



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

*Love. Serve. Grow.*

## **Good Friday 2022**

*This year's Good Friday service will focus less on Christ's blood and sacrifice saving us for our sin and more on how Christ's death on the cross challenged the political and religious powers of the day. This theology of the cross is less in line with the ancient Hebrew theology of blood sacrifice and more in line with our understanding of Jesus's teaching about power and justice. This theology of the cross emphasizes a different model of power: one of love, humility and sacrificial action. Both models spring from scripture, highlight Christ's teaching and rely on the Holy Spirit.*

*A Welcoming Community,                      Accepting and Serving All  
In the Spirit of Christ*

Prelude

Jesus, Priceless Treasure

J.S. Bach\*\*

## **GOD'S VISION STATED IN WORD, SONG AND PRAYER**

Greeting and Welcome

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey  
you are welcome in this place.*

Introit

Oh, How He Loves You and Me

Kurt Kaiser\*\*

An Early Vision of God's Peaceable Kingdom

Isaiah 65:17-25

Read by Allie Hoffman

*From the earliest days of the Hebrew people, God called individuals into the wilderness to create a different type of community, one grounded in a relationship to God. The natural outgrowth of that relationship is a people that live in peace, righteousness and love. The Divine continually draws people back to the Garden, Holy Mountain, Peaceable Kingdom, wilderness, exiled remnant, the apocalyptic vision, or the New Heaven and New Earth.....always away from the ways of the world and into a place where God's love rules. Isaiah's ancient vision connects Jesus and his message to the ancient calling.....*

Opening Hymn

**Praise to the Living God**

**#8\*\***

## Call to Worship

Leader: Jesus preached love and justice for all God's children in Galilee. He healed wounds, offered hope, fed and filled people with the very presence of God.

**People: We flock to Jesus for he treats us with dignity and respect. He invites us into God's presence and we swarm to the divine with fervor. Our God loves us with abandon and we love the Sacred Presence back.**

Leader: Jesus turned to Jerusalem and the religious leaders, inviting them to join him in sharing God with the people. They declined and instead put the threat to their power to death. They thought they had won.

**People: But God is more powerful than self-absorbed people. Divine love is victorious over death, injustice, greed, division and apathy. Jesus' cross lives even now and challenges us to follow.**

Leader: Come, let us worship the glory found in Christ's cross.

Come, let us follow in its challenging footsteps of power.

Come, let us ground our lives in the power of Christ our Lord!

## Unison Prayer of Invocation

**Creator God, thank you for loving us deeply enough to invite us into your beautiful world. For warming our hearts, providing us sustenance, challenging our intellect, creating a yearning spirit and planting a divine seed in our souls...for these things we are grateful. Thank you for re-setting these foundational callings in each generation and continuing to offer us your love through prophets, poets, sages and saints of all stripes. Thank you for showing us the depth and power of your love through Christ's cross and how it continues to echo through the centuries causing change, chaos and conscription. Convict us that we might step up and join Jesus in making this world a better place. Give us the strength to carry our crosses and walk with you in your ways.**

Prayer Response

O, How He Loves You and Me

Kurt Kaiser\*\*

## GOD'S VISION CORRUPTED BY HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Scriptures of Contrasts and Power

Mark 7:1-9

Read by Zoe Moos

Mark 10:32-45

Read by Braeden Koch

*The cross was a symbol of shame and defeat. Everyone believed that Christ's death signaled the end of his movement. Disciples, Jewish leaders and Roman authorities all believed that power was grounded in might and right, not humble, sacrificial love. After the humiliating cross, the disciples hid in the upper room while the Jewish leadership believed his death would calm the crowds and cement the delicate balance of power and privilege enjoyed by the Jewish elite and their Roman overlords.*

*All too often, we still view the world through the eyes of the Disciples vying for glory, the Jewish leadership fighting for their privilege or the Roman overlords maintaining the status quo. For this reason, we need to turn our hearts, minds and souls to God in confession.*

Hymn

**Just a Closer Walk with Thee**

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**I am weak but Thou art strong. Jesus, keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long, as I walk, dear Lord, close to Thee.**

**Refrain**

**Just a closer walk with Thee. Grant it Jesus, if you please;  
Daily walking close to Thee. Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**Through this world of toil and snares, if I falter, Lord, who cares?  
Who with me my burden share? None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.**

**Refrain**

**When my feeble life is o'er, Time for me will be no more;  
On that bright eternal shore, I will walk, dear Lord, close to Thee.**

**Refrain**

**A Prayer of Confession and Ritual of Cleansing**

*After the prayer, ancient hymns of confession will be played. During the music, everyone is invited to write down the ways that we are overwhelmed and or discouraged by the ways of the world: its violence, hatred, corrupt systems, economic injustice, racial and class divisions and threatening chaos. Once written, please bring your worries and confessions up to the altar and place them in the large bowls of water where the specially made paper will disintegrate, taking the sins of the world and our own worries away. This symbolizes your desire for a different world and your accompanying repentance.*

Sanctuary Choir Anthem

No Greater Love

Pepper Choplin\*\*

**GOD'S VISION RESTORED IN THE POWER OF THE CHRIST'S CROSS**

A Scripture of Christ's Humble Power

Philippians 2:1-11

Read by Jacob Hoy

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Read by Izzy Owens

*Despite how the world viewed the cross, the early church and generations that followed viewed it as Jesus modelling a different way to understand power and reality. Paul, brilliantly turns the table on humanity's understanding of defeat and transforms the cross into a sign of power and victory. Christ's sacrificial love and forgiveness displays a power that challenges and ultimately will defeat the darkness and incomprehensibly corrupt world.*

Hymn

In the Cross of Christ, I Glory

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**In the Cross of Christ, I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story, gathers round its head sublime.  
When the woes of life o'er take me, hopes deceive and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me, lo it glows with peace and joy.  
When the sun of bliss is beaming, light and love upon my way,  
From the cross the radiance streaming, adds more luster to the day.  
Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.  
In the Cross of Christ, I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story, gathers round its head sublime.**

**A Prayer of Hope and Engagement**

*After the prayer, Marie and Denise will play quietly. As they play, everyone is invited to write down actions and ways that might lead to positive changes in the way the world claims power and accomplishes tasks. These changes could be initiated in our homes, at the church, locally, as a nation or in the world. Please be as concrete as possible. Once written, please bring your hopes for a better world and place them in the basket on the altar. As you return to your seat, you are invited to light a candle or two to symbolize your hope for the world coming from Christ's counter cultural ways.*

Hymn

We Would Be Building

#607\*\*

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

**\*Sung Community Benediction #77**

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

**Lord, dismiss us with your blessing; fill our hearts with joy and peace.  
Let us each your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.  
Oh, refresh us, oh, refresh us, travelling through this wilderness.  
We give thanks and adoration for your gospel's joyful sound.  
May the fruits of your salvation in our hearts and lives abound.  
Ever faithful, ever faithful, to the truth may we be found.**

\*Postlude

Once to Every Man and Nation

T.J. Williams\*\*

*On your way out of the sanctuary, please take one of the papers written to help effect change in the world and try to put the behavior of change into motion in your own life. They will be in a basket in the back of the church.*

\*Please stand if you are able

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