

*A service of Tenebrae, or "darkness," is based on a 12th century late night service and is an extended meditation on the Passion of Christ.
It is meant to put us in an attitude of prayer and reflection.*

* Call to Worship (based on *Spill the Beans*, iss. 26, © 2018)

One: The final words have been spoken,

Many: The last breath sighed.

One: The temple curtain lies in ruin,

Many: And the skies turn dark.

One: Like those faithful few –

Many: Those who wept at the foot of the cross,

One: Those who took down the body of the one they trusted,

Many: Those who prepared his body for burial –

One: Like those faithful few, tonight we come.

Many: We come in quiet devotion.

One: We come to praise the one we trust.

Many: We come to remember all he went through,

One: All he suffered,

Many: All he endured for our sakes.

One: Where is the light that shines in the darkness?

ALL: Where do we turn when all hope is lost?

* Hymn #223 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (verses 1-2)

(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

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.

* Prayer of Confession

Holy God, on this night we gather to wonder once more at your love for us. We do not understand why Jesus had to die, why he had to endure the pain and suffering of the cross. Tonight we gather here to meditate and contemplate that death of Jesus. Tonight we come to wonder at the sacrifice of our beloved Lord. Tonight we come in silence, awe and amazement, unsure of what to say or do, but knowing that we need to be here. Draw near to us tonight, and reveal to us every more clearly your love for us, now and forever. Amen.

* Hymn #223 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (verses 3-4)

(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and low 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 a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

The Passion of Jesus Christ – *The Scripture readings tonight are from Matthew 26:17-27:66 (NRSV). The betrayal, arrest, trial, denial, sentencing, death, and burial of Jesus Christ are contained in this narrative. As the final hours of Jesus' life are remembered, the lights and candles will slowly be extinguished. Toward the end of the service, you will hear a loud bang. This noise, called the "strepitus," is meant to signify the earthquake that accompanied Christ's death (Matt 27:46-53) as well as the sealing of the tomb (Matt 27:57-60).*

*We will end the service in darkness.
During the reading, the following music will be sung as announced.*

#533 – In the Singing

(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

In the singing, in the silence,
In the hands expectant, open,
In the blessing, in the breaking,
In the Presence at this table

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the wine of grace:
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the bread of peace.

In the question, in the answer,
In the moment of acceptance,
In the heart's cry, in the healing,
In the circle of your people

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the wine of grace:
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the bread of peace.

#220 – Go to Dark Gethsemane (verses 1-3)

(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Go to dark Gethsemane,
All who feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see;
Watch with him one bitter hour;
Turn not from his griefs away;
Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgment hall;
View the Lord of life arraigned;
O the wormwood and the gall!
O the pangs his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;
Learn from him to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb;
There, adoring at his feet,
Mark that miracle of time,
God's own sacrifice complete;
"It is finished!" hear him cry;
Learn from Jesus Christ to die.

#215 – What Wondrous Love Is This

(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

What wondrous love is this,

O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this,
O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
That caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse
For my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse
For my soul!

When I was sinking down,
Sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down,
O my soul!
When I was sinking down
Beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown
For my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown
For my soul!

To God and to the Lamb,
I will sing, I will sing,
To God and to the Lamb,
I will sing!
To God and to the Lamb
Who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme,
I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme,
I will sing!

And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing on!
And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity,
I'll sing on!

#221 – O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

O sacred head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down;
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory,
What bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.

What thou, my Lord, hast suffered

Was all for sinners' gain:
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve thy place;
Look on me with thy favor,
And grant to me thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
To thank thee, dearest friend,
For this thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me thine forever;
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to thee!

#90 – Wait for the Lord (sing through 5 times)
(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Wait for the Lord,
Whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord;
Be strong; take heart!

#228 – Were You There? *(At this point in the service, the sanctuary will be dark, so feel free to be a part of the moment in whatever way is most comfortable for you, be that singing the hymn if you're familiar with the words or simply experiencing God's presence in the stillness.)*

(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,
Tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,
Tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,
Tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,
Tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,

Tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,

Tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

A Time of Silence

Benediction

Going Forth

Feel free to remain in the sanctuary as long as you feel is necessary. When you leave, please do so quietly in respect for others' need to spend time in prayerful contemplation.