



sacred space

While we can't be at church, we can still create sacred space in our homes. For some of us that might be in a separate room, a place to go to be apart. For others of us, it might mean adapting a space that is being used for multiple purposes. For me, my sacred space and my work space are at my dining room table right now, so this involves some shifting at meal times. You can see a picture below of how I have set up my space to make it more conducive for prayer and leading online worship. So how can you set up your own sacred space?

1. Decide how you want to use the sacred space. Is this where you will participate in online worship? Is this just a place for personal prayer? What will help you relax and connect to God?

2. Choose items for your space that will help you pray. I find candles help. The practice of lighting them when it is time for prayer or worship helps me set that time aside from the rest of the day (this is particularly important for me now that I'm spending most of my time in my apartment). I also have a set of prayer beads that I keep in my space, as well as a journal and a prayer shawl. And, of course, I have a place for my knitting there as well.

3. What books or prayers are helpful for you? I have my Book of Common Prayer, several Bibles, devotionals and books of poetry. Some of this is for my personal prayers and some are resources for our shared worship, but it's nice to have them close at hand so that I don't have to interrupt my prayer time to go and get them. Anything that helps you meditate or pray.

4. Something from nature can help. I got some flowers this week for my sacred space and it has helped a lot. I also have several stones that I brought back with me from my pilgrimage to Iona. Perhaps your sacred space is outdoors. Perhaps a pine cone or even a picture of nature will help connect you to the beauty of creation.

5. Make the space your own. The most important thing is that you feel comfortable in the space and you're able to set aside the cares and anxieties of your day. What will help you connect to God?





palm sunday

On this day, Jesus and his disciples entered Jerusalem to finally confront the religious authorities of the day. Jesus rode in on a donkey rather than a horse, to show that he came in peace, and the crowds welcomed him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna!" Then he retired with his disciples to Bethany.

A Reading

Mark 11:1-11

When Jesus and his followers approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethpage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. Jesus gave two disciples a task, saying to them, "Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter it, you will find tied up there a colt that no one has ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say 'Its master needs it., and he will send it back right away.'"

They went and found a colt tied to a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. Some people standing around said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them just what Jesus said, and they left him alone. They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes upon it, and he sat on it. Many people spread out their clothes on the road while others spread branches cut from the fields. Those in front of him and those following were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest!" Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. After he looked around at everything, because it was already late in the evening, he returned to Bethany with the Twelve.

A Prayer

Jesus, Lord of the Journey, we thank you that you set your face firmly towards Jerusalem, with a single eye and a pure intent, knowing what lay ahead but never turning aside. Jesus, Lord of the Palms, we thank you that you enjoyed the shouts of "Hosanna!" from the ordinary people, living fully in that moment of welcome and accepting their praise. Jesus, Lord of the Cross and the Empty Tomb, we thank you that you freely entered the heart of our evil and our pain, along a way that was both terrible and wonderful, as your kingship became your brokenness, and your dying became the triumph of undying love. AMEN.

holy monday

On this day, Jesus and his disciples stayed in the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany - where Mary anointed Jesus' feet with perfume, and wiped them with her hair.

A Reading

John 12:1-8

Six days before Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, home of Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Lazarus and his sisters hosted a dinner for him. Martha served and Lazarus was among those who joined him at the table. Then Mary took an extraordinary amount, almost three-quarters of a pound, of very expensive perfume made of pure nard. She anointed Jesus' feet with it, then wiped his feet dry with her hair. The house was filled with the aroma of the perfume. Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), complained, "This perfume was worth a year's wages! Why wasn't it sold and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. He carried the money bag and would take what was in it.

Then Jesus said, "Leave her alone. This perfume was to be used in preparation for my burial, and this is how she has used it. You will always have the poor among you, but you won't always have me."

A Question

How can you extravagantly show your love for someone else today? How can you extravagantly show your love for God today?

A Prayer

God of love, in Jesus we see the true nature of your love - vulnerable, personal, costly, setting love's standards for all time. Look in mercy on us, whose loving rarely even approaches the standards set by Jesus. Forgive us - and help us to be encouraged by the openness Jesus showed to Martha and to Mary - as to all who loved him, even a little, in their own way. Help us to love a little more like Jesus, so that the scent of love may be detected in our lives. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



holy tuesday

On this day, Jesus and his disciples returned to Jerusalem, where he entered the Temple and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, declaring the Temple to be again a place of prayer for all nations.

A Reading

Mark 11:15-19

They came into Jerusalem. After entering the temple, he threw out those who were selling and buying there. He pushed over the tables used for currency exchange and the chairs of those who sold doves. He didn't allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He taught them, "Hasn't It been written, *My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?* But you've turned it into a hideout for crooks. The chief priests and legal experts heard this and tried to find a way to destroy him. They regarded him as dangerous because the whole crowd was enthralled at his teaching. When it was evening, Jesus and his disciples went outside the city.

A Question

What possessions or desires keep you from fully loving and giving yourself to God?

A Prayer

Loving God, you know the need we have as human beings for things to taste and touch, to smell and feel. You know that we are never satisfied with only words - you made us, body as well as spirit, flesh as well as soul. Thank you then for the things of our religion that speak to us of our faith. Cleanse our religious traditions of anything that would turn our faith into stone; may they always speak to us of Kingdom values - the justice, the peace, the care for the poor, the costly faith, that is never content unless it is walking in the footsteps of Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.



holy wednesday

On this day, Judas Iscariot entered into an agreement with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus to them.

A Reading

John 13:21-30

After he said these things, Jesus was deeply disturbed and testified, "I assure you, one of you will betray me."

His disciples looked at each other, confused about which of them he was talking about. One of the disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was at Jesus' side. Simon Peter nodded at him to get him to ask Jesus who he was talking about. Leaning back toward Jesus, this disciple asked, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus answered, "It's the one to whom I will give this piece of bread once I have dipped into the bowl." Then he dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son. After Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." No one sitting at the table understood why Jesus said this to him. Some thought that, since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus told him, "Go, buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. So when Judas took the bread, he left immediately. And it was night.

A Question

What causes us to forget about God, who God calls us to be, and what God calls us to do?

A Prayer

How much are you worth to me, Jesus? The Gospel tells us that to Judas, you were worth thirty pieces of silver. Not much - a day's wages - hardly a reason for such a betrayal. And to the others - the dozy eleven who fell asleep in the garden, put on a brief show of bravado, then forsook you and fled? They didn't value you all that highly either, it would seem. And what about me? What about me, concerned like they were, far more with my own agenda than with yours, most of the time? Do I really value you above my issues, my needs, even my understanding of the faith? On this day, Jesus help me admit, yet again my need of your forgiving kiss, and remind me that you value me far higher than I deserve or can ever repay. Amen.





maundy thursday

On this night, Jesus at the Passover meal with his disciples, and washed their feet, thus inaugurating the new covenant between God and all people, which he was to seal the next day with his blood. Then he was betrayed by Judas, deserted by his disciples and handed over to be crucified.

A Reading

John 13:1-15

Before the festival of Passover, Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them fully.

Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal. The devil had already provoked Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciple's feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later."

"No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me."

Simon Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus responded, "Those who have been bathed need only to have their feet washed, because they are completely clean. You disciples are clean, but not every one of you." He knew who would betray him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you is clean."

After he washed the disciple's feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table. He said to them, "Do you know what I've done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly because I am. If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do."

A Question

How do we find ways to humbly serve one another, following in the example of Jesus washing his disciples' feet?

A Prayer

Loving God, on this night you waited, in Jesus, for so much. You waited for loyalty - and found betrayal. You waited for support - and got, instead, desertion. You waited for love - and received instead hatred, misunderstanding, rejection, and a cruel death. Loving God, still you wait for us. We are no different from your first disciples. We carry within us all the sin that can crucify you again and again. Here on this night, the night of the basin and towel, of the bread broken and the wine outpoured, help us to wait now on you. Let your mercy and grace unite us in your forgiveness. And make us one with all your suffering children who wait for your reign of justice and peace to come and change their lives. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



good friday

On this day, Jesus endured the mockery of a trial; he was condemned to death, tortured and executed; then his body was taken down from the Cross, and buried in a borrowed grave.

A Reading

Mark 15:16-39

The soldiers led Jesus away into the courtyard of the palace known as the governor's headquarters, and they called together the whole company of soldiers. They dressed him up in a purple robe and twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on him. They saluted him, "Hey! King of the Jews!" Again and again, they struck his head with a stick. They spit on him and knelt before him to honor him. When they finished mocking him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. Simon, a man from Cyrene, Alexander and Rufus' father, was coming in from the countryside. They forced him to carry his cross.

They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means Skull Place. They tried to give him wine mixed with myrrh, but he didn't take it. They crucified him. They divided up his clothes, drawing lots for them to determine who would take what. It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The notice of the formal charge against him was written, "The king of the Jews." They crucified two outlaws with him, one on his right and one on his left.

People walking by insulted him, shaking their heads and saying, "Ha! So you were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, were you? Save yourself and come down from that cross!" In the same way, the chief priests were making fun of him among themselves, together with the legal experts. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross. Then we'll see and believe." Even those who had been crucified with Jesus insulted him.

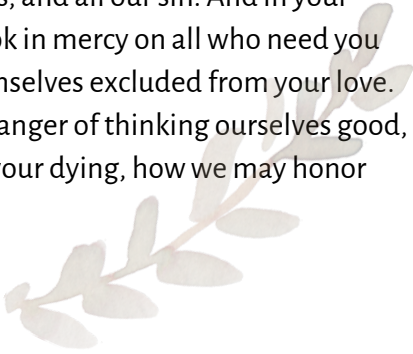
From noon until three in the afternoon the whole earth was dark. At three, Jesus cried out with a loud shout, "*Eloi, eloi, lama sabachtani*," which means "My God, my God, why have you left me?"

After hearing him, some standing there said, "Look! He's calling to Elijah!" Someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, and put it on a pole. He offered it to Jesus to drink, saying, "Let's see if Elijah will come to take him down." But Jesus let out a loud cry and died.

The curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion, who stood facing Jesus saw how he died, he said, "This man was certainly God's son."

A Prayer

Lord Jesus, lifted high on the cross, you look down on us in all our greatness, and all our sin. And in your amazing love you sift out the good in us, in both our greatness, and our sin. Look in mercy on all who need you now; especially those who would not dream of approaching you, who feel themselves excluded from your love. Live for them, we pray, as you died for them; and have mercy on us who go in danger of thinking ourselves good, when you have taught us who alone is good, and shown us, by your living and your dying, how we may honor Him. We pray in your name. Amen.



holy saturday

On this day, as Jesus lay, dead, in the tomb, the disciples remained scattered in fear, and the women watched, and waited, for what, they knew not.

A Reading

Matthew 27:57-61

That evening a man named Joseph came. He was a rich man from Arimathea who had become a disciple of Jesus. He came to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission to take it. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which had carved out of the rock. After he rolled a large stone at the door of the tomb, he went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting in front of the tomb.

A Prayer

Living God, we are come, with Joseph and the Marys, to the place of death and despair. With them, we have seen the awful power of hatred, fear and greed, having its way with frail flesh and that once so fragrant hope. With them, we have felt the shock of iron on bone, of state power on puny mortals, of religious righteousness on the faint freedom of faith.

With them we have heard that well-loved voice go silent, seen that deeply desired face fall vacant, the eyes grow dim, the flesh turn cold. Death has had its way with all that they, and we, held most dear; and we have felt the first fear, the beginnings of the awful loneliness, the emptiness where fullness once was, out still to be.

Dear God, you know that we have been here before. Been here, not just with Joseph and the Marys, but on our own, watching a loved one die; or with friends and family, paying our last respects at the door of death to one who has gone through ahead of us all. We are not strangers to death, we know its ways.

Dear God, help us, no as before, to hold our hand from any final action; to hold our breath from any final word. Teach us, once again, the truth of our creatureliness: that we are not the masters of our fate, we are not the captains of our souls. Keep us open to the possibilities of God throughout this watchful night; and in the face of every dying with which our lives are filled from our first cry to our final breath, help us to know that the final word lies with you, and that the word is a resounding YES. We ask this in the name of this same dead Jesus in whom all the possibilities of God wait their time. Amen.



On a day like this, the earth shook as death was destroyed and humankind was changed forever. And Jesus reminded his friends, and us, that we should not be afraid because he would be there to meet us.

A Reading

Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb. Look, there was a great earthquake, for an angel from the Lord came down from heaven. Coming to the stone, he rolled it away and sat on it. Now his face was like lightning and his clothes white as snow. The guards were so terrified of him that they shook with fear and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him. Now hurry, go and tell his disciples, 'He's been raised from the dead. He's going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' I've given the message to you."

With great fear and excitement, they hurried away from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples. But Jesus met them and greeted them. They came and grabbed his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers that I am going into Galilee. They will see me there."

A Prayer

We thought we had heard it all, dear God, we thought we knew! The Bible stories; the words of our faith; the rules for living and the way to heaven; we thought, dear God, we knew! But here, before the mystery again of a grave that is empty when it should be filled with a decaying corpse, we know we know nothing at all! Lord, have mercy on us!

We thought we had heard it all, dear God, we thought we knew! The great stories of the church; the ebb and flow of the faith; our place in the great scheme of things; we thought, dear God, we knew! But here, before the mystery again of death defeated, of broken folk made whole, and mighty powers quite broken down, we know we know nothing at all! Lord, have mercy upon us!

We thought we had heard it all, dear God, we thought we knew! The way of the world; the powers that be, and the powers that would be; the ebb and flow of armies and international finance; the endless tide of refugees, and the awful endlessness of hate; we thought, dear God, we knew! But here, before the mystery again of a word of love in a quiet garden, and the promise, suddenly, of a new order of creation in place of the old, tired, familiar scene, we know we know nothing at all! Lord, have mercy on us! Have mercy on your people, Lord.



Take out our stony hearts - our cynical, confident, controlling, careful, cautious hearts - and give us again hearts of flesh, we pray; so that, knowing our own ignorance, we may be filled instead with your knowledge; filled with that saving knowledge which in the beginning made all things; that saving knowledge which in Jesus Christ, crucified, dead and risen, can make all things, even us, new again; that saving knowledge which will, in that same Christ, bring all things, in the end, to their completion. In his name we pray. Amen.



*alleluia! christ is risen!
the lord is risen indeed!
alleluia!*

Join us for online worship experiences throughout Holy Week.
Noonday Prayer will be offered Monday-Friday at 12:00 on Facebook Live.
Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday worship will be offered at 11:00 am
on FaceBook Live and YouTube.
Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship videos will be offered as well.

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Resources adapted from: Prayers For Holy Week by John Harvey, Wild Goose Publications
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