

## MAUNDY THURSDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE

*This service was originally designed for a church that usually only celebrates either Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, but not both. It combines Maundy Thursday's new commandment, a fellowship meal, the Last Supper and a Tenebrae service. For a larger church, this could be done twice in the same evening.*

*As people are eating, they are to reflect upon the text of Maundy Thursday.*

*Tables are set up so that everyone is seated at table. A simple fellowship meal may precede this liturgy, in which case, casually and informally make sure that a basket of bread is on the table for all to share and that a bottle of sparkling grape juice is also there to share. Toward the end of the meal, break into it with the following liturgy. The idea is that like Jesus' last supper with his disciples, the meaning of the meal just suddenly unfolds with Jesus' odd words interjected into what seemed like a rather ordinary meal of the day.*

*Lit tapers are on each table. A larger Christ candle is also in center of the space on one of the tables or on its own stand.*

*This service requires advanced preparation and some practice in the evening with regard to lighting so that the lights gradually dim with the extinguishing of each candle. Timing is everything. There is a rhythm to this story that needs attention, so pastors may hand this service to someone with drama experience to "direct" the liturgy so that all he/she has to do is holy communion. Be careful, though, not to overdramatize the scriptures. The scriptures have their own power when read well without drawing attention to how they're read, but instead to what they say.*

*You will need:*

- ⊕ *Enough copies of this liturgy for all readers given at least a week in advance*
- ⊕ *All hands on deck for a simple fellowship meal*
- ⊕ *Tables set up for the meal and liturgy with a total of 12 candles that will be extinguished, AND a larger white Christ candle set in the center or most prominent place in the room*
- ⊕ *Baskets of bread for each table or every 8 people if you do one long table*
- ⊕ *Bottles of red sparkling grape juice for each table or every 8 people if you do one long table*
- ⊕ *Someone to slyly see to it that there is sufficient bread and juice at each table at the end of the meal in order to do communion*
- ⊕ *Someone to do lights*
- ⊕ *Four small flashlights*
- ⊕ *Matches by the Christ candle or with the person who will light it*
- ⊕ *Something with which to make quite a racket of noise. Thin sheet metal is often shook by sound artists to make thunder.*
- ⊕ *Many readers, deliberately seated randomly throughout the room, especially Voices 1-2 and 17-20, yet near the candles on the table so that after they read, they can just lean over and extinguish the candle however they wish. These people need to know how to read scripture well. Readers can double up as needed.*
- ⊕ *Someone to return later to completely clean up*
- ⊕ *A cantor and/or soloist*
- ⊕ *A choir, printed bulletins with music, or projector for hymns*

*At the beginning of the meal, before the prayer, welcome everyone and explain the service, particularly mentioning that*

- *Maundy Thursday gets its name from the Latin mandatum, which means commandment. Maundy Thursday is the time we celebrate Jesus giving people the new commandment that we love one another as he*

*has loved us. On your table you will find the traditional scripture text for Maundy Thursday [show what it looks like]. After you're all seated, have someone read it aloud and then answer the questions as you talk together during the meal. Feel free to get up and avail yourself of the meal as you will.*

- *We will have a communal liturgy together at the end of the meal, which will continue for another 45 minutes. Because the room will get dark, you will want to attend to your and your children's physical needs before getting dessert.*
- *We will be celebrating both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday by doing communion and a Tenebrae service. Communion will be done informally, so don't worry about how you partake; you can't mess it up. Serve one another however feels respectful of Christ to you.*
- *Tenebrae means shadows, and as we read Matthew's account of the Passion of our Lord, we will experience the growing shadows of sin and this world's darkness gathering around the cross.*
- *This can be a scary service to young children, so you may want to avail yourself of childcare when NAME comes to ask if there are any children who'd like to come with her. Otherwise, as it grows darker, watch out for the little ones, hold them a little closer so that they don't get scared.*
- *As soon as you've finished eating, please clear your place and then continue with your fellowship at table.*
- *At the end of the service, we will leave in silence, for traditionally, there is no benediction at the end of either Maundy Thursday or Good Friday since the services commemorating the cross do not end until Easter's proclamation of our Lord's resurrection.*
- *Stay as long as you'd like afterward. You may wish to follow the Christ candle's procession up into the sanctuary and sit in silent prayer and meditation in the sanctuary.*
- *The sanctuary will be open tomorrow and Saturday from {TIME a.m. to TIME p.m.} tomorrow and Saturday if you'd like to come in for a prayer vigil and to join in Christ's intercession for the .*
- *Please leave in silence. Quietly bus your own tables of any remaining dishes as you leave. Leave the tablecloths, tables, chairs, and candles. We'll be doing something with those later.*

### **Prayer before Meal:**

On this holy night, O Lord, we gather to ask your blessing. Thank you for the provision of this food and those who have had a hand in its preparation. May it nourish holy communion with you and one another as we share together at table and remember your love for us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord of all of creation. Amen.

### **Table Talk:**

*At each table provide the following for informal sharing. This can be printed on a place mat, table tent, or just a sheet of paper:*

During supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." After he had washed

their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. . . . I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” [John 13:2b-15, 34-35]

*Invite all to share, including children, but require none to speak.*

What did you hear in this text that spoke to you? Or which character do you most relate to in this text?

Many people do a footwashing service on Maundy Thursday. We are not going to do one. How does that make you feel? (i.e. relieved, sad, indifferent, etc.) Why?

If Jesus were to wash your feet and then ask you to do the same for others, how might your life be different?

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### TABLE LITURGY

*As people are finishing, call all to attention in the appropriate communal manner and then launch into the following liturgy with no further ado to get the effect of divine interjection:*

**VOICE 1:** When it was evening, Jesus took his place with his disciples, and while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

**VOICE 2:** “Who? Who will betray you? they all wondered. Surely not me. Tell us who, Jesus.

**VOICE 1:** “The one who dips his hand into the dish with me.”

**VOICE 2:** But that’s all of us. We’ve all shared this common meal.

*Brief Silence*

### LORD’S SUPPER

The Lord be with you

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Thank you, O Lord, that with the sweep of creation

you have revealed the beauty of your blessing to the whole universe.

Though the ugliness of our sin has marred creation, killed innocents, and caused slavery,

you make and keep covenant with your people,  
leading us from bondage to freedom  
and send us prophets to call us back to your ways of justice and peace for all.

**May You be praised, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe.  
You feed the world with goodness, mercy, and grace.**

Blessed are you, O God,  
for our beloved brother Jesus  
who came to show us the Way, the Truth, and the Life  
so that we might share in your blessing  
and live in your abundance forever and ever.  
When we were hungry, without food, he healed us.  
When ignorant, he taught us.  
When we were sick, he touched us with healing.  
When enslaved to demons, he freed us.  
He embodied your Sovereign rule all the way to certain death by Empire,  
yet he did not back down.

*Pick up bread from the basket on the table, saying*

The last time he sat at table with his disciples, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

Take bread from your table and share it with one another with the words, "The body of Christ" until all have bread. We will partake together after all are served.

*Raise your bread with the words, "Manna from heaven" and partake.*

*After eating, continue, pouring the grape juice into the cup you used for supper, saying*

Thank you, Lord, that after eating together, you took a cup and gave it to your friends, saying, "Drink from this all of you, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Pour the grape juice in one another's cups at your table with the words, "The cup of the covenant in Christ's blood." We will drink together when all are served.

*Lift your cup with the words, "The cup of salvation" and partake.*

Send forth your Holy Spirit now, we pray,  
That, as we read the ancient story,  
we may hear you speak  
among all the screams and silences of the cross.  
Keep us all one,  
even as you prayed we would all be one,  
and fill us with the strength to abide with you  
and minister unto you  
even in the torturous chaos of a crucifying world.

This we ask in Christ, through Christ, with Christ  
to whom be all honor and glory and dominion now and forevermore.  
**Amen.**

### TENEBRAE SERVICE OF SHADOWS

**VOICE 3** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*): **MATTHEW 26:31-35**

Then Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.” Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples.

*Extinguish first candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 4** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*): **MATTHEW 26:36-46**

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

*Extinguish second candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 5:** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*): **MATTHEW 26:47-56**

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has

taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

*Extinguish third candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 6:** *(reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse):* **MATTHEW 26:57-68**

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.” Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?”

*Extinguish fourth candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 7** *(reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse):* **MATTHEW 26:69-75**

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

*Extinguish fifth candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 8** *(reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse):* **MATTHEW 27:1-2**

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

*Extinguish sixth candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 9** *(reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse):* **MATTHEW 27:3-10**

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, “I have sinned by betraying



innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

*Extinguish seventh candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 10** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*): **MATTHEW 27:11-14**

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

**SOLO** (*a capella*): “He Never Said a Mumbalin’ Word (vs. 1) 95PH

*Extinguish eighth candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 11** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*): **MATTHEW 27:15-26**

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

*Extinguish ninth candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 12** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*): **MATTHEW 27:27-31**

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his

right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

*Extinguish tenth candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**HYMN** (Choir and/or Congregation): “O Come and Mourn with Me Awhile”  
O come and mourn with me awhile; O come ye to the Savior’s side;  
O come, together let us mourn: Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

Have we no tears to shed for Him, While soldiers scoff and foes deride?  
How patiently, how patiently He hands: Jesus our Lord, is crucified.

Seven times he spake, seven words of love; And all three hours His silence cried  
For mercy on the souls of all: Jesus our Lord is crucified!

O love of God, O human sin! In this dread act your strength is tried  
And victory remains with love: Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

**VOICE 13** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*): **MATTHEW 27:32-37**

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

*Extinguish eleventh candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence.*

**VOICE 2:** **ISAIAH 53:1-12**

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his



days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

**VOICE 14** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*):

**MATTHEW 27:38-44**

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

**VOICE 15:** (*reading from table, without announcement of gospel, chapter, verse*):

**MATTHEW 27:45-46**

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

*Extinguish twelfth candle and dim overhead lights a bit. Silence*

**CANTOR:**

**PSALM 22:1-30**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
and are so far from my cry  
and from the words of my distress?  
O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer;  
by night as well, but I find no rest.  
Yet you are the Holy One,  
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.  
Our ancestors put their trust in you;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.  
They cried out to you and were delivered;  
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

But as for me, I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by all and despised by the people.  
All who see me laugh me to scorn;  
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,  
"He trusted in the LORD; let the LORD deliver him;  
let God rescue him, if God delights in him."  
Yet you are the one who took me out of the womb,  
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.

I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born;  
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.  
Be not far from me, for trouble is near,  
and there is none to help.  
Many young bulls encircle me;  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.  
They open wide their jaws at me,  
like a ravening and a roaring lion.  
I am poured out like water;  
all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart within my breast is melting wax.  
My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd;  
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.  
Packs of dogs close me in,  
and gangs of evildoers circle around me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet;  
I can count all my bones.  
They stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my garments among them;  
they cast lots for my clothing.

Be not far away, O LORD;  
you are my strength; hasten to help me.  
Save me from the sword,  
my life from the power of the dog.  
Save me from the lion's mouth,  
my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.

I will declare your name to the community;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

Praise the LORD, you that are God-fearing;  
stand in awe of the LORD, O offspring of Israel;  
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.  
For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;  
neither is the LORD's face hidden from them;  
but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.

My praise is of God in the great assembly;  
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who  
worship the LORD.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the LORD shall give praise:  
"May your heart live forever!"  
All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to God,  
and all the families of the nations shall bow before the LORD.  
For sovereignty belongs to the LORD,

who rules over the nations.  
To the LORD alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship;  
all who go down to the dust fall before the LORD.  
My soul shall live for God;  
my descendants shall serve the LORD;  
they shall be known as the LORD's forever.

**VOICE 15**

**MATTHEW 27:47-50**

When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

*Christ candle is suddenly and loudly blown out at the end of the reading by someone other than the reader as the lights in the room are turned off so that darkness prevails.*

*Long dark silence.*

*Sound of fabric ripping. Then, after the brain has time to register the sound as tearing fabric . . .*

**VOICE 16** (*reading from somewhere where reading light cannot be seen--i.e. behind a screen, in the balcony, under the table (careful here—many tablecloths become see-through when lit from behind, and such comic effects are to be avoided.)*):

**MATTHEW 27:51-54**

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

*Then comes an obstreperous loud, chaotic sound, as of an earthquake, thunder, a tornado, or the rumble of war. The following is bellowed over the sound*

The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

*Sound begins a decrescendo through this next section*

Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said,

*Sound is now soft.*

"Truly this man was God's Son!"

*Silence. After 10-15 seconds, the Christ candle is relit with the strike of a match. Short silence.*

*The readers of the following stand in the darkness from various parts of the room. As each voice arises, the readers turn on a flashlight focused on their face but in such a way that they can also see their lines to read, which should overlap slightly, though delivered slowly. The flashlights are to stay on after they are switched on:*

*As they do, the house lights slowly come up to a level that enables people to see to sing and exit, though it will still be fairly dark.*

**VOICE 17:** The true light that enlightens everyone came into the world through Christ.

**VOICE 18:** Though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

**VOICE 19:** In him was life, and his life was the light of all.

**VOICE 20:** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

**HYMN** 101PH “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

On the cross

*Departure in Silence*

*Extinguish candle and dim overhead lights a bit.*