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen**

### **The First Word Luke 23:34 Liz Loomis**

“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

Just outside Jerusalem, we came to a gate called Truth.

We called to the gatekeeper to let us in.

“The latch is not on,” he replied, “Anyone who will can enter.”

We went closer, but seeing how great and how heavy was the gate, we looked for a way around.

There must be a way around.

*Ann Weems*

### **Silent Reflection**

### **The Second Word Luke 23:43 Jan Marshall**

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

One of the criminals hanging there threw insults at him: “Aren't you the messiah? Save yourself and us!” The other one, however, rebuked him, saying: “Don't you fear God? Here we are all under the same sentence. Ours, however, is only right, for we are getting what we deserve for what we did; but he has done no wrong.” And he said to Jesus, “Remember me, Jesus, when you come as King!” Jesus said to him, “I tell you this: Today you will be in Paradise with me.”

What is Paradise? Complete trust, peace, being gathered into the heart of God. Eternal life begins not at the end of time, nor even at the funeral home, but right now; the death that comes is not the death that separates us from God. “Though he die, yet shall he live.”

### **The Third Word John 19:26-27 Steve Carhart**

“Woman, here is your son.”

Standing close to Jesus’ cross were his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that time the disciple took her to live in his home.

Jesus’ executioners leave. Daring to come close, a handful of very brave, devoted followers remain at the cross. Hearts full of sorrow, minds traumatized, their souls guide them in blessed affection and tender care. Tearfully, they receive Jesus’ dead body. The women who most love him – his mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, and a mother of one of the twelve disciples – reach out their arms to hold and wrap his body in soft, clean linen.

Their tears, and enfolding him in burial cloths, return to him his dignity. But they cannot return the breath into his mouth, the sparkle in his eye, the warmth of his touch, and the wisdom of his word.

May we pause to be in solidarity with mothers whose children are suffering. May God fortify their faith, courage, and strength. When our hearts grow weary with news of war and tragedy, children gunned down in school, may we be uplifted by ordinary human beings empowered by God to do extraordinary things.

O God, bless the brave ones who comfort their frightened children.

### **The Fourth Word Matthew 27:46 Martha Farmer**

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Isaiah 53:3-6

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

### **Response Jill Auld**

Dear God, no! On that black Friday we are not forsaken!

Not Jesus or any other desolate child of dust!

That day you entered our forsakenness and bitter chill of death's dark night, you shaped the valley of shadows to become an avenue of light.

Our Christ! We praise you; we acknowledge you as Lord!

Despised and rejected, man of sorrows and grief, great and marvelous are your deeds!

Wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, you have given your soul that we may be made whole.

*B.D. Prewer*

### **Silent Reflection**

#### **The Fifth Word John 19:28 Rev. Judy Brain**

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty."

### **Candle Lighting**

What do we thirst for? What are our deepest longings? You are invited to come forward to light a candle representing burdens, pain, confessions, grief, or the intentions you bring with you.

### **Response Allison Moir-Smith**

When the journey gets too hard, when we feel depleted,  
when our compassion turns to complaining,

when our efforts toward justice and mercy seem to get us nowhere,  
it's time to remember the humility part -

That it is God who has made us and not we ourselves,

that the saving of the world or even one part of it is not on our shoulders. It is then we can come unto him and he will give us rest. With rest we'll remember what it is we are about.

*Ann Weems*

**Prayer Betsy Nickless**

**People: O God, we pray this day:**

**for all who have a song they cannot sing,**

**for all who have a burden they cannot bear,**

**for all who live in chains they cannot break,**

**for all who wander homeless and cannot return,**

**for those who are sick**

**and for those who tend them,**

**for those who wait for loved ones and wait in vain,**

**for those who live in hunger and for those who will not share their bread,**

**for those who are misunderstood and for those who misunderstand,**

**for those who are captives and for those who are captors,**

**for those whose words of love are locked within their hearts**

**and for those who yearn to hear those words.**

**Have mercy upon these, O God. Have mercy upon us all.**

*Ann Weems*

**The Sixth Word John 19:30 John Feuerbach**

“When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**“Friday”**

The sky peels back to purple and thunder slaps the thighs of heaven, and all the tears of those who grieve fly up to clouds and are released and drench the earth.

The ones who see and hear know that all is lost.

The only One named Savior died upon a cross.

The ones who believed and loved huddle together...stunned.

All night long, the angels weep.

*Ann Weems*

## **The Seventh Word Luke 23:46 Bethany Woods**

Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.

### **"Funeral Blues"**

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message 'He is Dead'.  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.  
*W. H. Auden*

### **Silence**

We sit with the shadows of grief and sorrow. We remember.

### **Blessing Rev. Judy Brain**

**Depart in silence.**

Deacons John Feuerbach and Paul Gudonis.

Today we welcome Rev. Judy Brain, as our Worship Leader.

Rev. Brain is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School where she was awarded the Billings Prize for Preaching.

Judy served as senior minister at Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Lexington for 17 years. A resident of Essex since her retirement, she has continued in ministry as a bridge pastor for churches on the North Shore as well as the Boston suburbs.

In her ministry, a primary focus has been interfaith understanding and social justice. She has worked with many community organizations that promote respect, civility, and peace.

She is an enthusiastic gardener and enjoys swimming, kayaking, jigsaw puzzles, and is a convert to Wordle.