

Neighbourhood Prayer Walk

Good Friday 2020



In better times, it is easier to believe that we are in control, easier to lose sight of the suffering of others. But this Holy Week our vulnerabilities have come more sharply into focus, and we experience a small taste of the fear and hardship that characterizes regular life for people on the margins.

Many of us long for this to be over. But if we lean into the promise that God is always with us, how can we be awake and alive to God's movement in our midst *here and now*? How can we participate in what God is doing in our midst?

This Neighbourhood Prayer Walk is an invitation to engage these questions through lament. The scripture passages bring us through Jesus' final steps towards death. The prayers invite us to engage the current crisis as an opportunity to enter into the grief Jesus bears for the world.

As you walk through your neighbourhood, you are invited to pray for the people and places you pass, and to hold space for whatever emotions arise along the way.



Station 1: Personal grief and fears

Your home
Mark 26:36-42

Jesus, Lamb of God, you are no stranger to loneliness and grief.

We confess that in these times our hearts are heavy and our thoughts are scattered. Bring us comfort and peace.

When we grieve distance from friends and family, strengthen the bonds of belonging in our communities.

When we struggle with loneliness, anxiety and boredom, enfold us in your embrace.

When we are overwhelmed with work and family responsibilities, grant us the respite we need.

When we struggle to orient ourselves in this unfamiliar reality, help us to anchor ourselves in You.

When we fear what lies ahead, give us the grace to accept each day's invitation to see You and rest in Your love.

Name some fears and griefs you carry as an individual or as a family.

Lord, in your mercy, grant us peace.



Station 2: Those whose lives are most at risk

A back alley, or quiet intersection
Matthew 27:27-31

Jesus, Lamb of God, you are no stranger to abuse, persecution, and injustice.

For all those who are sick,

we ask for your healing.

For all grieving the loss of a loved one,

we ask for your comfort.

For those staffing our grocery stores, tending our sick, and standing on many other frontlines,

we ask for your protection.

God, we grieve the ways in which this current crisis deepens inequalities in our society.

We pray:

For Indigenous communities made more vulnerable to illness by colonial displacement, violence, disenfranchisement, and oppression

Lord, hear our prayer.

For women and children experiencing violence, who are co-quarantined with their abusers

Lord, hear our prayer.

For displaced people trapped in refugee camps and migrant detention centres

Lord, hear our prayer.

For incarcerated people who are crowded in jails and prisons

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those made more vulnerable to illness because of poverty

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those without a safe home in which to shelter, and for those whose food and housing security is threatened by the closure of schools and workplaces

Lord, hear our prayer.

Name people in your community, neighbourhood and beyond who you want to pray for.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.



Station 3: Prayers for courage and generosity

In front of the house of a neighbour or friend
John 19:25-27

Jesus, Lamb of God, full of compassion, who takes away the sin of the world, Give us the courage to trust in You, even as the future is uncertain;

to be generous and open-handed, even as we are surrounded by stories of scarcity.

Make us faithful to your example of sacrificial love.

Even as the sense of danger tempts us to turn inward on ourselves.

Deliver us from greed and self-interest and fill us with compassion to serve others.

Name some ways you can care for others in this time.

Lord, set us free so we can serve you.



Station 4: The environment

A park or green space

Matthew 27:45-46, 50-52

Jesus, King of all Creation,

We see how even the heavens and the earth mourned at the moment of your death.

We grieve how our society has put profit above care for creation, trading the wellbeing of people, plants, and animals for the wealth of a few.

As much in the global economy is put on pause, clear skies over polluted cities offer a glimpse of the beauty we routinely sacrifice for the sake of our chosen ways of life.

We acknowledge that our complacency and self-centeredness contribute to climate change and environmental degradation, and we grieve the ways in which we have not cared for your Creation.

We confess the ways in which we have lived with the illusion of separateness, from Creation and from our global neighbours. Help us to move forward with awareness of our interdependence with all of Creation.

Name something in Creation you love.

Lord, help us to steward your earth well.



Station 5: Hope for the future

A garden

John 19:28-30

Jesus, Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

In the darkness of this present moment, we can connect to the solemnity of Good Friday.

We grieve the loss of life around us, but we do not grieve as those without hope.

The world is changing in ways we cannot understand.

We grieve the death of what is familiar, but we lean into the hope of resurrection and new life.

Let us not long for a return to what we have known,

instead may we yearn for our own transformation, and for a just world in which everyone is cared for.

Loving God, we pray to you in our grief:

Renew all of Creation, that it may be on earth as it is in heaven.

Name people, places and situations which you place in God's hope.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Amen.

At the end of your walk you are invited to write out a confession, and nail it to a piece of wood

Mark 26:36-42

“They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples,” Sit here while I pray.” He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible that hour might pass from him. “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.

Matthew 27:27-31

“Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers round him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, King of the Jews!” they said. They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”

John 19:25-17

“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Matthew 27:45-46, 50-52

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open.

Matthew 27:57-60

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.