

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Jesus told his disciples,
‘If any want to become my followers,
let them deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me.
For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who
lose their life for my sake will find it.’ Matthew 16.24

Peace to you all
And also with you

Words of introduction

Historically, Protestants have tended to reject the practices associated with the Stations of the Cross, largely because they were associated with indulgences. In increasing numbers, Protestants are rediscovering the value of liturgically shaped communal and personal devotional practices. As a result, there has been an increasing interest from Protestants in the Stations of the Cross

Many Protestants prefer to use only eight Stations of the Cross, since those are the main events recorded in the Gospel accounts about Jesus’ journey. Our service will follow that pattern.

The value in the Stations of the Cross lies in the simple twofold enacted confession. First, life is sometimes dark, painful, and brings endings. That reality will not go away even for the Son of God. Second, God does some of his best work in the darkness

as we persist in the journey, even when that journey leads to Golgotha. Resurrection Sunday has no meaning without Good Friday. This journey reminds us of the darkness as a basis to celebrate the light.

Let us pray.

A brief moment of silence follows.

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death on a cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through 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.

Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal.
have mercy on us.

Hymn There is a green hill far away,

Station 1: Pilate Condemns Jesus to Die



Jesus stands in the most human of places. He has already experienced profound solidarity with so many on this earth, by being beaten and tortured. Now he is wrongfully condemned to punishment by death. His commitment to entering our lives completely begins its final steps. He has said "yes" to God and placed his life in God's hands. We follow him in this final surrender, and contemplate with reverence each place along the way, as he is broken and given for us.

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

As I view the scene,
I become moved by both outrage and gratitude.
I look at Jesus.
His face.
The crown of thorns.
The blood.

His clothes stuck to the wounds on his back.
Pilate washes his hands of the whole affair.
Jesus' hands are tied behind his back.

This is for me.
That I might be free.
That I might have eternal life.
As the journey begins I ask to be with Jesus.
To follow his journey. I express my love and thanks.

Station 2: Jesus Accepts His Cross



Jesus is made to carry the cross on which he will die. It represents the weight of all our crosses. What he must have felt as he first took it upon his shoulders! With each step he enters more deeply into our human experience. He walks in the path of human misery and suffering, and experiences its crushing weight.

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

I contemplate the wood of that cross.

I imagine how heavy it is.

I reflect upon all it means that Jesus is carrying it.

I look into his eyes.

It's all there.

This is for me.

So I place myself with him in this journey.

In its anguish.

In his freedom and surrender.

In the love that must fill his heart.

With sorrow and gratitude,

I continue the journey.

Moved by the power of his love,

I am drawn to him
and express my love
in the words that come to me.

Station 3: Simon Helps Carry the Cross



Jesus even experiences our struggle to receive help. He is made to experience the poverty of not being able to carry his burden alone. He enters into the experience of all who must depend upon others to survive. He is deprived of the satisfaction of carrying this burden on his own.

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

I look into his face and contemplate his struggle.
His weariness and fragility.
His powerlessness .
I see how he looks at Simon,
with utmost humility and gratitude.

This is for me.

So I feel anguish and gratitude.

I express my thanks that he can continue this journey. That he has help.

That he knows my inability to carry my burden alone.

I say what is in my heart, with deep feeling.

Station 4: Jesus Speaks to the Women



The women of Jerusalem, and their children, come out to comfort and thank him. They had seen his compassion and welcomed his words of healing and freedom. He had broken all kinds of social and religious conventions to connect with them. Now they are here to support him. He feels their grief. He suffers, knowing he can't remain to help them more in this life. He knows the mystery of facing the separation of death.

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

I look at their faces.

So full of love and gratitude,
loss and fear.

I contemplate what words might have passed between them.

I remember all his tender, compassionate,
merciful love for me.

I place myself with these women and children to support him.

This is for me.

So, I let this scene stir up deep gratitude.

Station 5: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments



Part of the indignity is to be crucified naked. Jesus is completely stripped of any pride. The wounds on his back are torn open again. He experiences the ultimate vulnerability of the defenceless. No shield or security protects him. As they stare at him, his eyes turn to heaven.

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

I pause to watch the stripping.
I contemplate all that is taken from him.
And, how he faces his death with such nakedness.
I reflect upon how much of himself
he has revealed to me.
Holding nothing back.

As I look at him in his humility,
I know that this is for me,
and I share my feelings of gratitude.

Station 6: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross



Huge nails are hammered through his hands and feet to fix him on the cross. He is bleeding much more seriously now. As the cross is lifted up, the weight of his life hangs on those nails. Every time he struggles to pull himself up to breathe, his ability to cling to life slips away.

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

I make myself watch the nails being driven through his flesh.
And I watch his face.

I contemplate the completeness of his entry into our lives. Can there be any pain or agony he would not understand?

This is for me.

Nailed to a cross to forever proclaim liberty to captives.

What sorrow and gratitude fill my heart!

Station 7: Jesus Cares for His Mother



Jesus' path takes him to a powerful source of his strength to continue. All his life, his mother had taught him the meaning of the words, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord." Now they look into each other's eyes. How pierced-through her heart must be! How pained he must be to see her tears! Now, her grace-filled smile blesses his mission and stirs his heart to its depth. Love and trust in God bind them together.

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

As I watch them in this place along the way,
I contemplate the mystery of love's power to give strength.
She knows the sorrow in every mother's heart,
who has lost a child to tragedy or violence.
I look at the two of them very carefully,
and long for such love and such peace.

This is for me.

Such incredible freedom.
The availability of a servant.
I find the words to express what is in my heart.

Station 8: Jesus Dies on the Cross



Between two criminals, a mocking title above his head, with only Mary and John and Mary Magdalene to support him, Jesus surrenders his last breath: "Into your hands I commend my spirit."

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.**

I stand there, at the foot of the cross,
side by side with all of humanity,
and behold our salvation.
I carefully watch and listen to all that is said.
And then,
I experience the one
who gives life pass from life to death, for me.
I console Mary and John and Mary.
And let them console me.

This is the hour to express the deepest feelings within me.

Hymn: When I survey the wondrous cross

The minister says these devotions.

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and praise you for your mighty resurrection;

by virtue of your cross
joy has come into our world.

God be gracious to us and bless us:
make his face shine upon us,

Let your ways be made known on earth:
your liberating power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God:
all the peoples praise you.

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and praise you for your mighty resurrection;
by virtue of your cross
joy has come into our world.

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
may we know your love for us,
that in humility, love and joy
we may place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen

The Conclusion

The minister says

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross, and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for you live and reign now and for ever.
Amen.

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom
in the words our Saviour taught us.

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved mankind: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross, we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And may the blessing of God the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit be with us all this day and forever more.

Amen.