

Welcome to Crete United Church's online Good Friday Worship Service on the 7 Last Words, or phrases Jesus spoke from the cross. Each are followed by a meditation or prayer in which to participate. Sources for this service have been gathered from a variety of resources, many have been amended. May God bless this time and your worship on this holy day.

A Good Friday Service for Worship at Home

Opening Words

gather round
I have a story to tell
of one who reached inside himself
and took a handful of love
like a pile of stardust
and said: this is for you
it is all you need
it is all you will ever need
there is enough here
to change the whole world
take it

many laughed at him
mocked him
and ignored the invitation

but some dared to take it
and those who did
noticed something about this love
they found they could do what the gift-giver could do
they could stand with the lost
welcome the traveler
eat with the hungry
they found themselves doing what the man first did to them
give something of themselves to others
they became like the man
offering themselves
and as they offered themselves
others took the invitation
and many still do
and many still trust
it is enough to change the whole world

The Crucifixion of Jesus: John 19:16b-19

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. Here they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

The Seven Last Words

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Before you die, Jesus Christ,
and the world goes into deep darkness,
take from our lives,
 from our souls,
 from our consciences
all that has offended you,
all that has hurt others,
and the intransigence
which has made us numb to the plight
of those whom we could help or heal.

Today you will be with me in paradise.

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding[a] 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." Luke 23:39-43

Remember us,
not for our impressive accomplishments,
nor for things we occasionally display
or for any credit
we think we have in our moral account.

Remember us,
as one of the criminal community
who hung at your side,
and if life will not let us be in paradise
with you today,
keep a place for us tomorrow.

Mother, there is your son ...

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Mother, there is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. John 19:26-27

Let us pray for our families,
where they are open, loving, supportive,
that their joy might be kept safe.

For our families,
where they are tense, troubled, fragmented,
seething with suspicion,
that they may find a way through pain,

not a path away from it.

If there is one of my family
for whom I should care more fondly,
Lord, direct my gaze to them.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Lord Jesus,
by your cry of desperate honesty,
rid us of superficial faith
which is afraid of the dark.

Not so that we might be justified pessimists,
but so that we might discover profound joy,
give us, when we need it,
the courage to doubt,
 to rage,
 to question,
 to rail against heaven
until we know we are heard.

We ask for a sense of your solidarity,
that will be enough
to let us know
that we do not walk or cry alone;
that will enable us to go through the dark
and find light again in the morning.

I am thirsty.

You have made us for yourself.
We know it, even if we cannot name it.

We have had these bodies and these minds
long enough to learn to live with our limitations.

Yet despite this,
something in us longs, yearns, thirsts
for something better,
 something greater,
which we know is there.
So thank you for this incompleteness,
thank you for this yearning,
thank you for this thirst.

Thank you for giving us enough of you
to want more,
and so to sense the fullness of eternity
within the limits of time.

It is finished.

Now, Lord Jesus,
you can let go of us.

You have convinced us of our sin
and you have forgiven it.
You have convinced us of your way
and have engaged us in it.
You have shown us a foretaste of heaven
and have made us members of its commonwealth.

You can let go of us now.

Having overcome the sin of the world,
death will be a small obstacle.

Just as you foretold
that you would be handed over to be crucified
and this has to come true;
also as you foretold,
on the third day,
you will rise again.
And we will be your witnesses.

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Those whom he left behind saw nothing but his corpse. He was not a teacher anymore. He had become a teaching instead- a window into the depths of God that some could see through and some could not. Those who held out hope for a strong God, a fierce God, a God who would brook no injustice-they looked upon a scene where God was not, while those whose feet Jesus had washed, whose faces he had touched, whose open mouths he had fed as if they were little birds-they looked upon a scene in which God had died for love of them. He had put his own body between them and those who meant to do them harm. He had demolished the rock around their hearts. He had shown them a dangerous new way to live.

It was dark by the time they got him down and found a place to lay him. It was the Sabbath, his turn to rest. His part was over. His work was done.