

# Wesley Uniting Church

## Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup> 2024, 7pm

### Litany of the Thorns

A service of musical reflections composed and arranged by John Harper (b. 1947)



*image: Freepik.com*

#### **Prelude**

#### **Choir Come, My Lord, My Light, My Way**

Come, my Lord, My light, my way;  
come, my lantern night and day;  
come, my healer, make me whole;  
come, my saviour, protect my soul;  
come, my King, enter my heart,  
come, prince of peace, and never, never depart.

#### **Bible reading:** 1 Peter 1:3-5, 13-16, 2:2-5

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. <sup>14</sup> Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. <sup>15</sup> Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; <sup>16</sup> for it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'

<sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. <sup>4</sup> Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and <sup>5</sup> like living stones, let yourselves be built<sup>[a]</sup> into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

[Reader: Chris Chenoweth]

## **Litany 1**

Minister: Jesus, Saviour of the world, come to us in your mercy:

*Choir: We look to you to save and help us*

Minister: When they were ready to perish, you set your people free:

*Choir: We look to you to save and help us*

Minister: In the greatness of your mercy, loose us from our chains: forgive the sins of all your people.

*Choir: We look to you to save and help us.*

Minister: Make yourself known as Saviour and Mighty Deliverer: save and help us, that we may praise you.

*Choir: We look to you to save and help us*

Minister: Come now, and dwell with us, Lord Christ Jesus: hear our prayer and be with us always.

*Choir: We look to you to save and help us (x2)*

Minister: And when you come in your glory, make us to be one with you and to share the life of your kingdom.

*Choir: We look to you to save and help us (x2)*

## **Choir There is no rose of such virtue**

There is no rose of such virtue

As is the rose that bore Jesu.

Alleluia.

For in that rose contained was

Heaven and earth in little space.

Resmiranda.

By that rose we may well see

There be one God in persons three.

Pares forma.

The angels sand and the shepherds too

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gaudeamus.

Then leave we all this worldly mirth

And follow we this joyful birth.

Transeamus.

*A moment of silence*

**Hymn 320 Never In All Human History**

Marion Pittman (1874-1960), words by Joseph Pittman (1842-1930)

**Part 2: The Thorns of the Desert**

**Choir The Lament of a Sudanese Christian**

You, O Lord, reign forever  
Your throne endures from generation to generation.  
But why do you always forget us?  
Why do you forsake us so long?  
You have turned a blind eye to your creation  
You have abandoned your own children  
The skulls in the jungle like looking up to you in heaven  
Do you see them, O Lord?  
The scattered, wrecked bones speak for themselves  
The widows and the orphans  
Lord, have you condemned us to death?  
Have you no more love for us?  
We cry for your help  
Why do you not listen to our cry?  
But you are our God, our Lord  
Bring us back to you, O God  
Bring us back to you if you can, O Lord. Amen.

**Bible Reading: Psalm 63**

- <sup>1</sup> O God, you are my God, I seek you,  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- <sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.
- <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.
- <sup>4</sup> So I will bless you as long as I live;  
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
- <sup>5</sup> My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,  
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips
- <sup>6</sup> when I think of you on my bed,  
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
- <sup>7</sup> for you have been my help,  
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.
- <sup>8</sup> My soul clings to you;  
your right hand upholds me.

<sup>9</sup> But those who seek to destroy my life  
shall go down into the depths of the earth;  
<sup>10</sup> they shall be given over to the power of the sword,  
they shall be prey for jackals.  
<sup>11</sup> But the king shall rejoice in God;  
all who swear by him shall exult,  
for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

[Reader: Tia Nation]

## **Litany 2**

Minister: Christ who died for our sins, forgive the penitent.

**Response: Lord, have mercy.**

Liturgist: Christ, who shared our griefs, comfort the sorrowing.

**Response: Lord, have mercy.**

Minister: Christ, who thirsted on the cross, bring relief to the hungry.

**Response: Lord, have mercy.**

*Choir Kyrie eleison*

Minister: Christ forsaken by all, be with the lonely and the sad.

**Response: Christ, have mercy.**

Liturgist: Christ mocked and scorned, support the outcasts and rejected.

**Response: Christ, have mercy.**

Minister: Christ who suffered great pain, be a strength to the weak.

**Response: Christ, have mercy.**

*Choir Christe eleison*

Minister: Christ who died for all, grant us your salvation.

**Response: Lord, have mercy.**

Minister: Christ crucified, done to death and buried, give us hope.

**Response: Lord, have mercy.**

Minister: Christ who descended into hell, raise us to glory.

**Response: Lord, have mercy.**

*Choir Kyrie eleison*

## **Choir Tides and Seasons**

O spring in the desert, O shelter from the heat  
O light in the darkness, O guide for the feet  
O joy in our sadness, O support for the weak  
O Lord with us always Your presence we seek.

*A moment of silence*

## **Hymn 240 All Go to God When They Are Sorely Placed**

Alfred Smith (1879-1971), words by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45), trans. Walter Farquharson (b. 1936)

## Part 3: The Thorns of the City

**Bible Reading:** Lamentations 1:1-4, 12-16

<sup>1</sup> How lonely sits the city  
that once was full of people!  
How like a widow she has become,  
she that was great among the nations!  
She that was a princess among the provinces  
has become a vassal.

<sup>2</sup> She weeps bitterly in the night,  
with tears on her cheeks;  
among all her lovers  
she has no one to comfort her;  
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her,  
they have become her enemies.

<sup>3</sup> Judah has gone into exile with suffering  
and hard servitude;  
she lives now among the nations,  
and finds no resting-place;  
her pursuers have all overtaken her  
in the midst of her distress.

<sup>4</sup> The roads to Zion mourn,  
for no one comes to the festivals;  
all her gates are desolate,  
her priests groan;  
her young girls grieve,  
and her lot is bitter.

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?  
Look and see  
if there is any sorrow like my sorrow,  
which was brought upon me,  
which the LORD inflicted  
on the day of his fierce anger.

<sup>13</sup> From on high he sent fire;  
it went deep into my bones;  
he spread a net for my feet;  
he turned me back;  
he has left me stunned,  
faint all day long.

<sup>14</sup> My transgressions were bound into a yoke;  
by his hand they were fastened together;  
they weigh on my neck,  
sapping my strength;

the Lord handed me over  
to those whom I cannot withstand.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD has rejected  
all my warriors in the midst of me;  
he proclaimed a time against me  
to crush my young men;  
the Lord has trodden as in a wine press  
the virgin daughter Judah.

<sup>16</sup> For these things I weep;  
my eyes flow with tears;  
for a comforter is far from me,  
one to revive my courage;  
my children are desolate,  
for the enemy has prevailed.

[Reader: Tharu Tayshetye]

### Litany 3

Choir

Jesus, Saviour, Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,  
*we come to you for you alone can make us whole.*  
Jesus, Saviour, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,  
*we come to you for you alone can make us whole.*  
Jesus, Saviour, We come as a church broken by factions,  
weak in our mission, wavering in our faith  
*we come to you for you alone can make us whole.*  
Jesus, Saviour, we come as people of the world,  
Torn by war, ruined by greed, spoilt by selfishness,  
*we come to you for you alone can make us whole.*  
Jesus, Saviour, we come as members of a family  
Insensitive to each other, blind to tears and deaf to cries  
*we come to you for you alone can make us whole.*  
Jesus, Saviour, we come with the sick at heart,  
we come with the ill in mind, we come with the diseased in body.  
*we come to you for you alone can make us whole.*

### Bible Reading: Psalm 137

<sup>1</sup> By the rivers of Babylon—  
there we sat down and there we wept  
when we remembered Zion.  
<sup>2</sup> On the willows<sup>[a]</sup> there  
we hung up our harps.  
<sup>3</sup> For there our captors  
asked us for songs,  
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,  
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'

- <sup>4</sup> How could we sing the LORD's song  
in a foreign land?
- <sup>5</sup> If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand wither!
- <sup>6</sup> Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not set Jerusalem  
above my highest joy.
- <sup>7</sup> Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites  
the day of Jerusalem's fall,  
how they said, 'Tear it down! Tear it down!  
Down to its foundations!'
- <sup>8</sup> O daughter Babylon, you devastator!<sup>[b]</sup>  
Happy shall they be who pay you back  
what you have done to us!
- <sup>9</sup> Happy shall they be who take your little ones  
and dash them against the rock!

[Reader: Hyeuk Ryu]

### **Choir By the Babylonian Rivers**

By the Babylonian rivers we sat down in grief and wept;  
hung our harps upon a willow, mourned for Zion while we slept.  
There our captors, in derision, did require of us a song;  
so we sat with staring vision and the days were hard and long.  
How shall we sing the Lord's son in a strange and bitter land?  
Can our voices veil the sorrow? Lord God, hear your lonely band.  
Let your cross be benediction for all bound in tyranny;  
by the power of resurrection loose them from captivity.

*A moment of silence*

### **Hymn 679 v. 1-3, 5 God of Jeremiah, Grieving with an Aching Heart**

Valerie Ruddle (b. 1932), words by Brian Wren (b. 1936)

## **Part 4: The Crown of Thorns**

**Bible Reading:** Matthew 26:36-44

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' <sup>37</sup> He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' <sup>39</sup> And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.' <sup>40</sup> Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?' <sup>41</sup> Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;

the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' <sup>42</sup> Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.'

<sup>43</sup> Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.

[Reader: Lorraine Clode]

### **Choir Out of the Depths**

Miserere mei, miserere Domine  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Out of the darkness of my own night.  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Lord come in your great might.

Miserere mei, miserere Domine  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Out of the depth of my despair  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Lord, come, lift me from there.

Miserere mei, miserere Domine  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Out of the turmoil of my soul,  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Lord, come, and make me whole

Miserere mei, miserere Domine  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Out of the agony of my being,  
Out of the deep I call, O God,  
Lord, come, my whole life freeing.  
Miserere mei, miserere Domine

### **Bible Reading: Matthew 27:27-31**

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup> and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' <sup>30</sup> They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. <sup>31</sup> After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

[Reader: Philip Bruen]

### **Litany 4**

Choir:

By the nails through your hands and feet  
give comfort to the suffering.  
Hear us, Lord Christ.



By the crown of thorns upon your head,  
Give hope to the despairing.  
Hear us, Lord Christ.  
By the spear that pierced your side,  
Give courage to the broken hearted.  
Hear us, Lord Christ.  
By your being scorned and rejected of men,  
Give love to the lonely.  
Hear us, Lord Christ.  
By your being scorned and rejected of men,  
Give love to the lonely.  
Hear us, Lord Christ.  
By your time of desolation,  
Lift up all who are down.  
Hear us, Lord Christ.  
By your death on the cross,  
Give us life which is eternal.  
Hear us, Lord Christ.

### **Choir The Cross of Christ**

The Cross of Christ upon your brow  
The Cross of Christ protect you now  
The Cross of Christ upon your mind  
The Cross of Christ make you kind.  
The Cross of Christ upon your head  
The Cross of Christ save you from dread  
The Cross of Christ upon your face  
The Cross of Christ give you grace.  
The Cross of Christ upon your heart  
The Cross of Christ set you apart  
The Cross of Christ upon your soul  
The Cross of Christ keep you whole.

*A moment of silence*

### **Hymn 356 Here Hangs a Man Discarded**

Peter Cutts (b. 1937), words by Brian Wren (b. 1936)

## **Conclusion**

Together, we pray 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 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 and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.**

**Prayers**

*Choir: Lord, may we abide (x3)*

Minister: In the power of the presence,  
In the love of the Lord  
In the strength of the Saviour  
In the compassion of Christ.

*Choir: Lord, may we abide (x3)*

Minister: In the joy of Jesus  
In the indwelling of our God  
That we may dwell in him and he in us.

*Choir: Lord, may we abide (x3)*

Minister: Lord, you have welcomed us,  
You have healed us, you have restored us  
You have fed us, you have empowered us.  
Send us out to reveal your Presence.  
Send us out to declare your love.  
Send us out to proclaim your goodness,  
This day and always.  
**Amen.**

*The ministers and the people depart in silence.*

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**Minister:** Rev'd Dr. Geoff Dornan  
**Music Coordinator:** Jade McFaul  
**Organist:** Lorraine Macknight  
**Wesley Music Scholars:** Martin Magill (choir)  
**Sound and Video:** David Benger and Keith Hart  
**Flowers arranged by:** Ann Sutton

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