



“Sharing God’s Love-in-Action from the Heart of Swarthmore”

Sunday worship @ 10:30am

Find out more @ www.swarthmoreumc.com

**Welcome to our Lent & Holy Week Prayer & Meditation Stations.
We are glad you have come!**

You are invited to move through the prayer stations at your own pace, lingering as long or as short as you choose. If you are with a group, some may choose to discuss each station as a group while others may choose to walk individually.

These prayer and meditation stations are a different take on the traditional 14 Stations of the Cross. These stations were created by the team at *A Sanctified Art* and adapted here at SUMC for our community. In these stations, you will journey through Jesus’ final moments through the eyes of his disciple, Peter.

In Peter, we see a little of all of us—he is devout and resolute, zealous and rash, and even fearful and flawed. If any of us can locate ourselves in the crucifixion story, it is likely we can see ourselves in Peter. Peter’s experience, we will consider our own. We will look closely at the events of Good Friday to help us honestly assess who we are.

As Jesus tells Peter the truth about himself, we will consider the truth about ourselves. James Baldwin once said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” May each step of your journey be one that helps grow your trust in divine power all around us.

Before you begin, take a few deep, cleansing breaths to center yourself. Begin by reading (silently or aloud) these words of invitation:

*Holy God, as we journey through this familiar story,
help us to understand it anew.
Show us, O God, where we find ourselves in the narrative,
and move us toward a more just and compassionate future. Amen.*

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Station 1: Peter resists then receives the foot washing | JOHN 13:1-20

Read: John 13:1-20

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And 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. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.'

Look: Look closely at the artwork: Golden Hour by Nicolette Peñaranda. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

Reflect: Read the corresponding artist's statement. What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?

The story of Peter brings us to the last supper. The disciples are tucked away in the upper room. Within the overall composition of this piece, we see the West African symbol, Aban, which means fortress and demonstrates power and authority. Aban is the central image of Golden Hour and it is duplicated around the perimeter of the piece like a mighty fortress. The gold-plated vessel at the top represents the water Jesus uses to wash the disciples' feet. Around it are miniature Mpuannum, the five tufts of hair. In Ghanaian culture, it is said that a priestess wore this hairstyle giving the symbol a meaning of deep loyalty and priestly office. The water drips directly down onto swollen feet, feet that bear no name. The section to the left of the vessel holds a tearful Peter. He refuses Jesus' hospitality and then backtracks when he learns the value of merciful water. Around him contains Dwannini Mmen, the horns of rams, and Nyansapo, the wisdom knot. Both sit subtly in the background. If only Peter remembered that pride is a vice and through curiosity, we are exposed to the interconnectedness of wisdom and knowledge. Across from the image of Peter we see the Eucharist. When orienting this piece in a diamond formation, the cup looks overflowing. But when the canvas is sitting as a square, the wine is tipping out of the chalice, dripping in unison with the vessel onto the Aban. The Eucharist is also one of the ways we receive Christ's mercy. Body and blood broken for us. Water is very versatile. The vessel of water is providing mercy. The swollen feet are receiving mercy. Peter is asking for mercy. The chalice has shed mercy. There is a particular time of day we refer to as the "golden hour." This is when photographers love to take photos as the sun sits at a particular point, either after sunrise or before sunset,

when daylight is redder and softer than when the sun is higher in the sky. A serious photographer does anything to capture that moment. When I reflect on the entire Passion story, this might just be the golden hour for the disciples. Jesus and his crew are tucked away, having their Passover meal. They are cleansing themselves and carrying on not realizing this will be the last moment of peace they will have. Sharing a meal with the people you love is one of the most glorious moments anyone could have—before what will end as a night of torture and betrayal. While Peter is tearful in this image, the overall vibe of Golden Hour is soft, rich. It feels like it is captured in marble as if nothing can destroy it.

Respond: Consider Jesus' commandment to "wash one another's feet." Whose feet are you being called to wash?

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Station 2: Jesus foretells Peter's denials | JOHN 13:31-38

Read: John 13:31-38

When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." 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.'

Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus answered, 'Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterwards.' Peter said to him, 'Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.'

Look: Look closely at the artwork: Really? by Hannah Garrity. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

Reflect: Read the corresponding artist's statement. What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?

In this pulpit parament, drawn with ink on paper, Jesus looks up at the congregation asking, "Really?" In my unique first glance at this story, looking through the eyes of Peter, I was floored by Jesus' judgment of Peter in this text (John 13:38). Jesus's response to Peter sounds harsh coming from a loving God. I think that that is why I was so surprised as I studied the scripture. So I looked deeper to see what Jesus is actually going through, to see where his perspective may be coming from. Trauma. With this lens, my fragile frustration with Jesus is really me centering myself. Jesus is constantly putting himself in harm's way and now he's heading toward the cross. Yet, I am still demanding him to be polite to me, not to call my bluff. Recent research on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) has caught the attention of many educators and doctors. An amazing TED talk by Nadine Burke Harris breaks it down

simply: a person's health predictors change when they are traumatized as a child. A doctor or an educator can better serve their patient or student with an awareness of their ACE score. My frustration with Jesus unveils my impatience with being treated in a way I consider rude by a person with a high ACE score. My reaction is to push back, to not have sympathy and deference for the real difficulty he is going through. I wonder in my daily life whose trauma I am still approaching ineffectively. How can I learn from Jesus' valid impatience with Peter's empty, well-meaning promises?

Respond: Consider Jesus' charge: "Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another."

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Station 3: Peter draws his sword | JOHN 18:1-11

Read: John 18:1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus replied, 'I am he.' Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, 'I am he', they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again, he asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.' This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.' Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?'

Look: Look closely at the artwork: *Disarming Peter* by Lauren Wright Pittman. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

Reflect: Read the corresponding artist's statement. What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?

"In *disarming Peter*, Christ disarms all Christians." —Tertullian (160-220 CE) Pressed in by soldiers and religious leaders, surrounded by lanterns, torches, and weapons, Peter does what many of us would do. He responds to the threat of violence with violence. With sword in hand, he tries to take the unfolding narrative into his own hands and cuts off Malchus' ear. Jesus tells Peter to "put the sword back into its sheath" (John 18:11). This is the moment I wanted to capture in this image. I imagine a rush of emotions surge through Peter's body like a bolt of lightning. I imagine he feels the sting of shame after being admonished by his teacher for his violent actions. I imagine he feels the searing grief that comes with the realization that his teacher and friend will in fact die, and he is helpless to do anything about it—perhaps the most painful of all. Peter had a choice. He could continue down the

path of violence, fight the soldiers and religious leaders and protect Jesus from the inevitable, or he could yield, dropping his sword and surrendering to the cup that God has placed before his friend. In the image, this choice is suspended in time. Is Peter releasing the sword and choosing the way of peace? Or is Peter about to take up the sword and choose the way of violence? On the left in the image, leaves from the garden's olive grove reach out to shade and comfort him. This is the way of peace. On the right, the soldiers are looming with the flames closing in around him. This is the way of violence. Peter releases the sword as if it was on fire, as hot tears of shame, grief, and helplessness pour down his face. Which way will we choose?

Respond: Pray this prayer of confession:

Holy One, we are convicted of our addiction to violence. We lament the proliferation and use of firearms. We bemoan the staggering statistics of intimate partner violence. Yet, we confess our own complicity in the pain of our neighbors. Whether we have picked up a gun, uttered harmful words about each other, or simply refused to acknowledge another's pain, we have betrayed the peace you left with us. We have built war economies that make conflict profitable. We have created societies that justify the violence of food and housing insecurity, racism, discrimination, and marginalization. God of grace, have mercy upon us, and save us from weak resignation to these evils. Amen.

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Station 4: Jesus is arrested and Peter denies Christ | JOHN 18:12-18

Read: John 18:12-18

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Look: Read the poem slowly a few times. What images stand out to you? How do you feel?

Reflect: Is there a word or phrase that stands out for you, or "shimmers" among the other words? Why associations do you make with that word or phrase? What does it remind you of?

Respond: Write the word or phrase down, or type it into your phone. How does your word or phrase "stick with you" through the rest of your day or week? What might God be wanting you to do (or not do) in light of your word or phrase?

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Station 5: Peter denies Christ again and again | JOHN 18:19-27

Read: John 18:19-27

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.' When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, 'You are not also one of his disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not.' One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?' Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Look: Look closely at the artwork: The Descent by T. Denise Anderson. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

Reflect: Read the corresponding artist's statement. What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?

From [the top], Peter descends into more fear—the kind that does not help us to be our best selves. I depict him going from stunned to defensive and then to belligerent, navigating the full spectrum of the fight, flight, or freeze responses to perceived threat. By the time the cock crows as Jesus predicted (see if you can make out the bird's faint silhouette in the lower right-hand corner), Peter probably no longer recognizes himself. He must feel deflated and ashamed. At the end of his descent he is different, so I depict him differently from his three prior denials. He has much less fire in his countenance and can't even open his eyes to face what he's done. The flames recall the fire where Peter warmed himself, but they also represent purification and illumination. Peter is forced to see himself as he truly is—as Jesus had already shown him. Who will he choose to be after this? When we are confronted with who we truly are, who will we choose to be after that confrontation? As we look at Peter's journey, it's my prayer that we will consider and meditate on our own.

Respond: You are invited to pick up a small rock (alluding to Peter as "the rock") or nail (representing Jesus nailed to the cross). Consider what they might symbolize for you or for our world. Carry them with you to the next station.

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Station 6: Jesus is Crucified | JOHN 19:1-30

Read: John 19:1-30

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.'

This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

*'They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.'*

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Look: Look closely at the artwork: Were You There? by Lisle Gwynn Garrity. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

Reflect: Read the corresponding artist's statement. What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?

Respond: In this final station, we have created a small cross. You are invited to place a small rock (alluding to Peter as "the rock") or nail (representing Jesus nailed to the cross) at the foot of the cross, offering your own silent prayers. Consider all the unnamed prayers that are offered here.

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Thank you for being a part of these prayer & meditation stations. To finish your time here today, we invite you to:

1. Sign your name in the book, leave a poem or your own art, write a prayer or share a reflection of your experience of the stations today.
2. Read or Sing Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing (Lyrics by Robert Robinson)

*Come, thou Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.*

*O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,*

*bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.*

We are more like Peter than we may like to admit. But as you leave this place, remember: your wandering heart is always tethered to the love of God. God's abundant grace existed for Peter and it exists for you. God's love will never run out.

Go now in peace, trusting that streams of mercy shall find us all. Amen.

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Swarthmore UMC Holy Week & Easter

3/24 - Palm Sunday

w/ palm processional @ 10:30am

3/28 - Maundy Thursday

'Messy Church' w/ Dinner @ 6:00pm designed
especially for kids, with all ages welcomed

3/29 - Good Friday

Interactive Prayer Stations @ 2:00pm
Tenebrae Good Friday Service @ 7:00pm

3/30 - Holy Saturday

In the Memorial Garden @ 10:30am

3/31 - Easter Sunday

@ 10:30am with Easter Egg Hunt following worship

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