

Lisbon United Methodist Church
Maundy Thursday Portraits of Darkness
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Reading One: Temptation

Monica

Mark 14.26-42

²⁶ When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’

²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”

²⁹ Peter said to him, “Even though all become deserters, I will not.” ³⁰ Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this day, this very

night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” ³¹ But he said vehemently, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all of them said the same.

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴ And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” ³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” ³⁷ He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸ Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the

flesh is weak.”³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.⁴⁰ And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him.⁴¹ He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴² Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

O Lord God, as we come to you on this night before the crucifixion, forgive us, we pray, for our failure to watch and wait with your Son, Jesus Christ. Make us bold to affirm your presence in our lives and help us to understand the sacrifice that you offer for each of us; may we find ourselves near to the cross of Christ on this holy night. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

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EXTINGUISH ONE CANDLE

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Reading Two: One Ran Away
Mark 14.43-52

Jen

⁴³ Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶ Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. ⁴⁷ But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? ⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰ All of them deserted him and fled.

⁵¹ A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

Creator God, like Judas, we, too, confess that we oftentimes betray your Son, Jesus the Christ. When we fail to show compassion, when we turn away from those in need, when we keep the love you offer only to ourselves, in these ways we neglect to share the spirit of Christ with your world. Forgive us, we pray, when we fail to stay near to the cross of Jesus and free us this night from the temptation toward betrayal. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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EXTINGUISH ONE CANDLE

Reading Three: False Witnesses

Judy

Mark 14.53-65

⁵³ They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. ⁵⁴ Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire. ⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. ⁵⁶ For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. ⁵⁷ Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” ⁵⁹ But even on this point their testimony did not agree. ⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” ⁶¹ But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” ⁶² Jesus said, “I am; and ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’”

⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?” All of them condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵ Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to

strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” The guards also took him over and beat him.

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

God of all mercy, as we gather together on this holy night, we do proclaim to you that Christ is, indeed, the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God. As we worship, we praise your name and give you thanks for this most sacred gift. While others would refuse to believe in the One whom you have sent, help us tonight to renew our belief and continue our faithful witness. May we be constant in our efforts to stay near to Jesus’ cross and to offer Christ to a waiting world. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

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EXTINGUISH ONE CANDLE

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Reading Four: Tears
Mark 14.66-72

Pastor E.

⁶⁶ While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. ⁶⁷ When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. ⁶⁹ And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” ⁷⁰ But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” ⁷¹ But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.” ⁷² At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

God of grace and God of glory, as we hear the words of Peter's denial, we remember our own journeys of faith and those places where we have failed to be your obedient followers and your faithful church. We ask that your forgiveness might be upon us as we pray. Strengthen us as we stay near to Jesus' cross that we might renew our commitment to you for all the days before us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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EXTINGUISH ONE CANDLE

Reading Five: A Crowd Stirred Up
Mark 15.1-15

Monica

15 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ² Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” ³ Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴ Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” ⁵ But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶ Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷ Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸ So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹ Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ¹⁰ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹² Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” ¹³ They shouted back, “Crucify him!” ¹⁴ Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” ¹⁵ So Pilate, wishing

to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

As we hear the words of the gospel this night, we remember once again how unfair were the events of Jesus' life. Through the ages, the cries of the crowd, "Crucify him!" ring in our ears and we recall those times when we have lived as if Christ were dead as well. Forgive us, we pray again to you. As we stay near to Jesus' cross, help us to know the joy that comes as we live in Christ and he lives in us, always to your glory. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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Reading Six: Struck...Mocked.....Crucified

Jen

Mark 15.16-32

¹⁶ Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²⁰ After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹ They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²² Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³ And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴ And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵ It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶ The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷ And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who

would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ save yourself, and come down from the cross!” ³¹ In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³² Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

Holy God, like Simon of Cyrene, we hope that on our journeys of faith we, too, have stepped in now and again to the aid of Jesus Christ and that we, too, have shouldered the burden in Jesus’ name for those who are weak, mocked, and stripped of all their humanity. May the lessons of Jesus’ life become real in ours; may we reach out with open arms to those you have created in your image even as we stay near to the cross of Christ. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

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Reading Seven: Darkness Over the Land

Judy

Mark 15.33-39

³³ When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴ At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

Almighty God, as we hear again the stories of Jesus' final days, we remember how painful those events must have been in his life and how much you must love each of us to have sacrificed him for the world's redemption. As we proclaim that he really is your Son, we remember this gift of love which you offer to us unconditionally and without price. May we be found, O gracious God, worthy of its acceptance as we stay near to the cross of our Lord. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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Reading Eight: Lingerin Light
Mark 15.40-47

Pastor E.

⁴⁰ There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹ These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

⁴² When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵ When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

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Time of Silent Prayer

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Prayer by Reader Only:

Creator God, like Joseph of Arimathea, we, too, await the coming of your Kingdom. Having gathered on this holy night to relive once again the events of Holy Week in the life of our Savior, may our spirits be renewed and may our hearts be cleansed of all unrighteousness. You alone forgive us our sins and guide us on the path that leads to life eternal as we keep ourselves near to the cross of Jesus. On Easter morning, we will rejoice in the Resurrection of the One whom we call our Savior and give you thanks for Jesus Christ, the Light that forever shines in the darkness of our world. In Jesus' holy name, we pray. Amen.