**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for**

**Palm Sunday 2021**

*"“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”* John 12:13

**CHECK-IN** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Suzie De Quattro & Betty Thompson)**

**WELCOME (Betty)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before? (Betty)
* Judy Sholes and Maryann Dolan prepared today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to Stu Sklamm, Linda Donaldson and Reggie Ott for leading our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Joan Sklamm, Anne Regan, Bill Beard, Bill Fanelli, Richard McGinnis, Jim De Quattro, Ann Jelen, Bob Gallagher, Suzie De Quattro, Peggy Thompson, Sr. Grace Hartzog, and Anne LoPiano.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please put a note in Chat or email later.
* We will have services at 7:30 PM Eastern time on Holy Thursday and Good Friday.  On Thursday, please bring a cup of wine or water, and a piece of bread.  On Friday, please bring paper and pen.
* Change in how we are reflecting on the readings today. We are using the same questions for all seven short readings. They will be read aloud the first time. After the other readings, you will hear a chime to start the silence and the questions will be shown on your screen. You will find the questions in Chat as we begin Sharing, and otherwise we won’t be using Chat until after our last song.

**SETTLING IN (Judy)**

Let’s settle in.

We are not all in the same physical space, but we can still be together by sharing a common breath.  So, let us begin by slowly taking one collective breath together. In and out.   With each breath, let us all allow the Spirit of God to settle deeper into us. As we breathe in…and out…let’s relax our bodies and allow our breath to carry away any tensions we might feel and to free us of any distractions that might be trying to fill our minds.   Now let’s take 3 more breaths together.  One to be here…one to be together as a community…and one to make space for the light of God to reside in each of us.

And now Stu and Joan Sklamm will lead us into our opening.

**OPENING HYMN: “Hosanna” (Stu Sklamm)**

*Refrain*:  Hosanna! Hosanna!  Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he, blessed is he; Hosanna! Hosanna!

He who comes in the name of the Lord: Hosanna! Hosanna!

*Refrain*.

Children of Jerusalem: Hosanna! Hosanna!

Children, welcome Christ your King; Hosanna! Hosanna!

*Refrain*.

Sing your praise, sing your praise: Hosanna! Hosanna!

Hail the dawn of eternal life: Hosanna! Hosanna!

*Refrain*.

**READING 1** **(Joan Sklamm)**

A reading from the the gospel of John. (pause)

When the great crowd that had come to the feast heard   
that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,   
they took palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out:  
    “Hosanna!  
    “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,  
        the king of Israel.”  
Jesus found an ass and sat upon it, as is written:  
    Fear no more, O daughter Zion;  
    see, your king comes, seated upon an ass’s colt.

**RITUAL (Maryann Dolan, Judy Sholes, and Linda Donaldson)**

Beloved Community:  Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph, knowing that this was where he would meet death. In the *remaining* readings today we follow Jesus from the darkness of suffering and death into the full light of his love.

Linda and all, muted (sung): Lord, you have the words of everlasting light

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Beloved Community … We have journeyed together this Lent “becoming, doing, and changing whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life that is in us.” (Joan Chittister)

Linda and all, muted (sung): Lord, you have the words of everlasting light.

Beloved Community … We have been stretching ourselves open to more and more light. This week we open wide the door to Holy Week, to the dying and rising of Jesus.

Linda and all, muted (sung): Lord, you have the words of everlasting light.

Beloved Community….Mark begins the gospel today in the upper room that was prepared for the Passover Feast. Gathered with his disciples, Jesus gives us his body and his blood. It is the new covenant of service and love which his life and his actions reveal to us.

Linda and all, muted (sung): Lord, you have the words of everlasting light.

Beloved Community ...The readings quickly shift to the darkness of suffering and finally death on the cross. In and through this great act of love Jesus becomes one with us. The light of God’s unconditional love shines like a beacon for us all.

Linda and all, muted (sung): Lord, you have the words of everlasting light.

Beloved Community … The journey of Jesus is the journey of every believer. In these final days of Lent, we continue to move from darkness to the fullness of the light as Jesus journeys to his death and resurrection. He comes in the name of the Lord to reveal the true nature of God as love and to announce the reign of God and the vision of the Kingdom…or Kin-dom of God.

Linda and all, muted (sung): Lord, you have the words of everlasting light.

Beloved Community… Jesus would not want us to hear this as his unique story. Listen with awareness of the unjust suffering and death that still surrounds us.  Listen in solidarity with refugees, victims of trafficking, and people who bear the weight of 400 years of racism.  Listen, alert to our **Kin**-dom.

  Linda and all, muted (sung): Lord, you have the words of everlasting light.

Judy: Let us now listen to segments from the Gospel of Mark. The readers, in order, are: Anne Regan, Bill Beard, Richard McGinnis, Jim De Quattro, Ann Jelen, Bob Gallagher, and Suzie De Quattro. After the first reading, Bill Fanelli will read the two reflection questions that we will be using after each of the gospel segments. We encourage you to remain with these two questions for all of the periods of silence. This will allow you to realize how each reading might resonate with you in different ways.

**READING 2**  **(Anne Regan with Bill Beard)**

Jesus came with the Twelve into the city,

to the upper room that had been prepared for the Passover feast.   
While they were eating,  
he took bread, and gave it to them, and said,

**(Bill Beard) “Take it; this is my body.”**  
Then he took a cup and gave it to them,   
and they all drank from it.  
He said to them,  
**(Bill) “This is my blood of the covenant.”**

**QUESTIONS (Bill Fanelli) (Betty:** Slide w questions**)**

What did I hear in this gospel that invites me to change my heart or my mind?

How do my life and my actions, in this time and place, manifest the reign of God in the KIN-dom of God?

**SILENCE** (About 90 seconds) (**Judy** will sound chime; then **Betty** stops slide.)

**READING 3** **(Richard McGinnis with Bill Beard)**

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane,  
and Jesus said to his disciples,  
**(Bill Beard) “My soul is sorrowful even to death.  
Remain here and keep watch.”**  
He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed  
that if it were possible the hour might pass by him;   
he said,

**(Bill Beard) “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you.  
Take this cup away from me,  
but not what I will but what you will.”**

**(Betty:**  Slide w questions)

**SILENCE** (About 90 seconds) (**Judy** will sound chime; then **Betty** stops slide.)

**READING 4**  **(Jim De Quattro with Bill Beard)**

Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived,   
accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs   
who had come from the chief priests,  
the scribes, and the elders.  
They laid hands on him and arrested him.  
One of the bystanders drew his sword,  
struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear.  
Jesus said to them in reply,  
**(Bill Beard) “Have you come out as against a robber,   
with swords and clubs, to seize me?  
Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area,   
yet you did not arrest me.”**

They led Jesus away to the high priest.

**(Betty:**  Slide w questions)

**SILENCE** (About 90 seconds) (**Judy** will sound chime; then **Betty** stops slide.)

**READING 5**  **(Ann Jelen with Bob Gallagher, Bill Beard, and Ann Jelen)**

The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus,  
saying,

**(Bob Gallagher) “Have you no answer?  
What are these men testifying against you?”**  
But he was silent and answered nothing.  
Again the high priest asked him and said to him,

**(B Gallagher) “Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?”**

Then Jesus answered,

**(Bill Beard) “I am.”**

The high priest said,

**(Bob Gallagher) “What further need have we of witnesses?”**

They all condemned him as deserving to die.  
Some began to spit on him.  
They blindfolded him and struck him and said to him,

(Bill, Bob, Ann**) “Prophesy!”**

And the guards greeted him with blows.

**(Betty:**  Slide w questions)

**SILENCE** (About 90 seconds) (**Judy** will sound chime; then **Betty** stops slide.)

**READING 6** **(Ann Jelen with Bob Gallagher and Bill Beard)**

Pilate [asked the crowd,]

**(Bob Gallagher) “What do you want me to do   
with the man you call the king of the Jews?”**

They shouted again, (Bill, Bob,, Ann) **“Crucify hm.”**

**(Bob Gallagher) “Why?  What evil has he done?”**

They only shouted the louder, (Bill, Bob, and Ann) **“Crucify him.”**

So Pilate had Jesus scourged, [and]  
handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace,   
and assembled the whole cohort.  
They clothed him in purple and,   
weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him.  
They began to salute him with,

**(Bill, Bob) "Hail, King of the Jews!”**   
and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him.  
They knelt before him in homage.  
And when they had mocked him,  
they stripped him of the purple cloak,  
dressed him in his own clothes,  
and led him out to crucify him.

**(Betty:**  Slide w questions)

**SILENCE** (About 90 seconds) (**Judy** will sound chime; then **Betty** stops slide.)

**READING 7** **(Suzie De Quatro with Bill Beard)**

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon,  
a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country,  
to carry his cross.

They brought him to the place of Golgotha  
— which is translated Place of the Skull —,  
They gave him wine drugged with myrrh,  
but he did not take it.  
Then they crucified him and divided his garments.

At noon darkness came over the whole land  
until three in the afternoon.  
And at three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,   
**(Bill Beard) “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*”**

which is translated, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”  
Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

**(Betty:**  Slide w questions)

**SILENCE** (About 90 seconds) (**Judy** will sound chime; then **Betty** stops slide.)

**SHARING (Peggy Thompson)**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you have reflected upon our readings and music. We welcome everyone who wants to speak, and we also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening.

So, let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. How is Jesus asking you to enter God’s reign with him? [Long-ish pause]

Now who would like to start our sharing? Remember to unmute yourself to speak and mute yourself again afterwards.

[Sharing]

[If there is silence more than about 30 seconds before anyone speaks:] Take whatever quiet you need before you speak.

[If there is extended silence during the sharing:] Is there anyone else who would like to share?  [Pause.]

[Stop by about 11:25.]

Thank you.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Judy)**

We have just listened to God’s word and the inner stirrings of our hearts and minds. Let’s pause in silence to notice what prayer rises in us now. (Pause) Our response will be: Loving God, hear our prayer. Please end your prayer with “Let us pray…”

As we emerge from the darkness of Lent to the light of Easter, may we dedicate this Holy Week to experiencing a change of heart to align ourselves with the reign of God, let us pray…Loving God, hear our prayer.

In this time of deep division, let us be peacemakers who strive to better understand each other’s hopes, dreams and needs…let us pray…Loving God, hear our prayer.

For our sisters, brothers and children throughout the world who are abandoned, oppressed and living in fear, let us pray…Loving God, her our prayer.

That we might follow the example of the Leadership Conference of Religious Women and all the congregations under their leadership by becoming instruments of the change that the world needs, let us pray….Loving God, hear our prayer.

For what else shall we pray?

Thank you.

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other’s burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts’ longings for the healing of our world. Amen.

**OFFERTORY Musical Meditation: I Have Loved You with an Everlasting Love**

**Betty:** Start immediately after Judy ends above, with the sky and music at 0:25 and end when the credits start about 2:37

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=yfp-t-s&ei=UTF-8&p=i+have+loved+you+with+an+everlasting+love#id=3&vid=ea54f89ab6aec09936db110c7cc61c75&action=view>

I have loved you with an everlasting love.  
I have called you, and you are mine..  
I have loved you with an everlasting love.  
I have called you, and you are mine.  
  
Seek the face of the lord and long for him.  
He will bring you his light and his peace.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Sr. Grace Hartzog )**

O Great Love, we are humbled and emboldened

to know that you trust us to be your body in this world.

We are part of that body as we let go of all that separates us from you,

and as we embrace one another and your entire creation with merciful love.

We give you thanks for your presence in and among us. [Pause.]

We remember the night before Jesus died.

At dinner with friends, Jesus knew all that would soon be asked of them,

and, loving them to the end, Jesus showed them how to care for each other

as they went out into the world.

First Jesus washed their feet.

Then he looked at what was in front of them, the bread and the cup,

gifts of the earth and work of human hands, and blessed them.

So let us, too, invite God right now into what is front and center in our lives

knowing that God will indeed enter what we offer – and bless it. [Pause.]

Let us invite God into ourselves so that we become God’s living presence in our world. [Pause.]

Holy One, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER (Anne LoPiano)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to pray in harmony with Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus gave us:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your 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 do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING / SENDING FORTH (Judy)**

As we enter into Holy Week

And continue our journey

From darkness into light,

Let us go forth as instruments

of God’s liberating love and

joyful compassion.

Let us say a resounding “yes”

To the invitation of Jesus to

Come back to him

With all our hearts

As we strive to serve God and

Reach out to others

In peace and love. Amen.

And now, Reggie Ott will lead us in the closing song.

**CLOSING SONG (Reggie Ott)**  **Come Back To Me** by John Michael Talbot

Come back to me with all your heart.  
Don't let fear keep us apart.  
Trees do bend though straight and tall;  
So must we to others' call.

Long have I waited for  
Your coming home to me  
And living deeply our new lives.

The wilderness will lead you  
To the place where I will speak.  
Integrity and justice  
With tenderness  
You shall know.

Long have I waited for  
Your coming home to me  
And living deeply our new lives.