

**NEW MARYLAND UNITED CHURCH
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

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JESUS' LAST WEEK: Lent VI: The Trial

Welcome and thank you for joining in our worship this sacred morning! Let us pause to remember that in this region we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territories of the Wabanaki peoples—predominantly the lands of the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik and Passamaquoddy. May we live with respect on this land, and live in friendship with its people. Grace and peace to you all!

Thought for Meditation:

The evidence is a red river, mounting.

It wants to carry you

away like an old chair

some fisherman forgot

to take home. And I want

to shout: listen...

I love him.

Is there a place

where all those things

that catch in the throat

gather and shape themselves?

Jane Mead

THE GATHERING

***Please rise in body or in spirit for sections marked with an asterisk.**

***WELCOME & LIGHTING OF THE LENTEN CANDLES**

***Introit: Don't Be Afraid, (#90 MV)**

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,

My love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,

and I have promised, promised to be always near.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you!

People: And also with you!

Leader: Let us worship together!

OPENING PRAYER ENDING WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Leader: Our Lenten journey continues, O God: The last week of Jesus' life, when time

stood still,

People: When events rushed by, out of control.

Leader: The more they praised his power,

People: The more they feared his power

Leader: The more they lifted up his name,

People: The more they sought to crush him.

Leader: And still the story calls us, O God, and so we follow, out of Gethsemane and into the fray of trial and suffering, and so we pray together, saying:

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 trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil,

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen.

THE GOSPEL LESSON: John 18:28-38

When they had arrested Jesus in the Garden, the religious leaders took Jesus to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement. So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.'

Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.'

The Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death.'

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?'

Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?'

Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world.'

Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?'

Jesus answered, 'You say so. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.'

Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

SERMON: *The Trial, The Truth, The Travesty*

THE LENTEN PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

1. As these pandemic days carry on, we still reach down and give thanks somehow: for all those on the

front lines: health care workers who are in fear for what the next day will bring for themselves, their patients and their families, for clerks and cleaners and truckers and delivery drivers, and for (Name someone, or some group of people, for whom we give thanks to God in this time).

2. We pray for all our children getting squirrely in isolation: missing friends, missing routines, missing even school. And so we pray too for teachers, especially with the recent news that schools are now closed for the rest of the school year. For we know that their work, and the work of students still continues.....
3. We pray for the vulnerable, those who don't feel safe at the best of times, and for the helpers, who are stepping up and for(Name someone, or some group of people, in particular need or risk)
4. Thank you for the courage and strength of conviction that Jesus showed at his trial. We pray for those around us who are called to speak truth to power, for public health officials and government leaders who are calling us to comply with difficult directives, for those who continue to protest injustice in our world, even when the media is focused on Covid-19, and for(Name someone, who came to mind, someone trying to speak truth, even though it is unwelcome, and inconvenient)

For all this and more, we pray, in the name, and in the way of Jesus. Amen.

***THE LITANY OF THE DIMINISHING LIGHT**

Leader: Jesus' death was a long time coming. Between those who were out to get him, and those who didn't get him, he was still alone, even among throngs of adoring fans.

People: How much courage must it have taken for Jesus to stay the course? How many times would his friends let him down?

Leader: How many times would he forgive?

[The sixth, purple candle is snuffed]

Leader: Let us pray:

ALL: Even from the cross, you call us to return to you.

Even from the cross, you offer us forgiveness, a chance to start again.

Even from the cross, you make room for us to stand.

Even from the cross.

ALL SING (VU. 144, adapted):

Were you there, when he stood condemned to die? (Were you there?)

Were you there, when he stood condemned to die?

Oh-oh-oh-oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,

Were you there, when he stood condemned to die? (Were you there?)