

Welcome to the Parish Church of St Mark
Serving the people of Broomhill & Broomhall
Living Thinking Loving Faith



Reflections at the Foot of the Cross

Good Friday, 3rd April 2026
12 noon to 3 pm

Welcome to St Mark's Church

Today as we come together at the foot of the cross to remember Jesus' crucifixion. These events, and how Christians have come to understand them, bring up different thoughts and emotions. The temptation can be to skip over today, with its raw and traumatic acts, to focus on the hope of resurrection.

Today we contend with the horror and injustice of violence, the reality of broken bodies, and unresolved stories. Today we remember Jesus' death, retelling the route from court to cross, and in doing so we hear again the mechanics of scapegoating, abuses of power, the miscarriage of justice, and the challenge of forgiveness. Today we remember Jesus. But in doing so we remember that violent acts will happen to people today also.

Over time the church has explored what meaning we can take from Good Friday. What is God doing in these traumatising and devastating events? And what could that mean for victims of violence today.

We can look at the crucifixion from different angles, from different perspectives. From the perspective of the one who betrays, or the disciples who fled, the women who stayed, or the religious leaders who call for blood. From the perspectives of those who were swayed by the whim of the people, or the ruler who washed his hands of guilt. The perspectives of the bystanders who did not know what to do, the soldiers who carried out their duties, or the criminals crucified alongside.

We also come to this horrific day with the perspectives we bring. Our connection to violence, and our experience of broken bodies, however close or disconnected to us that might feel.

Today in our reflections, we are purposefully choosing to stand with those who have experienced violence. Standing, watching, and retelling these events with those who have known powerlessness in mind.

In her book, *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman writes

The traumatic event challenges an ordinary person to become a theologian, a philosopher, and a jurist. The survivor is called upon to articulate the values and beliefs that she once held and that the trauma destroyed. She stands mute before the emptiness of evil, feeling the insufficiency of any known system of

explanation...where all questions are reduced to one, spoken more in bewilderment than in outrage: why? The answer is beyond understanding.

The traumatic event challenges the ordinary person to become a *theologian*. It is such an odd phrase to read in a psychiatric work and yet it rings true. Perhaps it should not be surprising, that a faith which carries the trauma of God at its very heart, could become more tangible through personal experiences of trauma. However, trauma carries its own incomprehensible experience, its own questions of why, with no obvious answer. Today we stand in solidarity with Christ, and in solidarity with others, and ask in bewilderment - why?

The next three hours lead us through the crucifixion narrative. And we have provided detailed information in this booklet, knowing some will stay for the three hours, and others will only be able to stay a while. Our time together will include readings, homilies, silence, and music. Across the three hours we will explore the themes of scapegoating, abuses of power, forgiveness and atonement.

You are invited to come and go during these 3 hours and to move freely around the church during the time you are here. If you would like to step out, drinks and quiet space is available in the lounge, and the option to speak to someone. Towards the end of our time together there is an invitation to venerate the cross and to share silently in communion using reserved sacrament.

Along the walls are images from *The Footsteps of Christ* created by the Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey. The Stations of the Cross have formed part of Christian devotion at Passiontide for many centuries because they enable us to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus. They originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to follow literally in the footsteps of Jesus, tracing the path from Pilate's house to Calvary. They would pause for prayer and devotion at various points. Eventually, those pilgrims brought the practice back to their home countries and ever since then Christians of differing traditions have used this form of devotion.

Please remain mindful of those choosing to be in silence. You may wish to light a candle or offer a prayer at the cross at the back of church, pray holding a small holding cross, or pick up one of the images to look at. Your time here will demand a great deal of you, but we pray that it will be a blessing too.

THE FIRST HOUR: 12-1pm

Introit: Thou Knowest Lord by Purcell

*Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts;
Shut not thy merciful ears unto our pray'rs;
But spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty*

*O holy and most merciful Saviour
Thou most worthy Judge eternal
Suffer us not, at our last hour
For any pains of death, to fall from thee. Amen*

Welcome

Introduction to the three hours followed by the Singing Bowl.

Gathering

Today we gather at the foot of the cross.
At the place where violence is not hidden,
and truth is not avoided.

**We come not to explain what cannot be explained,
but to witness.**

We come to listen to the story of Jesus
and to recognise, in him,
all who have been harmed, silenced, or cast out.

**We come not with easy answers,
but with open hearts.**

We come to hear again the story of Christ's suffering and death,
and to stand with all who suffer.

**We come in silence,
in grief and truth.**

Hymn

In the depth of human suffering
in the mystery of loss,
in the cry of desolation
we are walking with the cross.

When our hearts are sore and aching,
grieving, weary with the strain,
God walks with us, bearing witness
to the love that holds our pain.

When relationships are broken,
And the ties of trust are torn
God walks with us, bearing witness
in the wait for hope newborn.

In a world of hurt and violence,
bodies broken and abused,
God walks with us, bearing witness
to the longing search for truth.

When our world is spoiled and damaged,
air polluted, beauty marred,
God walks with us, bearing witness
to the tending of earth's scars.

In and through creation's suffering
in the mystery of loss,
on the road of our redemption
God is walking with the cross.

Jan Berry (b.1953)
Music: John Stainer (1840 - 1901)
Tune: Cross of Jesus

A long reading from John chapters 18 and 19 Including these verses.

Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.”
John 19.4-6

Music

Pie Jesu by Gabriel Fauré

Homily I

Jesus as scapegoat

Prayer

God of truth,

you see what we hide.

You see what we place on others.

God of justice,

you know the weight we shift.

You know the cost of our peace.

God of mercy,

you stand with the rejected.

Stand with them now.

Let us pray for those who have been made scapegoats
Those blamed for the failures of others,
those silenced to protect institutions,
those excluded so that others may feel secure
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For those who carry shame that is not theirs,
for those who have been disbelieved,
for those sent into isolation and exile
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For communities and churches,
when truth is costly and silence is easier,
when harm is hidden and victims are burdened
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of the crucified,
you are found in the one cast out and condemned:
give us grace to recognise the weight we place on others,
and courage to refuse the patterns that harm;
that we may stand with those who suffer,
and walk in the truth revealed on the cross;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Silence is kept.

A reading from John chapter 19

Including these verses.

Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you?"

Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above".

John 19.10-11

Hymn

My song is love unknown, my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.

O who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh, and die?

Sometimes they strew his way, and his sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day hosannas to their King.

Then 'Crucify!' is all their breath,
and for his death, they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite?

He made the lame to run, he gave the blind their sight.

Sweet injuries! yet they at these
themselves displease, and 'gainst him rise.

They rise, and needs will have, my dear Lord made away;

a murderer they save, the Prince of Life they slay.

Yet patient he to suffering goes,
that he his foes from death might free.

Here might I stay and sing: no story so divine;

never was love, dear King, never was grief like thine!

This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise

I all my days could gladly spend.

Samuel Crossman (1624-84)

Tune: Love Unknown by John Ireland (1879-1961)

THE SECOND HOUR 1-2pm

A reading from John 10

Sometime before Jesus spoke to his disciples about his death saying...
'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them...I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.

(John 10. 11,12, 17 & 18)

Music

Melodie by Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck

Homily 2

Abuse of Power

Prayer

Let us remain with Christ before the powers of this world.
Let us bring before God all those whose bodies and lives are controlled by others.

God of all power,
you do not coerce or dominate.
Reveal your power among us.

Christ who stood before Pilate,
you faced violence without surrendering truth.
Hold those who face such power now.

Spirit of truth,
you cannot be silenced.
Remain with us.

Let us pray for those who live under the power of others.
Those who are controlled, coerced, or abused,
those whose voices are not heard,
those whose bodies are not their own.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For those who stand before systems that judge without listening,
for those navigating courts, institutions, and authorities,
for those whose truth is questioned or denied.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For all who hold power
in government, in churches, in homes
that it may not be used to harm, but to protect and uphold dignity.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God whose power is revealed in the cross,
not in domination but in truth and love:
teach us to recognise the difference between power that harms
and power that gives life;
may we reflect the dignity you have given to every human being;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Silence is kept

Hymn

O sacred head, surrounded by crown of piercing thorn!
O bleeding head, so wounded, so shamed and put to scorn!
Death's pallid hue comes o'er thee, the glow of life decays;
yet angel-hosts adore thee, and tremble as they gaze.

Thy comeliness and vigour is withered up and gone,
and in thy wasted figure I see death drawing on.
O agony and dying! O love to sinners free!
Jesus, all grace supplying, turn thou thy face on me.

In this thy bitter Passion, Good Shepherd, think of me
with thy most sweet compassion, unworthy though I be:
beneath thy Cross abiding for ever would I rest,
in thy dear love confiding, and with thy presence blest.

Text: Paul Gerhardt (1607-1677) trans. Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)

Tune: Passion Chorale arr. JS Bach (1685-1750)

A reading from Luke chapter 23

Including these verses.

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Luke 23. 32-34

Music

Sarabande from Cello Suite No. 2 in D Minor by J.S Bach

Homily 3

The Limits of Forgiveness

Prayer

We remain with Christ in his prayer and bring before God all that is unresolved, all that cannot yet be forgiven.

God of mercy,
you hear the prayers we cannot pray.

Hold them in your love.

Christ on the cross,
you entrusted all things to the Father.

Teach us to entrust what we cannot carry.

Spirit who dwells within us,
you make space for truth.

Keep us in that space.

Let us pray for those who have been hurt.

Those who are not ready to forgive,

those who cannot forgive,

those who have been told they must.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For those who carry anger, grief, or confusion,

for those whose wounds are deep and enduring,

for those seeking healing without pressure.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For all relationships broken by harm,

for the long work of truth and justice,

for the possibility of restoration, where it may come.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of mercy and truth,
you do not rush us beyond what we can bear:
hold in your love all that is unresolved,
all that is wounded,
all that remains undone;
and in your time,
bring healing where there is pain,
truth where there is silence,
and life where there has been death;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Silence is kept.

THE THIRD HOUR 2-3pm

Music

Pastorale on Rockingham by Norman Gilbert.

A reading from Mark chapter 15. Jesus dies on the cross.

At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Mark 15.34-37

Hymn

On a hillside, near a city,
Hanging in the noonday sun,
Scorned by soldiers without pity,
Arms were opened wide for me.

*O my Jesus, O my Saviour,
lifted on the cross for me,
Open wide your arms to hold us
In the love that sets us free.*

Faced with God-rejecting anger;
Fragile in his agony,
Bearing loads we cannot reckon,
Arms were opened wide for me.

O my Jesus, O my Saviour

Lonely Jesus, placid, patient;
Battered by hostility,
Yet you call us, 'Stand here with me';
Arms are opened wide for me.

O my Jesus, O my Saviour

Jesus, born for every nation.
Shocking truth of God's great love,
In your open arms of welcome
Let us see the victory.

O my Jesus, O my Saviour.....

*Words: John Schofield
Tune: Blaenwern*

Homily 4 Atonement

Prayer

Let us remain at the cross, where nothing is hidden,
and God is present in the midst of suffering.

God of compassion,
you do not turn away from suffering.
You enter it.

God of truth,
you do not conceal violence.
You reveal it.

God of love,
you do not abandon the wounded.
You remain.

Let us pray for those who suffer.
Those whose pain has been explained away,
those whose stories have been used but not honoured,
those whose wounds remain open.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For those who struggle with the language of faith,
when it has been used to justify harm,
or to make sense of what should never have happened—
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the Church,
that it may speak truthfully of the cross,
and never call good what is not good,
nor holy what is harmful
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of the cross,
in Christ you have entered the depths of human suffering
and made yourself known among the wounded:
keep us from false understandings that harm,
and lead us into truth that heals;
that we may recognise your presence in life and in death;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Silence is kept.

Veneration of the Cross

We stand at the foot of the cross.
Here, violence is laid bare.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

God of the crucified,
you are not distant from suffering,
but present within it:
as we stand before the cross,
teach us to recognise your presence
in all who are wounded and cast out;
and give us grace to stand with them,
in truth and in love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

You are invited to come forward to venerate the cross, by touch, bow, or silence.

Music

Stabat Mater Dolorosa by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you were betrayed and abandoned
be with those who are alone.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you were accused and condemned
be with those who are judged unjustly.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you were mocked and shamed
be with those who are humiliated or silenced.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you were stripped and exposed
be with those whose dignity has been taken.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you were wounded and crucified
be with those who suffer violence.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you died upon the cross
hold all who are dying and all who mourn.

Hymn

You are invited to stand.

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
save in the death of Christ, my God:
all the vain things
that charm me most
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingling down:
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm
of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)
Music: Edward Miller (1735 - 1807)
Tune: Rockingham

Sharing Communion

Jesus, in bread and in wine,
you remind us of body and blood.
Broken and bruised, you take on wounded creation.
In sacrifice and death you give us life,
redemption and reconciliation,
to God, to one another, to the earth.
This is love. Root in us your deep love. **Amen.**

Standing at the foot of the cross as Jesus taught us, so we pray
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed by your name
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
crucified yet ever living,
be the communion between us,
the sustenance we share,
and the life we long to embody.
Amen.

*You are invited to come forward in silence to receive the bread and wine
or words of blessing. Please ask if you would prefer a gluten free wafer.*

Silence

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy,
you have brought us to the cross of Christ:
keep us in its shadow
as we wait in hope for the dawning of Easter;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Three Hours is concluded. We leave in silence.

We are grateful to Eleanor Jarvis, our acting Director of Music and St Mark's Choir, our organist Paul Hudson, our choral scholars Agnes Holman, Zimo Liu, and Kaiyan Zhang, and Clare Wallace for the musical contributions.

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