

Opening Hymn: We sing the praise

We sing the praise of him who died,
of him who died upon the cross;
the sinner's hope let men deride,
for this we count the world but loss.

Inscribed upon the cross we see
in shining letters, 'God is love;'
he bears our sins upon the Tree;
he brings us mercy from above.

The Cross! it takes our guilt away:
it holds the fainting spirit up;
it cheers with hope the gloomy day,
and sweetens ev'ry bitter cup.

It makes the coward spirit brave,
and nerves the feeble arm for fight;
it takes its terror from the grave,
and gilds the bed of death with light:

The balm of life, the cure of woe,
the measure and the pledge of love,
the sinner's refuge here below,
the angels' theme in heaven above.

Bow Brickhill 94 NEH

The Collect: Passion Sunday

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through the same Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

The New Testament Reading

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

Philippians 3: 4b–14

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: Bless the Lord, my soul

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.

Taize Community

The Gospel

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

St John 12: 1–8

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Creed:

Let us declare our faith in the living God.

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Offertory Hymn: My song is love unknown

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?

He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow:
but men made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.

But O, my friend,
my friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend!

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.

They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away;
a murderer they save,
the Prince of Life they slay.

Yet cheerful he
to suffering goes,
that he his foes
from thence 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.

Anthem: Wondrous Cross

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 cross 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 mingled 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.

Philip Wilby (b. 1949)
Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Communion Hymn: Once, only once, and once for all

Once, only once, and once for all,
his precious life he gave;
before the Cross in faith we fall,
and own it strong to save.

'One offering, single and complete,'
with lips and heart we say;
but what he never can repeat
he shows forth day by day.

For, as the priest of Aaron's line
within the holiest stood,
and sprinkled all the mercy-shrine
with sacrificial blood;

So he who once atonement wrought,
our Priest of endless power,
presents himself for those he bought
in that dark noontide hour.

His manhood pleads where now it lives
on heaven's eternal throne,
and where in mystic rite he gives
its presence to his own.

And so we show thy death, O Lord,
till thou again appear;
and feel, when we approach thy board,
we have an altar here.

Albano 304 NEH

Dismissal: There is a green hill far away

There is a green hill far away,
without a city wall,
where the dear Lord was crucified
who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell,
what pains he had to bear,
but we believe it was for us
he hung and suffered there.

He died that we might be forgiven,
he died to make us good;
that we might go at last to heaven,
saved by his precious blood.

There was no other good enough
to pay the price of sin;
he only could unlock the gate
of heaven, and let us in.

O, dearly, dearly has he loved,
and we must love him too,
and trust in his redeeming blood,
and try his works to do.

Horsley 92 NEH