

**Bethel Presbyterian Church
Corner of George & Brookland Streets
Sydney, NS**



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
Friday, March 30th, 2018
1:00 p.m.

Leading Worship
Rev. Robert Lyle
Brad Gillespie

Music Director
Peter MacDonald

Order of Service

Prelude

Announcements

Brad Gillespie

Call to Worship

On this day we gather to remember Jesus our Savior who loved us and gave himself for us. Let us draw near in full assurance of God's endless love and mercy.

We give our thanks and praise to Jesus Christ who carries our sorrows, heals our wounds, and redeems us from sin and death.

Prayer of Approach (in unison)

As we gather together today, we remember the supreme sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Led like a lamb to the slaughter, clothed in humility and grace, he willingly offered himself to death so that we might live forever. We are truly thankful for the extent of his love, stretched out on a cruel wooden cross. We dwell on the pain he bore for us and are truly grateful for the forgiveness that he offers. As we worship and praise now, help us to live in the wonder of this goodness and marvel at his endless grace. Amen.

Hymn # 238

Beneathe the cross of Jesus

Prayer of Confession

We confess to You, our Lord and Savior, that we have betrayed and denied You, forgotten and doubted You. When our faith is tested, we wonder where You are. When we see injustice in the world, we often stand by, we turn our backs, we ignore the cries of others. We confess that again and again we deny You and betray You with our silence when we fail to proclaim Your Good News, when we fail to live out Your teachings and love our neighbor as ourselves. Forgive us, O God, and help us to truly repent. Help us to remember Your sacrifice, Your love, and to know Your forgiveness. In the name of the One who lived, who was crucified, and who lives again, Jesus the Messiah, we pray. Amen.

Choir:

Remember

Words by J. Paul Williams

Music by Douglas Nolan

O. T. Lesson

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Res. Psalm

Psalm 22

Good Friday Litany

Hymn # 239 *O sacred head, sore wounded*

N.T. Epistle *Hebrews 10:16-25*

N.T. Gospel *John 18:1-19:42*

Sermon *At the cross*

Hymn # 237 *Oh come and mourn with me...*

Offering

A Prayer for Good Friday

Choir: *Calvary* *Words by Mary Kay Beall*

Music by John Carter

Hymn # 231 *When I survey the wondrous cross*

Benediction

Welcome

We welcome everyone to this service this afternoon and pray that all will be blessed as we worship together and remember the grace given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks to Brad Gillespie for his participating in this service and Peter MacDonald and the choir for providing special music.

The free-will offering this afternoon will be given to support the Cancer Patient Care Fund

A reflection on Good Friday

On this sacred day, we listen to the story of the passion of Jesus as told by John the Evangelist. If you are anything like me, when you read or listen to this account, you find it to be simply overwhelming. It is almost too much to take in at once. The passion of Jesus is a gripping drama that reaches down inside of us and evokes our deepest and strongest emotions. It almost defies words of commentary or explanation.

In reflecting on the passion, I have been thinking about my older brother, Tom. Tom was a Navy pilot who retired from the service some years ago. He was always a bright, active and caring person with a great sense of responsibility for the rest of the family. Last June, Tom was diagnosed with fourth stage glioblastoma, a virulent form of brain cancer. He underwent surgery to remove the tumor, but this is the kind of cancer that comes back with a vengeance, and it has done so in Tom. His prognosis is not good. Tom is now at the stage where he does not recognize anyone, even his very devoted wife, Dot. He cannot feed himself any longer. In about a week, I will be traveling from Chicago to Virginia Beach to visit Tom in the nursing home where he is now staying.

I thought of Tom in a particular way as I read John's account of the crucifixion scene. Mary, some other women, and the beloved disciple are depicted as standing near the cross. It seems to me that Tom, his wife Dot and their children, and the rest of our family are standing near the foot of the cross at this moment. This is the place where Jesus says, "It is finished." He has accomplished the mission given him by the Father. This is the place where he bows his head and hands over the spirit, the gift of his Spirit to all those who

believe in him. This is the place where a soldier thrusts a lance into his side and blood and water flow out, signifying the new life that comes forth from the crucified Christ. Standing near the cross of Jesus is both a painful and a powerful place to be.

Each of us has stood near the cross at particular moments in our lives. We know this place well. The situation may have involved the serious illness or loss of a family member, grappling with a broken relationship, experiencing a terrible disappointment, facing a disability, or a thousand other things. Whatever the situation, we know that standing near the cross is indeed a painful place to be. The Gospels do not suppress or gloss over the pain of the cross. In an era in which talk about a Messiah who had been crucified sounded ludicrous to many people, the Christian Scriptures presented the death of Jesus directly and vividly. For Christians, keeping the memory of Jesus' death is a living reminder that we are never alone as we stand near the cross in our own lives. While our faith does not magically remove the pain of that place, you and I are assured that Jesus, the crucified Son of God, is in solidarity with us at that place. He is intimately close to us because he has experienced that place in the most personal and intense way possible.

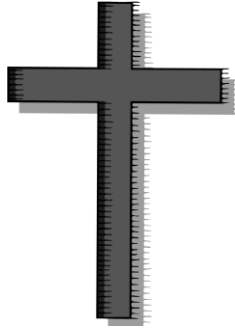
Standing near the cross of Jesus is also, however, a powerful place to be. It is powerful not because God finds any joy in human suffering. It was human beings, not God the Father, who put Jesus on the cross. Christianity is not a cult of suffering. Standing near the cross of Jesus is a powerful place to be because it is the place where the power of God is present and at work – quietly, faithfully, patiently at work from within. At his own moment of death, Jesus held on to the hand of his Abba God, and, even in this hour of

darkness, experienced communion with this tenaciously faithful God. And God was present and on the move to bring life out of death. The flow of blood and water from the pierced side of Christ is a sign of that new life that will become manifest in the raising of Jesus from the dead.

For us, too, despite its pain, standing near the cross can be a powerful place to be. For my family, Tom's illness has brought us together in a spirit of care and support at a whole new level. That does not explain why Tom and his wife and children are going through this ordeal. Suffering remains a mystery that defies any human explanation, even the most theological of explanations. But it is clear that God's grace has been at work through this difficult time to offer us new life. Witnessing the fidelity and care of Tom's wife, Dot, has been one way in which God has communicated to us something of his own fidelity. In faith, I know that God is holding on to the hand of Tom even at this moment in which Tom cannot communicate with us. There is enduring communion between the crucified and risen Christ and Tom in his own time of crucifixion. And, as he was present at Calvary, God is faithfully, quietly at work to bring life out of death for Tom and for his family.

Standing near the cross of Jesus is a painful and a powerful place to be. As we pray this Good Friday, we are invited to stand there with Jesus and his disciples. And we are called to trust that what is happening there is what happens wherever the God of Jesus Christ is present: God is faithfully present and at work to bring life out of death. We believe that this, in fact, is what God does for a living.

Robin Ryan, CP



On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross
The emblem of suffering and shame
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown

O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world
Has a wondrous attraction for me
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary

In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine
A wondrous beauty I see
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died
To pardon and sanctify me

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true
Its shame and reproach gladly bear
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away
Where His glory forever I'll share