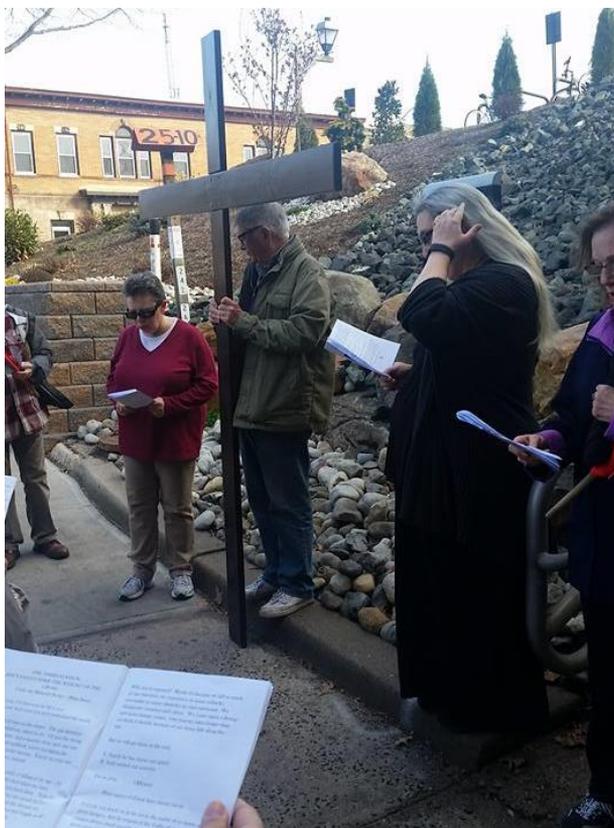


The Way of the Cross



Good Friday
2021

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on 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.

V. We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

R. In whom, is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life, and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE FIRST STATION:
Metuchen Municipal Court
Mains Street and Rt. 27

*We adore you, O Christ and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

We are now standing in front of a building which houses the municipal court, where a judge sits from time to time, and metes out punishment for various wrong-doings. We would hope that our judges here temper their justice with mercy.

Jesus was arrested late in the night after the supper in Jerusalem by a small group of Roman soldiers. He was brought early the next morning before the Jewish council. They accused him of claiming to be the Messiah and then sent him on to the Roman Governor to be executed. Obviously the crime was to be sedition, since a case could be made that Jesus claimed to be King of the Jews.

Pilate, the Roman Governor, at first seemed to think that Jesus deserved nothing worse than a flogging (which, under Roman rule, would have been a lenient punishment), but at the insistence of the priests, gave in. Jesus would just be one more prisoner to be executed. Pilate had little time or inclination to argue with the difficult Jews. He labeled Jesus with a sign that said. "This is the King of the Jews."

We cannot know how many other prisoners are given the same sort of off-hand justice because of indifference in our legal systems or pressure on our judges by powerful forces in our society.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, for our sake you were condemned as a criminal: Visit our jails and prisons with your pity and judgment. Remember all prisoners, and bring the guilty to repentance and amendment of life according to your will, and give them hope for their future. When any are held unjustly, bring them release; forgive us, and teach us to improve our justice. Remember those who work in these institutions; keep them humane and compassionate; and save them from becoming brutal or callous. And since what we do for those in prison, O Lord, we do for you; constrain us to improve their lot. All this we ask for your mercy's sake. *Amen.*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us



THE SECOND STATION:

Campbell School

24 Durham Avenue

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

On His way to Golgotha Jesus is required to carry His own Cross.

Some say that the Cross represents our daily struggles.

What were the struggles Jesus had faced? He'd been bullied by the Chief Priests. The authorities did not respect his message. His friends deserted him at a time when their support would be of comfort. His neighbors called for Him to be crucified. That's a lot to carry.

The behaviors Jesus experienced are not unlike those experienced day in and day out in schools throughout the world, by children and adults alike. We, His followers, can choose to engage in the Christ-like behaviors of loving one another, respecting the dignity of every human being and providing comfort to those in need.

None of us is without struggles. Before life's struggles begin to feel like a heavy hunk of wood laid across your shoulders, lay those struggles aside. Seek the peaceful of taking up your own cross and following Jesus' teaching.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities, and especially the schools of Metuchen, that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE THIRD STATION

Central Ave Businesses

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

In our borough not every business is on Main Street. In many ways this small road has many small businesses and restaraunts. Some are new, some have been here for a while and sadly some have closed. This pandemic has brought the plight of small businesses to our hearts and we pray especially this year for them all. For those holding on, for dreams that were shattered and for the employees who work in these places.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Let us pray:

Spirit of wisdom, Creator God, we give you thanks for all the ways you inspire your people, the ways you provide for them, and set great paths before them. We are grateful for the many small business owners who felt your creative call and pursued their dreams. Gracious God, we know that you are the sustainer of our dreams, in prosperity and in hardship.

We pray for all those businesses who are suffering hardship because of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. May the communities these businesses serve rally to support them. Provide for all the people being impacted by this economic crisis, O God, the people employed by these small businesses and the families that are supported by their income. Protect them in this time of economic uncertainty, and fill their spirits with hope. Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE FOURTH STATION

Whole Foods Market Area

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you;

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

God has granted each one of us a spirit of wisdom and creativity – and we each express that creativity in different

ways. For some, that spirit ignited a passion and drive to pursue something new and unique. As our nation works to battle this pandemic, the economic impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus on small business owners and entrepreneurs has been great. Many businesses have been shut down, threatening the well-being and prosperity of business owners and the people they employ. We offer a prayer of thanksgiving for these creative individuals who chased their passion, and for the communities that are working to support them. We pray for continued support from communities so that the dreams, jobs, and income of these small business owners and their employees may be sustained.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Spirit of wisdom, Creator God, we give you thanks for all the ways you inspire your people, the ways you provide for them, and set great paths before them. We are grateful for the many small business owners who felt your creative call and pursued their dreams. Gracious God, we know that you are the sustainer of our dreams, in prosperity and in hardship.

We pray for all those businesses who are suffering hardship because of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. May the communities these businesses serve rally to support them. Provide for all the people being impacted by this economic crisis, O God, the people employed by these small businesses and the families that are supported by their income. Protect them in this time

of economic uncertainty, and fill their spirits with hope.
Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE FIFTH STATION
SeeMore Appliance Center

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

As we look on the businesses along this stretch of town we are again reminded of how hard maintaining a shop or restaurant can be during these times. We again pray for those businesses that are fixtures in our town, for new businesses that open and try to offer something unique and again for those who dreamed, tried but ultimately didn't succeed.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Spirit of wisdom, Creator God, we give you thanks for all the ways you inspire your people, the ways you provide for them, and set great paths before them. We are grateful for the many small business owners who felt your creative call and pursued their dreams. Gracious God, we know that

you are the sustainer of our dreams, in prosperity and in hardship.

We pray for all those businesses who are suffering hardship because of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. May the communities these businesses serve rally to support them. Provide for all the people being impacted by this economic crisis, O God, the people employed by these small businesses and the families that are supported by their income. Protect them in this time of economic uncertainty, and fill their spirits with hope. Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE SIXTH STATION:

New Street

During the pandemic this little block saw the cooperation between restaurants and the borough in seeking creative ways to stay open. While this helped many of the businesses it negatively impacted others. We give thanks for those it helped and we pray for those it hurt. These are hard times for small businesses. May God see them through and give them creativity in adapting to changing circumstances.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Spirit of wisdom, Creator God, we give you thanks for all the ways you inspire your people, the ways you provide for them, and set great paths before them. We are grateful for the many small business owners who felt your creative call and pursued their dreams. Gracious God, we know that you are the sustainer of our dreams, in prosperity and in hardship.

We pray for all those businesses who are suffering hardship because of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. May the communities these businesses serve rally to support them. Provide for all the people being impacted by this economic crisis, O God, the people employed by these small businesses and the families that are supported by their income. Protect them in this time of economic uncertainty, and fill their spirits with hope. Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE SEVENTH STATION:
Main Street South of Amboy

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Our town has businesses South of the train tracks that again are often forgotten. We pray for these businesses, the ones that have always been here, the new ventures started and the dreams that started but did not succeed. For the owners and the employees.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Spirit of wisdom, Creator God, we give you thanks for all the ways you inspire your people, the ways you provide for them, and set great paths before them. We are grateful for the many small business owners who felt your creative call and pursued their dreams. Gracious God, we know that you are the sustainer of our dreams, in prosperity and in hardship.

We pray for all those businesses who are suffering hardship because of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. May the communities these businesses serve rally to support them. Provide for all the people being impacted by this economic crisis, O God, the people employed by these small businesses and the families that are supported by their income. Protect them in this time

of economic uncertainty, and fill their spirits with hope.
Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE EIGHTH STATION

Post Office

360 Main Street

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Going to the Post Office is often a routine, mundane errand that we must make. But if someone holds open the door for us, or the clerk is especially kind or cheerful, it becomes a more pleasant event and we can walk away feeling special that someone paid attention to us.

Did Jesus feel special and attended to when Veronica performed the simple act of offering him her veil to wipe his face? Probably. We don't know, really. Veronica isn't in the Bible. She didn't make the cut. We don't even know for sure if she really existed or if Veronica was really her name. Some say it was Bereniece, Long story.

So, why keep St. Veronica's story alive? Why give her a feast day for such a simple and, frankly, futile act? Wiping

Jesus' face didn't keep him from dying on the cross. It was never meant to. Veronica knew, when she offered that veil, that Jesus was on his way to die. He was, after all, carrying a cross. Even so, she took care to tend to his earthly needs, to offer him human care and kindness.

What did the dirt, sweat, and blood on his face matter? It would be only a matter of hours before Jesus would be hanging on that cross. But it's the little things we do along the way; along our own less obvious long, dirty, sweaty, even bloody walk to our own death and resurrection, the little things we do along the way that connect us to each other, to Veronica, to Christ, it's those things that matter. It is no coincidence that Veronica's simple act occurs at or near the time when Jesus' cross is removed and given to Simeon to carry. A simple act of kindness can lift a heavy burden from us, if only for a while.

For what kind act will you be remembered? What simple gesture received or observed will lift another's burden so profoundly that the relief it offers will be remembered for the rest of a person's life? For generations to come? Hold a door for someone. Be cheerful to those you interact with at the Post Office. Wipe someone's face. Set aside someone's cross, if only for a while.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Loving God, May everything we do be first class. Imprint your own loving zip code upon our hearts so that we may

never go astray. Provide in your gracious providence special handling for those of us who are fragile and keep us in one piece. We have been signed, sealed, stamped and delivered in your image and likeness and we beg you to keep us in your care as we go about our appointed rounds. And when our days draw to a close and we are marked return to sender, be there to greet us at heaven's door so that nobody may ever say unknown at this address. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE NINTH STATION

Train Station

Calvin Place

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Am I on the right track?? We speak about spirit. We speak about faith. We speak about the promise of eternal life with our Lorde & Master, Jesus Christ.

Trains represent the spirit of progress and the spirit of connection; ascending rapidly forward to the light at the end of the tunnel. Transporting us from Point A to Point

B. (The dictionary definition of ascending is sloping or leading upward, towards Heaven perhaps.) God transcends us from this earthly world to the next: giving us a foundation for life and the here-after; giving our lives meaning and the reason for existence, “raison d’etre.” Like the train connecting us to loved ones and dear ones, faith in God connects us to greater beauty and meaning where the ultimate answer in life is Faith, Hope, and Love!

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

O God, our heavenly Father, whose glory fills the whole creation, and whose presence we find wherever we go: Preserve those who travel in particular the commuters on the Northeast Corridor; surround them with your loving care; protect them from every danger; and bring them in safety to their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE TENTH STATION:
Main Street

Main Streets in small towns across our country are often the hub of life. Our town is no different. We are blessed with interesting shops, and a wide variety of restaurants. We are blessed with some that have been fixtures in our town for decades. This past year there have been some that sadly have closed both old and new. And new ventures are ready to try. We pray in thanksgiving for those who have survived during this pandemic. We mourn for those that didn't. And pray for the continued blessing that our downtown is to this borough.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

Spirit of wisdom, Creator God, we give you thanks for all the ways you inspire your people, the ways you provide for them, and set great paths before them. We are grateful for the many small business owners who felt your creative call and pursued their dreams. Gracious God, we know that you are the sustainer of our dreams, in prosperity and in hardship.

We pray for all those businesses who are suffering hardship because of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. May the communities these businesses serve rally to support them. Provide for all the people being impacted by this economic crisis, O God, the people employed by these small businesses and the families that are supported by their income. Protect them in this time

of economic uncertainty, and fill their spirits with hope.
Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE ELEVENTH STATION

Firehouse

500 Main Street

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Growing up in Metuchen, the fire whistle always blew at 5 pm. Of course it also went off when the fire trucks needed to roll. The sound alerted the town that something was happening. Later in life, the sound of the alarm and the sirens that followed called me to prayer: A prayer for whoever needed the firemen or the EMTs; and prayers for those first responders as well.

The prophet Isaiah said, When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall

not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
(Isaiah 43:2)

I hope that these words are true often. For the men and women who risk their lives to protect property and to save others we give thanks.

And while there no longer exists a fire whistle for the whole town to hear now that they use pagers, I am glad that there are volunteers in this town who love to do this ministry.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

We beseech you, Almighty God, to pour your blessing upon the fire fighters, EMTs and the police of our land: strengthen and preserve them in every danger; that they, who protect our lives and property while they faithfully perform their duties may so serve you here that they fail not finally to attain your heavenly promises. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE TWELFTH STATION
Martin Luther King, Jr Memorial
480 Middlesex Ave (Rt. 27)

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Dr. King was a member of the Negro elite in Atlanta -- a middle class college graduate and Ph.D., heir apparent to an important pulpit in the city. He was gifted and charismatic, a riveting orator. His life could have been a very comfortable one if he had chosen to ignore the reality of life for African Americans who did not have his pedigree or his education. Nothing in his life forced him to become what he became, and self-interest would have argued against it.

But self-interest is not what animated Dr. King. He took upon himself the oppression of others, knowing that it was dangerous to do so. He had lost count of the number of death threats he had received. His family was threatened. He himself was stabbed and seriously wounded. Even beyond the grave the enemies of freedom hunted him: after his death, his mother --an elderly woman by then -- was assassinated while playing the organ in church.

We think of Christ, the Son of God, leaving his throne in heaven to live our lives for no other reason than love. To take up suffering and be nailed to the cross willingly because others have no choice but to suffer is a supreme act of love. In any age, the few who make this choice are Christlike.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

O God our Father, whose Son forgave his enemies while he was suffering shame and death: Strengthen those who suffer for the sake of conscience; when they are accused, save them from speaking in hate; when they are rejected, save them from bitterness; when they are imprisoned, save them from despair; and to us your servants, give grace to respect their witness and to discern the truth, that our society may be cleansed and strengthened. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, our merciful and righteous Judge. *Amen.*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Library

480 Middlesex Ave - (Rt. 27)

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The library is a place that many mothers bring their young children to check out books, and to attend story hour. It is also a place that mothers go when their children have been

diagnosed with an illness and they are looking for answers because it is hard for a mother to see her child suffer.

How difficult it must have been for Mary to watch her son suffer, be tortured and then to die on the cross. How difficult it must have been to not be able to give him a proper burial. How grateful she must have been to Joseph of Arimathea who stepped in and offered his own tomb. How grateful she must have been that he was lowered from the cross and placed in her arms where she was able to say one last good-bye to her beloved son. It was then that Mary could finally breathe again. And although her heart was broken, she knew that no one would ever harm her son again.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

God of all creation, giver of knowledge, wisdom, and creativity, you spoke your Word and all things were brought into being. In the spirit of the creative power of words:

We offer prayers this day for our library;

For all who worked to bring it into being

For the support of the community of Metuchen

For the committed, ever welcoming and helpful librarians and staff

For all those who will use its resources

For children of all ages who find it a place to dream and wonder

For those who find it a place of refuge and support in their daily lives

For the connections it provides between the history and cultures of the world through books, magazines, and the Internet in the sharing of our stories, the stories of our community, and the stories of the world beyond our experience, through performances and presentations of plays, films, music and art.

May it be a safe place of gathering in the midst of our community where all are welcome, where our diversity is honored, and respect is practiced.

May we become not only knowledgeable, but also wise.

We pray this day for hope, for understanding, for new vision, and for the courage to take risks for the sake of knowledge and for the wisdom to use these gifts in service of our community and the world. May those who come here encounter hope, grace, and love. May the Metuchen Public Library ever be a place of blessing in our community. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



THE FOURTEENTH STATION

St. Luke's Memorial Garden

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

It was the last goodbye—where were his disciples? The women who followed Jesus (this is what they are called in Luke’s gospel) gathered spices and made ointments to anoint Jesus’ body after death. But because it was time for the preparation for the Sabbath, they did not have time to use them. So Jesus was laid to rest and a large stone was rolled in front of the door to the tomb. He was not totally and properly prepared for burial, but they were there for this last goodbye nonetheless. The disciples were absent. Too frightened to be publicly recognized as a follower of Jesus? Perhaps. Or maybe they were not properly prepared. Although Jesus told them many times what was going to happen to him; they were still unprepared.

We are not prepared when we lose our loved ones either. Many of us have family members resting in the Memorial garden. It comforts us to know they are here and to be able to visit and read the plaques with their names. Some of us feel reassured to know that when it is our time, we, too, will rest in this quiet place of beauty in the shadow of

the church at which we prayed, worshiped and communed with God and each other.

According to the story in Genesis, human life began in a garden. In this garden, we remember those who have completed their lives on earth. When Jesus was laid in the tomb, his followers thought his life was over. The flowers that blossom in the garden every spring remind us that joyful new life emerges as the former life passes away.

We pray for all who have lost loved ones and endured the heartbreak of laying them in their graves. We pray for ourselves, who are always unprepared for the greatness of our loss.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.



CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to live, so by his life he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

Have mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

To Christ our Lord who lives us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen*

