

THE WAY *of the* LORD

**A Good Friday Service Based on
Encounters with Jesus in the Gospel of Mark**



POST TENEBRAS LUX SERIES
Good Friday Services of Scripture, Story, and Song
(Song Suggestions Provided)

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Although many publishers do not capitalize terms, and particularly pronouns which refer to the Trinity, in this study CDM publications has capitalized those elements for clarity of reference.

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The Way of the Lord

The Way of the Lord

(Reading Time: 20-25 minutes)

The Way of the Lord provides the readings and structure for a Tenebrae service of Scripture, story, and song that is based on encounters with Jesus “on the way” in the Gospel of Mark. The balance of all three elements, with the gradual dimming of lights and extinguishing of candles, creates a meaningful opportunity for thought and reflection. Musical selections are suggested.

One of the strengths of this service is that it is accessible and adaptable to a host of settings. It is designed to fit your context.

Originally presented in a mid-sized church, the readers were members of the congregation or choir who were comfortable reading aloud and expressively. Through the years, the readers became more comfortable portraying the biblical characters, and that was reflected in their representations. In addition, selecting music that fit the strengths of the church musicians was key.

The Tenebrae quickly became one of the most beloved services of the year.

THE SERVICE

READERS (THREE WOMEN, NINE MEN):

While originally presented as a Good Friday service in a mid-sized church, we encourage groups of various types (including churches of all sizes, youth groups, college fellowships, senior centers) to produce and experience *The Way of the Lord*. Therefore, the ages listed for the readers should be considered as suggestions or guidance.

NARRATOR/MARK – a man, aged 25 or older and a strong reader

FIRST READER – a man with a strong voice, aged 30-40, portraying John the Baptist

SECOND READER – a man aged 25 or older, portraying Bartimaeus

THIRD, FOURTH, and FIFTH READERS – can be younger men (college age), portraying the paralytic and his friends

SIXTH READER – a man aged 35 or older, portraying Jairus

SEVENTH READER – a woman, aged 30 or older, portraying the woman who touched Jesus's robe

EIGHTH READER – a man aged 30 or older, portraying the man with a withered hand

NINTH READER – a man aged 35 or older, portraying Simon Peter

TENTH READER – a woman, aged 35 or older, portraying Mary (who anointed His feet)

ELEVENTH READER – a woman, aged 35 or older, portraying a friend of Mary

SETTING/SERVICE DIRECTIONS:

To begin, the sanctuary is well lit. The service will conclude in complete darkness. (As every setting is designed uniquely, the following description is to be used as a guide. Though this is not a theatrical production, terms such as "upstage" and "downstage" are used to most clearly explain placement and movement.)

A large, spotlighted cross is upstage center.

The music ENSEMBLE is seated immediately downstage of the cross.

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A podium with light and script binder for READERS is farther downstage, stage right. Across the stage from the READERS' podium is a small podium or music stand with a light, a script binder, and a stool for the NARRATOR, stage left (can be center left). This will create an antiphonal dialogue between the READERS and the NARRATOR.

Farthest downstage is a table with twelve white taper candles in a row, with an additional larger, white Christ candle in the center of them, and one or two candle snuffers for READERS to use.

Prior to the service, turn on all podium lights, and light the twelve taper candles and the Christ candle.

Elements such as a prelude, a welcome, prayer, responsive reading, musical reflection, etc. can precede the introduction of the Tenebrae service.

The music ENSEMBLE is seated on the stage at the director's discretion (either before the welcome or after), but prior to the reading of the Tenebrae introduction. The READERS are seated throughout the audience and/or choir.

A brief introduction (see Bulletin Notes) is read aloud by the pastor or service leader.

The NARRATOR is seated at his podium prior to the congregational hymn.

The Congregation sings the hymn, "Beneath the Cross of Jesus."

As the hymn ends, the microphones for the NARRATOR and READERS are turned on. The FIRST READER has left his seat and takes his place standing "off-stage," but on the same side as the READERS' podium. He will walk to the podium after NARRATOR'S introduction.

The Service

CANDLE #1 (Last Supper; selections from Mark 14:12-13, 22-25)

NARRATOR/MARK (*to congregation*):

The *beginning* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am the voice of Mark.

And I am following this Jesus . . . though now, from a distance, in the shadows.

From here, I am safe to watch and to listen.

From here, I can *stop* and consider this day, this life.

This Jesus, you know, He *never* stopped. He was always moving. Moving toward people and moving toward Jerusalem.

And now, on this most terrible night, He moves no more.

It seems that Time itself stands still . . . as if it cannot go on without Him.

And so, in my mind, I retrace the journey that has led us here, to this night in Jerusalem: a journey of encounters with people that began miles from here, at The River.

JOHN the BAPTIST (*Calling from "off-stage," moving to READERS' podium*):

Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make His paths straight!

(*At READERS' podium, speaking to congregation*):

Prepare ye the Way of the Lord!

I knew there was One coming who was mightier than I, whose sandals I was not worthy to stoop down and untie. I proclaimed this with power and expectation. And yet . . .

Yet I am not sure that I was prepared for the One who stood before *me* in that river, who allowed me to baptize *Him*.

And nothing could have prepared me to see the heavens themselves torn open, that Dove descend, and hear such words spoken over Him: "*You are My beloved Son, with You I am well pleased.*"

The Way of the Lord . . . where will it lead?

(*FIRST READER turns the page in the binder, walks to the table and extinguishes a taper candle next to the center Christ candle. Turn off or lower lights as candle is extinguished. The NARRATOR begins as READER returns to his seat.*)

The Way of the Lord

NARRATOR/MARK *(to congregation):*

And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Jesus, “Where will You have us go and *prepare for You* to eat the Passover?” And He sent two of His disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is My guest room, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’””

And later that evening as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is My body.” And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

(The ENSEMBLE sings (for example): “The Upper Room.” Immediately after the song ends, the SECOND READER leaves his seat in the audience and takes his place at the READERS’ podium.)