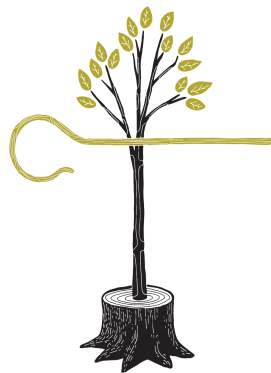


ARTWORK FROM  
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SPECIAL THANKS TO  
CARRIE JALONEN  
(and a wonderful team of volunteers)



Holy Saturday  
AD MMXXI

# *STATIONS ON THE HIGHWAY*

MEDITATIONS  
FOR MODERN PILGRIMS

## STATION I



*Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."*

Matthew 26:38

## JESUS IS TEMPTED

### MEDITATION

We begin in a garden. Jesus is alone. The one who proclaimed a kingdom is weeping. He brought others joy –will he not experience it? He comforted others– will he not himself be comforted? He is in agony. In a garden. There have been two great gardens in the history of the world. The first was in Eden. Another is here, in Gethsemane. Jesus returns to the place where Adam failed to resist the temptation to follow his own will. But listen as Jesus prays, *"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."* The cup to which he refers is the cup of God's wrath for sin. The temptation is for him to avoid it. But this is the reason Jesus has come. The one who taught us to pray *"Lead us not into temptation"* is himself tempted – in every respect, yet without sin. He will taste death for us, to the last drop. There will be evening, and morning. His last day.

### PASSAGE

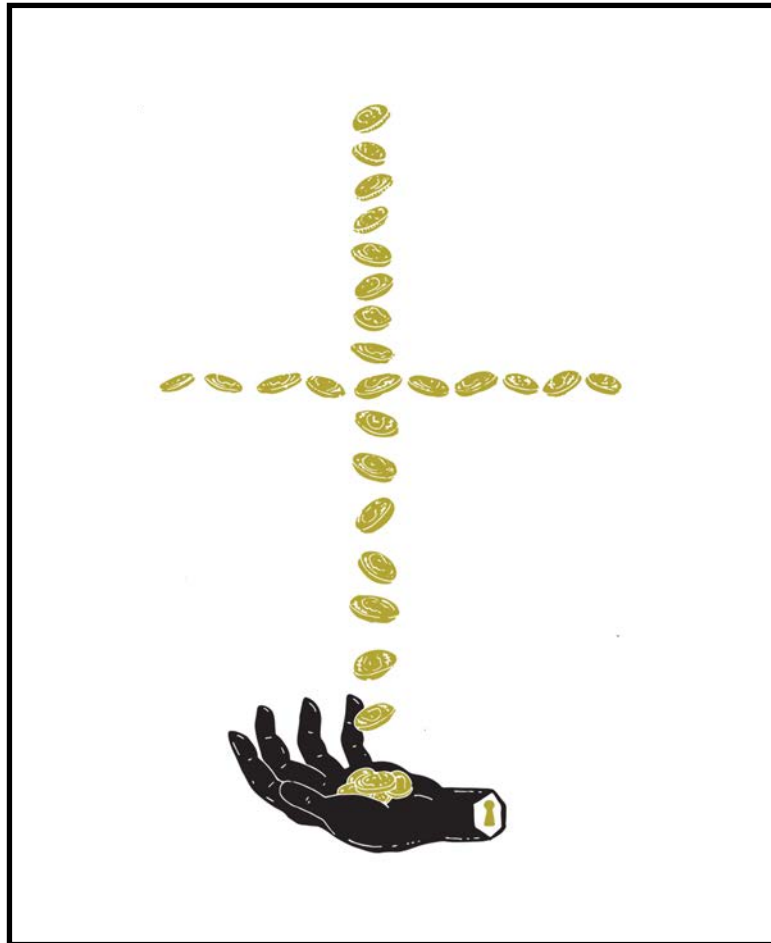
*And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly.*

Luke 22:43

### RESPONSE

Stay here with me  
Remain with me  
Watch and pray  
Watch and pray

## STATION II



*See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."*

Matthew 26:45-46

## JESUS IS BETRAYED

### MEDITATION

A crowd enters the eastern side of the garden armed with clubs and swords. They are led by one Jesus has loved. This is an hour of betrayal. Judas says to Jesus, "*Shalom, Rabbi.*" Treachery clothed in courtesy. And then a kiss. "*Judas,*" asks Jesus, "*would you betray the son of man with a kiss?*" Consider the years Jesus had spent with Judas. That night they had shared a meal, Jesus had washed his feet. The price of deception? Thirty pieces of silver. Yet Jesus is not surprised. "*Friend, do what you came to do.*" Jesus calls him "*friend.*" Behold the kindness of God. Judas did not accept it. Will you? You are invited to kiss the Son, not as his betrayer, but as his beloved. The crowd takes Jesus away. The journey to the cross has begun.

### PASSAGE

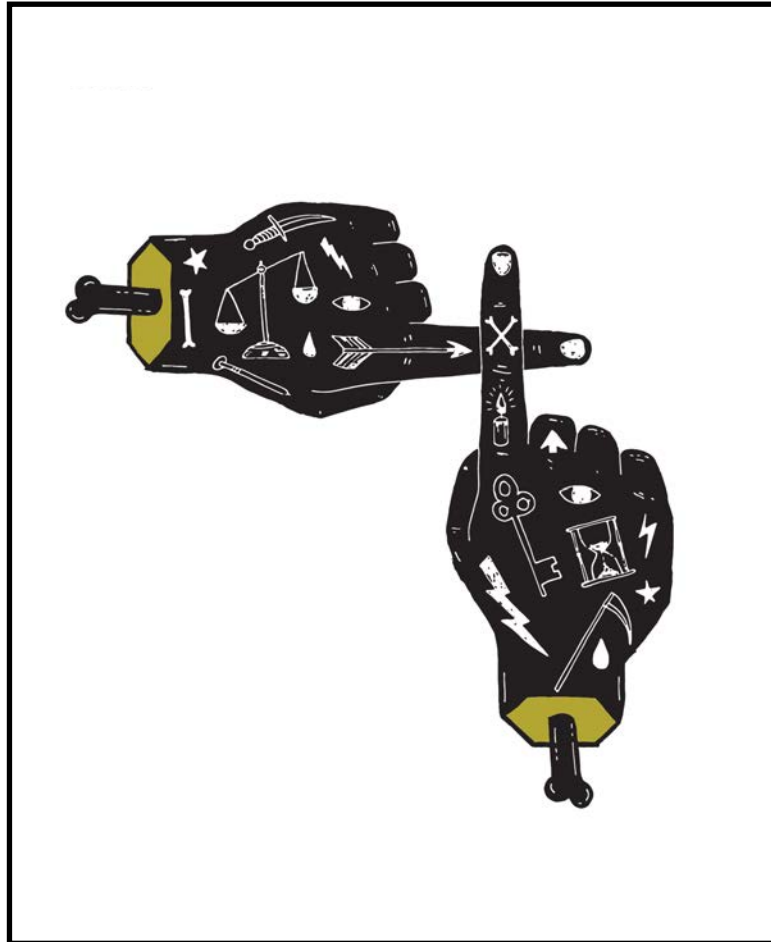
*Kiss the Son,  
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,  
for his wrath is quickly kindled.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Psalm 2:12

### RESPONSE

Stay here with me  
Remain with me  
Watch and pray  
Watch and pray

## STATION III



*When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.*

Matthew 27:1-2

## JESUS IS CONDEMNED

### MEDITATION

Two trials await Jesus – one religious, the other political. But the verdicts were decided before the courts were in session. And Jesus is condemned at both. His first crime: blasphemy – “*he made himself the Son of God*” (John 19:7). His second crime: sedition – he “*makes himself a king*” (John 19:12). Religion is threatened when Jesus is God; politics is threatened when Jesus is King. Justice has been perverted. The gavel falls and God is pronounced “guilty.” Condemned for crimes he didn’t commit. Yet Jesus offers no resistance. Why? Out of love for you and me. Jesus came in order that he might stand in *our* place, condemned for *our* sins. The verdict we deserve has fallen on him. But his condemnation will become our salvation.

### PASSAGE

*But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5

### RESPONSE

Stay here with me  
Remain with me  
Watch and pray  
Watch and pray

## STATION IV

## JESUS IS MOCKED



*They clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.*

Mark 15:17-20

### MEDITATION

Jesus is handed over to the Roman soldiers. Prior to crucifixion, prisoners were sometimes flogged so severely that they did not live long enough to experience death on a Roman cross. This "king of the Jews" attracts their special attention. He is beaten relentlessly. A garment is placed on him. A crown of crude thorns is pressed upon his head. "Hail to the king of the Jews," they mock and jeer. Consider the deep irony of the robe, the crown, and their kneeling. One day, this Jesus would be seen for who he is and on that day, every knee would bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. What of these soldiers then? Yet, consider the grace he extends even now. One who heard the mockery cried out, "Do you not fear God? This man has done nothing wrong. Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." To which Jesus responds, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

### PASSAGE

*All who see me mock me;  
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;  
"He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"*

Psalm 22:7-8

### RESPONSE

Lord, remember me  
When you come into your kingdom  
Remember me

## STATION V



*It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.*

John 19:14-16

## JESUS IS GIVEN HIS CROSS

### MEDITATION

Where do we see the cross today? On earrings, necklaces. Stitched onto fabric and etched onto Bibles. Behind pulpits. On buildings. Strange for a symbol so unsanitary. The cross is not for polite company. It is meant to be vulgar. It is meant to cause one to turn their head and avert their eyes. The cruelest form of human ingenuity. A fitting place for evil to linger. Yet Jesus takes hold of it. To be desecrated upon it. Christianity is the only major world religion that has as its central focus, the suffering of God for sinners. God making unsanitary people clean. Those who follow Jesus, therefore, are people of the cross, because to be marked by his cross is to be marked by his love.

### PASSAGE

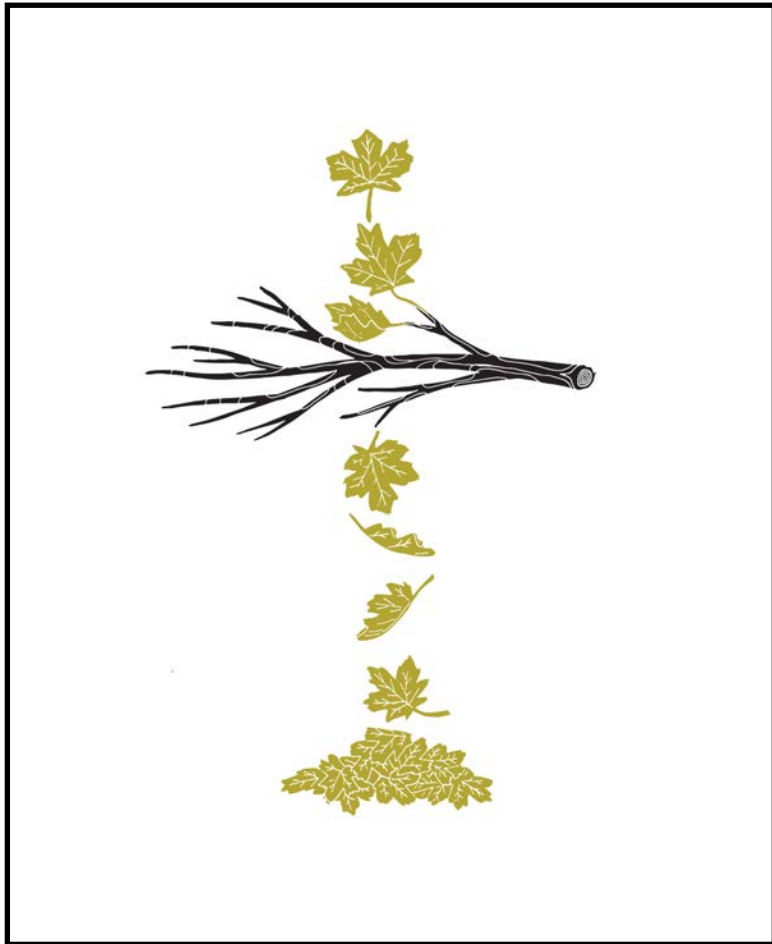
*Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

Galatians 6:14

### RESPONSE

Lord, remember me  
When you come into your kingdom  
Remember me

## STATION VI



*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

John 12:24

## JESUS FALLS

### MEDITATION

Watch him as he goes. Crossbeam on his back. The weight of Roman cruelty on his shoulders. The weight of our condemnation bearing down with his every step. Stripped and scourged, the Son of Man staggers. His knees buckle. The Son of God steadies himself. Beaten and exhausted. The sting of sweat or blood or tears – three becoming one. It is too much to bear. Trees are meant to be symbols of life. People climbed them to see Jesus. They opened roofs to come down that he might look upward in love. But this cross is a tree of death. And under its weight, Jesus collapses. Spent and scorned. What is your view from there, Jesus? Do you look up to see them point and laugh? They watch you as you fall. Jesus, how do you look upon us with such love?

### PASSAGE

*Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach,  
especially to my neighbors,  
and an object of dread to my acquaintances;  
those who see me in the street flee from me.  
I have been forgotten like one who is dead;  
I have become like a broken vessel.*

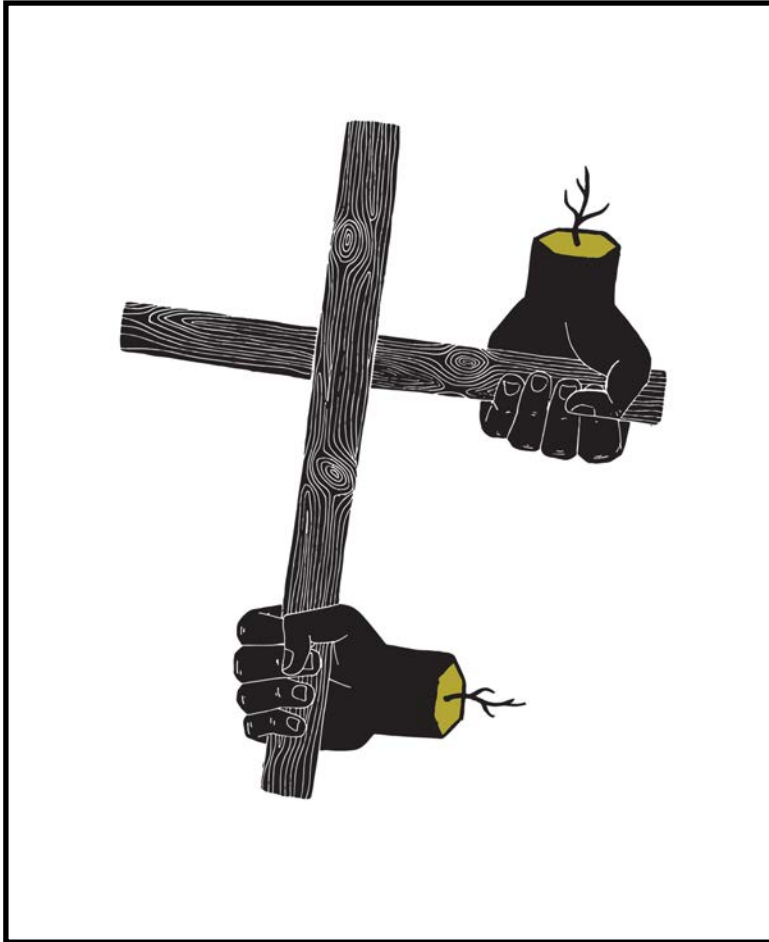
Psalm 31:11-12

### RESPONSE

Lord, remember me  
When you come into your kingdom  
Remember me



## STATION VII



*And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.*

Luke 23:26

## SIMON CARRIES JESUS' CROSS

### MEDITATION

A man is pulled from the crowd to assist Jesus. One Simon of Cyrene, father of two, arriving late from the country. How did he get there? Did he hear the crowd and get curious? Did he catch a glimpse only to be grabbed? We know almost nothing of this man from Africa – only that he was forced into the story. Joining Jesus in the spectacle. Himself humiliated. How long until he knew what it had meant? That while he was bearing Christ's burdens, Christ was bearing his. While he was entering Jesus' shame, Jesus was entering his. And what did Simon's children have to say? Their names were written into the story, too. And this invitation is extended to you as well. What Simon was forced to do unwillingly, the Son of God has done for you freely.

### PASSAGE

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

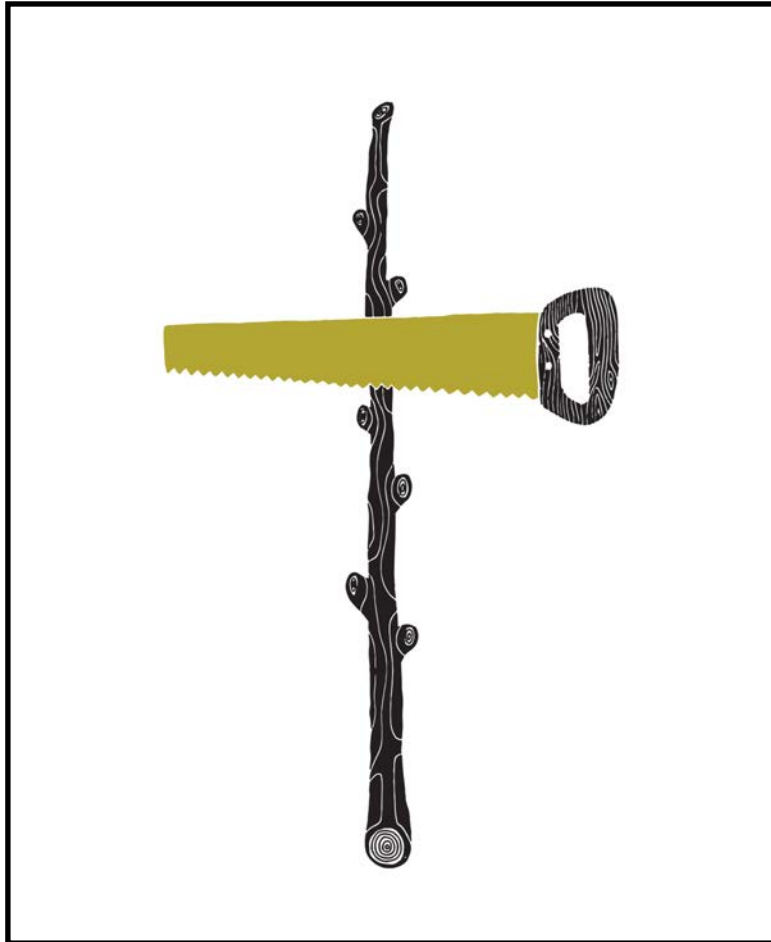
Galatians 2:20

### RESPONSE

Lord, remember me  
When you come into your kingdom  
Remember me



## STATION VIII



*When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom*

John 19:23

## JESUS IS STRIPPED

### MEDITATION

The cross is before Jesus. He is stripped of his clothes. Exhausted and exposed before the gaze of the crowd. Homeless, hopeless, penniless – with barely a rag to cover his nakedness. What could this man possibly offer to others? Ours is a nation of wealth and comfort. What can this man offer us who are full of possessions? Today we look upon him with contempt – as though he had *nothing*. Yet Jesus looks upon us with compassion – we think we have *everything*. But one day all will be laid bare. Who will stand exposed, then? Nothing we possess can cover our shame. But then there is Jesus. He is stripped of his garments that we might be clothed.

### PASSAGE

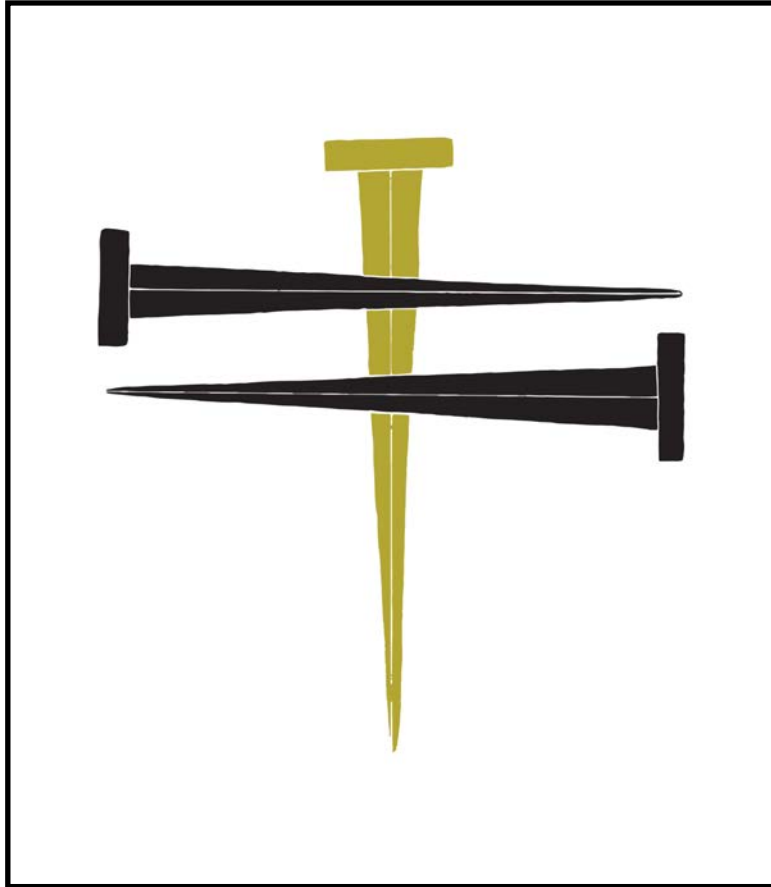
*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;  
my soul shall exult in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

Isaiah 61:10

### RESPONSE

Lord, remember me  
When you come into your kingdom  
Remember me

## STATION IX



*Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

Luke 23:32-34

## JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

### MEDITATION

Observe in horror. The hammer falls. Again and again. Blow by blow. Nails into Jesus' hands and feet. Consider those hands: hands that held children and blessed them; hands that had given sight to the blind; hands that broke bread and drank wine; hands that had formed worlds and hung the heavens. Now those hands are pierced. His feet are next. Consider those feet: feet that climbed mountains; once anointed by perfume; walked on water. How beautiful are those feet. Now those feet are pierced to a cross. Jesus is lifted up. Spread out to the four corners of the earth. A carpenter's son on carpenter's wood. God's Son, now crucified.

### PASSAGE

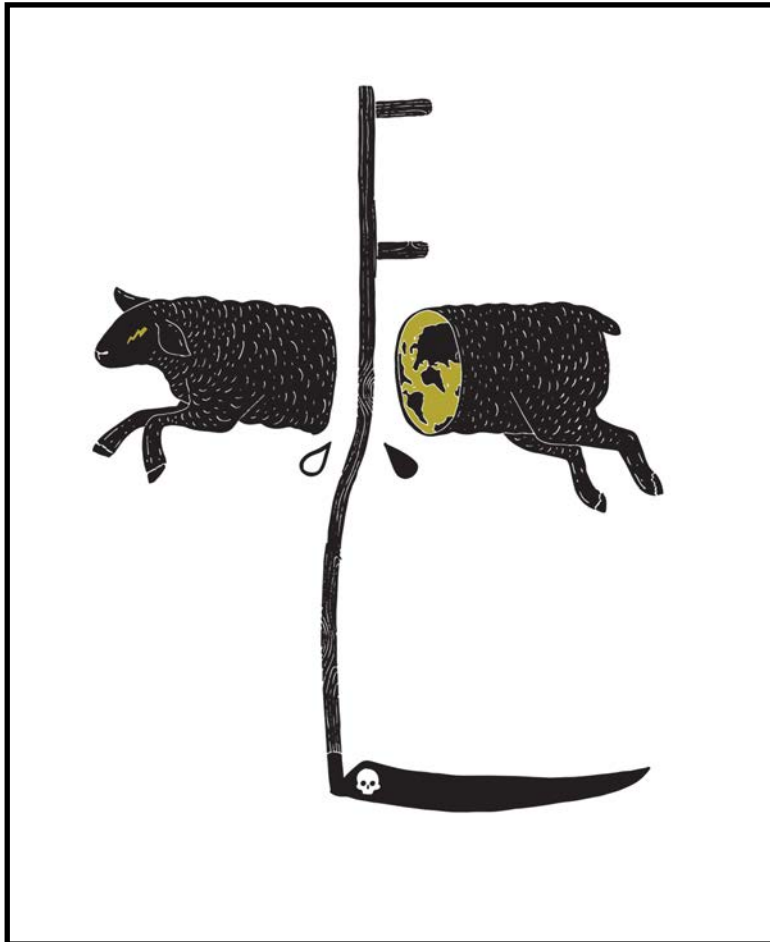
*They have pierced my hands and feet—  
I can count all my bones—  
they stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my garments among them,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.*

Psalm 22:16-18

### RESPONSE

Father, forgive us  
Look at what we've done  
We've crucified your Son

## STATION X



*It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.*

Luke 23:44-45

## JESUS DIES

### MEDITATION

Jesus hangs on a cross. Hear his cry of dereliction. *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* Suspended between heaven and earth. His Father above looks upon him, but does not speak. The voice of men below jeer and taunt. The sun in the sky will soon hide its face. Jesus writhes. He gasps. He thirsts. The bread is broken. The wine is poured out. All for the life of the world. The perfect priest, hands outstretched for his people. The perfect lamb, sacrificed for sin. The perfect temple, torn down. The earth trembles. Tombs break open. The light of creation is turned off. All goes dark. The Son of God dies on a cross.

### PASSAGE

*Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*

Luke 23:46

### RESPONSE

Father, forgive us  
Look at what we've done  
We've crucified your Son

## STATION XI



*So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.*

John 19:40-41

## JESUS IS BURIED

### MEDITATION

The first Adam was from dust but was given the breathe of life. This second Adam was from heaven but gave his final breathe. From the womb, Jesus was wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger. In the tomb, Jesus is wrapped in linen cloths, lying in a grave. But after both his birth and death, rich men provided him gifts. Surely, the Son of Man was the Son of God. Yet, who can fathom these things? In a tomb he was laid, and with him all the hopes of a new kingdom. What of them now? And with that, a stone seals them off. And there is silence.

### PASSAGE

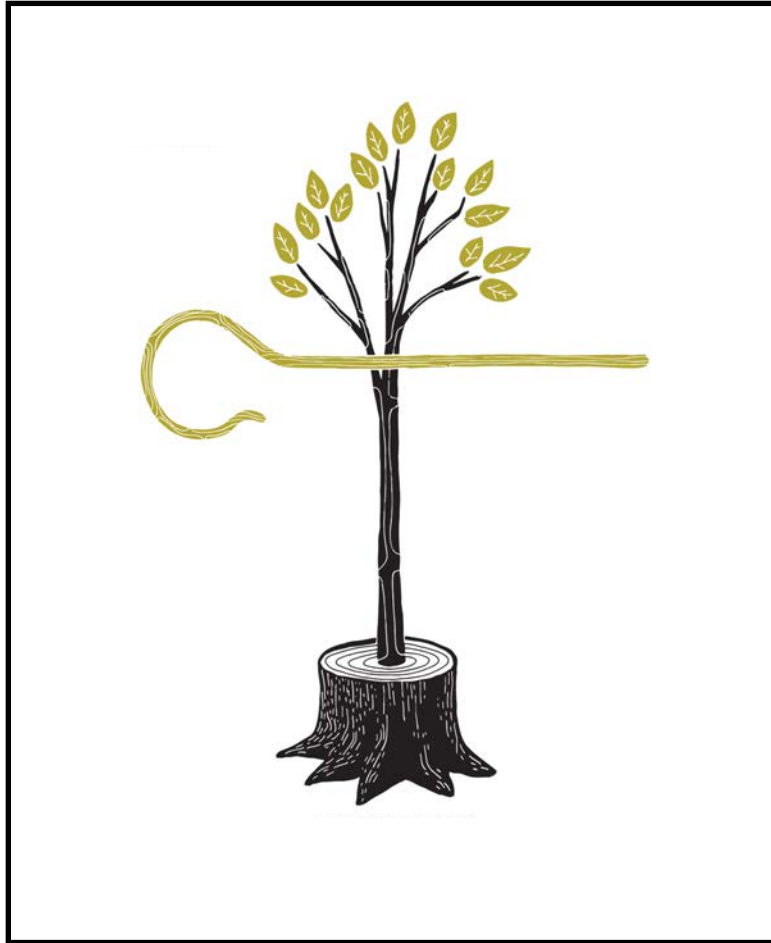
*And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.*

Matthew 27:59-60

### RESPONSE

*Observe in silence*

## STATION XII



*Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake*  
Matthew 28:1-2

## JESUS RISES

### MEDITATION

On Saturday, the Son of Man lay in the heart of the earth. But on Sunday, something shifted. The future is brought forward into the present. The first day of a new week, a new world, a new creation. This is the reality of resurrection. The hope of heaven. The cross will not have the final word. That which is buried lives. Ponder the words of the poet: *Death was an executioner, but the gospel has made him just a gardener.* The one we followed to the cross has walked out of the tomb. And this is a new garden. On Sunday, we celebrate. Tomorrow the preacher announces “*He is risen!*” and when he does, respond with full-throated joy, “*He is risen, indeed!*” But for now, we wait. For it is still Saturday. And there will be evening, and morning. The first day.

### PASSAGE

*Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.*

John 20:1

### RESPONSE

*For those wishing to receive Communion, see next page.  
For those wishing to become a Christian, see next page.*

## DO YOU WISH TO TAKE COMMUNION?

Portable communion is available for all Christians who would like to participate (at the tent).

This is how the apostle Paul instructed Christians to participate in this meal:

*For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*

First take the wafer and eat it. It is Christ's body which is for you.

Next, take the cup and drink it. It is the new covenant in Christ's blood.

We eat and drink in remembrance of Jesus.

We eat and drink to proclaim Jesus' death.

We eat and drink in anticipation of Jesus' return.

*Amen.*

## DO YOU WISH TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

As you traced the steps of Jesus today, realize the most startling news - Jesus actually came to walk those steps for you.

The Bible says, *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."* (Romans 10:9-10)

Here's a prayer you can make your own today. There's nothing magical about these words, but if they are meant from your heart, God hears your prayer and makes you new:

Dear God, as I have reflected upon the meaning of the cross today, I am struck by what Jesus has done. And that all that he did, he did for me. I am unworthy of so great a gift. But the Bible says, If we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Today, I confess, I am a sinner. Thank you that Jesus is a savior. I no longer want to follow my way, I want to follow the way of Jesus. Thank you that Jesus didn't stay on the cross. Thank you that he did not stay in the tomb. Thank you that he rose again and is Lord of life. In his hands, I place all my hope. *Amen.*

If you made this prayer today, would you tell us right away? We'd love to celebrate with you and encourage you. We'd also love to help you know how to follow Jesus.