

# Deep in the shadows: Called deep into the story

## *Tenebrae service*

*Tenebrae* is Latin for “darkness” or “shadows” and has often been used as a Good Friday service. *Tenebrae* services are often marked by reading from Lamentations, Psalms, or both and gradually extinguishing candles and lights until a single candle, considered a symbol of Jesus, remains. At the end of the service, this candle can be hidden or extinguished, symbolizing the apparent victory of evil.

To prepare your space for worship, dim the lights and light seven candles. Invite people to enter in silence and allow the dim light and silence to settle the worshipers.

The reading of Psalm 42 that is interspersed throughout the service could be read by a group or by all present as a communal response to the Passion narrative.

The reflections could be on a passage of Scripture or what Good Friday or “deep in the shadows” means to each person. How do worshipers feel “called deep into the story”? Invite worshipers to make a personal connection through art, a story, or music.

Consider creating a photo slideshow for the opening of the service with a variety of artistic depictions of the crucifixion from around the world.

No matter when you gather as a community, invite your congregation to observe a moment of silence at 2 p.m. EDT, in common with all congregations across Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA who are commemorating Good Friday today to remember Christ’s death and appreciate our connectedness.

### Call to worship

One: Today we gather to enter this story of betrayal and pain together.

Many: **With heavy feet we enter the story.**

**The sea, the earth, the sky, the woods, the current, the wilderness,  
all lead us here. We rest in God’s shadow.**

One: We are here in the darkness remembering Jesus’ death.

Many: **Slowly we open our hearts to grief and to our part in the story.**

One: We are here in the darkness, following Christ, who says, “Take up your cross.”

Many: **Deep in the darkness, we trust that death is not the end.**

*All: And there was darkness.*

### Song

- *Voices Together* Dans nos obscurités (Within Our Darkest Night)

## 1. THE SHADOW OF GETHSEMANE

### Scripture

*Excerpts from Matthew 26:36-41; Mark 14:43-46 (NABRE)*

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples, he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Then, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.

### Scripture response

*Psalm 42:1-2 (NIV)*

As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?

### Song

- **Voices Together** Go to Dark Gethsemane (also **HWB 240**)

### Prayer

Lord, there have been times when we, like Judas, have betrayed the ones we love. Forgive us, we pray.

*Extinguish a candle.*

## 2. THE SHADOW OF DENIAL

### Scripture

*Matthew 26:69-75*

### Scripture response

*Psalm 42:3 (NIV)*

My tears have been my food

day and night,

while people say to me all day long,

"Where is your God?"

### Reflection

### Song

- **HWB 242** Stay with Me *or*
- **Voices Together** Stay with Me, the Night Has Come

### Prayer

Lord, like Peter, we have been afraid and have denied the ones we love. Forgive us, we pray.

*Extinguish a candle.*

### 3. THE SHADOW OF CONDEMNATION

#### Scripture

*Mark 15:1-5, 15; John 19:1-3*

#### Scripture response

*Psalm 42:4 (NIV)*

These things I remember  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One  
with shouts of joy and praise  
among the festive throng.

#### Song

- **Voices Together** O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (also **HWB 252**)

#### Prayer

Lord, like the chief priests, we have lost sight of the truth and accused the innocent unfairly. Forgive us, we pray.

*Extinguish a candle.*

### 4. THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

#### Scripture

*John 19:6, 15-17*

#### Scripture response

*Psalm 42:5 (NIV)*

Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God.

#### Reflection

#### Song

- **Voices Together** My Song Is Love Unknown (also **HWB 235**)

#### Prayer

Lord, like the crowd, we have been swept up in the current of condemnation. Forgive us for inflicting harm, we pray.

*Extinguish a candle.*

## 5. THE SHADOW OF CRUCIFIXION

### Scripture

*Luke 23:33-34*

### Scripture response

*Psalm 42:7-8 (NIV)*

Deep calls to deep  
in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers  
have swept over me.

By day the Lord directs his love,  
at night his song is with me—  
a prayer to the God of my life.

### Song

- **Voices Together** Were You There (also HWB 257)

### Prayer

Lord, deep in the shadows, we know we have been part of your crucifixion, and have chosen death over life in many ways. Forgive us, we pray.

*Extinguish a candle.*

## 6. THE SHADOW OF GRACE

### Scripture

*Luke 23:39-43; John 19:25-27*

### Scripture response

*Psalm 42:9-10 (NIV)*

I say to God my Rock,  
“Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning,  
oppressed by the enemy?”  
My bones suffer mortal agony  
as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”

### Reflection

*Those who celebrate the Lord's Supper on Good Friday could do so at this time.*

### Song

- **STS 84** So Much Wrong and So Much Injustice *or*
- **Voices Together** How Shallow Former Shadows (also HWB 251)

### Prayer

Lord, at the crucible moments in our lives, give us, like the thief, courage to face and speak the truth. And like Mary, may we stand with the ones we love, even as they suffer.

*Extinguish a candle.*

## 7. THE SHADOW OF DEATH

### Scripture

*Luke 23:44-46*

### Moment of silence

### Scripture response

*Psalm 42:11 (NIV)*

Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God.

### Song

- **Voices Together** When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (La cruz excelsa al contemplar; also **HWB 259** or **260**)

### Sending blessing

In the darkest of moments, in the deep folds of night . . . this is where we sit in the story. The place where the followers have lost their center. In this suspended space, our souls cry out: Where do we go from here? May we be compelled to stay with the darkness a little longer and allow it to teach us. Go into this night with an open heart.

### Prayer

Jesus, in the eclipse of the sun, we hear your cry. Open our hearts to follow in your steps, to receive the mystery of your life and your death. Amen.

*Extinguish or hide the last candle.*

*Depart in silence.*