

Patrick: Welcome & Introduction

This service of Tenebrae, meaning “darkness” or “shadows” has been practiced by the church since the medieval times. Once a service for the monastic community, Tenebrae later became an important part of the worship for the congregation during Holy Week. We join Christians of many generations throughout the world in observing this service of Tenebrae: a prolonged meditation on Christ’s final days. Reflective readings and carefully chosen music help mediate the drama of this momentous day. On behalf of Nutana Park Mennonite Church Susanne and I (co-pastors of this congregation), welcome you to this service of shadows. We join together in prayer

Susanne: O God, by the passion of your beloved Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; peace to your church; and to us sinners everlasting life; for with Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen. (*Book of Common Prayer*, 221 and 282)

Hymn: “Lay down your head” #85 STS

Reading of the Passion Text: Luke 19-23 (excerpts)

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Susanne: Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; and he said, ‘It is written, “My house shall be a house of prayer”; but you have made it a den of robbers.’ Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him; but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

The Plot to Kill Jesus

Patrick: Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.

Susanne: Extinguishes a Candle

Music: “Lord Jesus, Come and Overturn” #146 VT (vv 1-2)

The Preparation of the Passover

Patrick: Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.’ They asked him, ‘Where do you want us to make preparations for it?’ ‘Listen,’ he said to them, ‘when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters and say to the owner of the house, “The teacher asks you, ‘Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ” He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.’ So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

The Institution of the Lord’s Supper

Susanne: When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!’ Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

The Dispute about Greatness

Patrick: A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Susanne: “A reading from Thomas Merton”

It is in this darkness, when there is nothing left in us that can please or comfort our own minds, when we seem to be useless and worthy of all contempt, when we seem to have failed, when we seem to be destroyed and devoured, it is then that the deep and secret selfishness that is too close to us for us to identify is stripped away from our souls. It is in this darkness that we find liberty. It is in this abandonment that we are made strong. This is the night which empties us and makes us pure.

Patrick: Extinguishes a Candle

Music: “Lord Jesus, as the shadows long” #78 STS

Susanne: ‘Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!’ Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.’

Patrick: Jesus said to them, ‘When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?’ They said, ‘No, not a thing.’ He said to them, ‘But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, “And he was counted among the lawless”; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.’ They said, ‘Lord, look, here are two swords.’ He replied, ‘It is enough.’

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

Susanne: Jesus came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, ‘Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.’ Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.’ When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.’

Patrick: “Remember” (author unknown)

Please, Lord, remember.

Remember me as

the child you made
born fresh, loving
open to life and people

Forget

my mistakes
my selfish behavior
my stubborn will
my silent hate.

You have created and named me.

I have fallen away.

Love me back to you, Lord.

Remember my sins and misdeeds
no more.

Lead me in your forgiven Way.

Susanne Extinguishes a Candle

Hymn: “‘Tis Midnight, and on Olive’s Brow” #318 VT

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Patrick: While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?’ When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, ‘Lord, should we strike with the sword?’ Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!’

Susanne: “The High Priest’s servant” by Madeleine L’Engle

Sometimes I take it out and look at it (unrecognizable now unless one knew it full of blood and sound) shriveled like an old heel of bread, or piece of fungus.

I was certainly not prepared. I knew my master had it in for some itinerant preacher, and it seemed to me that his high priest's fear and anger exceeded anything this Galilean might do. But my master was always given to extremes and what could I do but go along with him and the others on that warm, crucial night?

It would have been simple to take the man by day (though less dramatic). We came to the agreed-on place, where an ill-named friend approached to kiss him so we'd be certain we had the right man. After a sudden flurry of torches and shouting, a stunning pain slashed down my head. The roar of anguish within me was louder than my scream.

And then he touched me, this strange man we'd trapped, and the intolerable roaring cleared, and I heard the small song of a night bird, and the wind moving in the olive trees beyond the heavy breathing of frightened men.

I bent down and picked it up. Then lifted my hands, felt my head, and two ears, warm and hearing. And my life was shattered, turned around, and changed forever. I left the high priest, never to return.

There is danger now. Often we do not understand our freedom, and the fresh blood flowing in our lives. That is why I sometimes take it out and look at it, unrecognizable now, unless one knew it full of song and sound.

Patrick: Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, 'This man also was with him.' But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know him.' A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, 'You also are one of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!' Then about an hour later yet another kept insisting, 'Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about!' At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.

Patrick: Extinguishes a Candle

Music: "Before the cock crew twice" #243 HWB (vv 1-3)

The Mocking and Beating of Jesus

Susanne: Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, 'Prophesy! Who is it that struck

you?’ They kept heaping many other insults on him. When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. They said, ‘If you are the Messiah, tell us.’ He replied, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.’ All of them asked, ‘Are you, then, the Son of God?’ He said to them, ‘You say that I am.’ Then they said, ‘What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!’

Jesus before Pilate and Herod

Patrick: Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.’ Then Pilate asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ He answered, ‘You say so.’ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, ‘I find no basis for an accusation against this man.’ But they were insistent and said, ‘He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.’

Susanne: When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate.

Patrick: “In the name of the bruised one” Walter Bruggeman
The cadences of suffering love sound in the church in this Holy Week.
We ponder this coming Thursday and
this ready Friday.

Beating solemnly and transformatively in the foreground is this...
“wounded for our transgressions,
bruised for our iniquities,
healed by his stripes.”

We ponder how much self-giving could heal our lives,
and we cannot do better than to rest ourselves

in that awesome mystery...

You are the one who has spared,
 who has pitied,
 who has drawn the violence short in order to save.

Hold your church all this week
 to the unbearable mystery of your self-giving, and
 to the intolerable burden of our killing.

Move us from the grip of that deathly squeeze,
 move by your innocence,
 move by your weakness,
 move by your passion

Deliver us from our [violent] shaped-world
 In the name of the bruised one. Amen.

Susanne: Extinguishes a Candle

Hymn: “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” #325 VT

Jesus Sentenced to Death

Susanne: Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them, ‘You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him.’

Patrick: Then they all shouted out together, ‘Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!’ (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, ‘Crucify, crucify him!’ A third time he said to them, ‘Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.’ But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

Susanne: Majorie Maddox Phifer: “Flesh become Word”
On the way to becoming Word,
he remembered hands:

the planning, piecing together bones,
sketching creases on palms.

And hands, pointing, naming:
azalea, edelweiss, rose;
hands stained with soil.

He remembered the mid wives' hands
tugging Boaz, Solomon, Joram into light,
and his own: fingers translucent in the womb.

For a moment, he again mixed clay,
beckoned children
drew letters in sand,
until the hammer struck again.

Patrick: Extinguishes a candle

Music: "My song is love unknown" #320 VT (vv 1,3,4)

The Crucifixion of Jesus

Susanne: As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him....

Patrick: Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [[Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'

Susanne: One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he

said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’

Hymn: “Jesus, Remember Me” #327 VT

The Death of Jesus

Susanne: It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent.’ And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

The Burial of Jesus

Patrick: Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid.

Susanne: “Holy Saturday” by Margie McCreless Roe
In the tomb Christ is planted at last like a sacred seed.
The agony is over. Safe, finally, from thorns and nails and spears.
God is very still and a great vacuum builds at the heart of things.
The guards of this world are lulled into drowsiness beside the stone.
A profound ignorance fills this last moment before sunrise.

Susanne: Extinguishes the last Candle

Silence & Benediction

Patrick: “Saxon Prayer” (11th century) in *Triduum*, p.90

Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of your holy cross,
 be with us to shield us.

Lord Jesus Christ, by the memory of your blessed cross,
 be with us to strengthen us.

Lord Jesus Christ, for your glorious cross,
 go before us to direct our steps.

Lord Jesus Christ, for your adorable cross,
 come behind us to guard us.

Lord Jesus Christ, for your cross worthy of all praise,
 overshadow us to bless us.

Lord Jesus Christ for your noble cross,
 be within us to lead us to your kingdom. Amen.