



# Order of Service



6 April 2012

East Calder 7:30 pm



Worship led by:  
Rev Dr André Groenewald  
Musicians:  
Praise Band

## **Gathering of God's People**

Time when we greet one another and prepare for worship.  
Those who are able please stand for the entry of the Bible.  
Words of welcome and announcements.

Good evening to this very special service. How are you?

Would you please excuse me tonight at tea as I am on my way to join the couple I blessed this afternoon for dinner?

## **Worshipping God Together**

### **Call to worship**

Minister:           The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?

**All:                   The Lord is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?**

**MP 755            When I survey the wondrous cross**

### **Opening prayer & Lord's prayer**

The Bible says: "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven."

Lord Jesus, may we watch and pray with you this night, as we contemplate your cup of covenant, your blood poured out, dissolving all the sin, suffering and sorrow of this broken world. You were acutely aware of the weakness of the flesh as you braced yourself to

drink. So strengthen us by your Spirit as we seek to drink more deeply than we have done before.

**We ask this in the name of our Lord and Saviour, who taught us to pray:**

**All:**

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.**

## **Reflecting on God's Word**

Reading: Luke 23:26-31, 44-49 (NT page 1060-1061)

Reader: Mike Batley

### **Background**

Luke gives us quite a different version of the crucifixion than the Gospel of Mark and Matthew.

Condemned criminals normally bore their own crosses (that is the horizontal beam of the cross), but in this case someone

else was asked to help. This might have been as a consequence of the severe torture Jesus suffered.

Devout Jewish pilgrims from throughout the Mediterranean came to Jerusalem during Passover, which explained why a Simon from Cyrene was in Jerusalem. Cyrene was in what is now Libya in North Africa and included a large Jewish community. “Simon” is a typical Jewish name. Roman soldiers could force anyone into service to carry things for them. But because it was a feast and work was forbidden, Simon is not coming from “the field” (literally) as a worker.

Luke is the only Gospel who does not quote the famous saying “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*”. Instead he quotes from Psalm 31:5 “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” which was often recited at the period of the evening offering—about the time of Jesus’ death.

Jesus final hours was from the “sixth hour” that is shortly before midday, to the “ninth hour” that is shortly before 3 p.m. In those days crucifixions rarely ended so quickly. Jesus dying moments was close to the time of the evening offering in the temple. Darkness came over the whole land and the curtain in the temple was torn in two. The “veil” or “curtain” was probably the one between the holy of holies—inhabited only by God, and where no mortal could enter except the high priest once each year—and the sanctuary where the priests ministered. It was a clear indication of the departure of God from the temple, as in Ezekiel 10–11.

In Mark’s Gospel the centurion says: “Surely this man was the Son of God!” while Luke says “Surely this was a righteous man” or in other words: He was innocent! To Luke it was very important to challenge not only “the Roman Courts of law” but also the Jewish court in Jerusalem.

All the people who witnessed Jesus’ dying moments walk away while beating their breasts as a characteristic sign of mourning. Jewish women bystanders would offer this as the

only public mourning these criminals could get, because none was permitted after the disposal of their bodies. Luke does not tell us the names of the women as Mark and Matthew does. He just says: “the woman who had followed Him from Galilee”. Maybe Luke wanted to be sensitive and protect their identities because in the eyes of their society they would have been regarded as “shameful” .

**Amen**

**MP 987                      Here is love vast as the ocean**

**Sermon**

<sup>49</sup> But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

There is a stark contrast in our passages tonight between God and us humans. Unlike humans who struggles to forgive, God forgave the sinners. Jesus said in his final moments: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”

Unlike humans who stood and watched from a distance, God decided to come close to us through the dying of Jesus on the cross. Yes God decided to come so close and do it Himself, so that we can live without the burdens of sin, death and hell.

Unlike the Palestinian Jews, who “labeled” the women who accompanied Jesus’ group of disciples, Jesus included them in His journey of suffering, forgiveness and mercy.

Unlike humans God decided to love and have mercy on the human race who could nae save themselves.

Good Friday is only good because it saved you and me from the suffering and crucifixion caused by sin, death and hell. Jesus took our sins upon him and saved us.

We must therefore look at our hands.

Because it was hands like ours that were nailed to the cross.

We need to look at our feet because it was feet like ours that stumbled their way to Calvary.

We must look into eyes of our neighbors, because it was for ones like these, that Jesus was crucified.

But we need to look at ourselves because it was for you and me that Jesus died.

May we always express our sincere gratitude and thanksgiving to God for walking on our behalf the journey of pain, suffering and sacrifice. And may God help us never to exclude other people from the grace of God just because they are different!

AMEN

### **Responding to God's word**

Our offerings are given for the ministry and mission of the church while we sing "MSP 33: And can it be".

Prayer of thanksgiving – Janice Anderson

**MSP 456            Make me a channel of Your peace**



**Benediction Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:**

Lord Give us, for light, the sunshine of your sorrow,

for shelter, Give us the shadow of your cross;

And The blessing of God almighty,

God the Father, God the Son,

and God the Holy Spirit

Be with you all

Now and for evermore

**Sung Amen**

Please remain standing as The Bible is removed.

## Poem: The cross

'This is my gift,' he said,  
  
'The cross on which I bled.  
Its weight you cannot bear,  
Unless I'm also there  
As in my steps you tread.  
Once an emblem of shame,  
This is transformed by my name.  
Its curse I've lifted,  
Its glory I've gifted  
To kindle in you love's flame.  
I carried this cross before you,  
On it willingly bore you,  
For your life I pleaded,  
Abba my prayer heeded.  
Carry it now I implore you.  
Take this sign of my reign,  
  
Do not shrink from its pain.  
Love's wounds bring healing,  
Mercy and grace revealing,  
Losing your life becomes gain.'

**(from <http://www.rootsontheweb.com>)**

*You are invited to stay for tea and coffee which are served in the hall.*