

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

A Devotion for Lent



St. James Episcopal Church
Cheboygan, Michigan

About These Stations

These Stations of the Cross are offered as a prayerful journey of reflection shaped by the Gospel and by the mission of the Church in Christ Jesus. Rooted in the ancient Christian devotion of walking with Jesus through his Passion, they invite reflection not only on events of the past, but on how Christ's suffering, love, and faithfulness continue to meet the world today.

While honoring the traditional form of the Stations, these meditations are written with the life of the contemporary Christian in mind. They recognize the realities of our modern world—grief and exhaustion, injustice and loss, compassion and endurance—trusting that the way of the Cross still speaks into these places. Here, Christ is encountered not only in affliction, but wherever love bears burden, remains present, and refuses to turn away.

These Stations are grounded in the conviction that the Cross is not a transaction demanded by God, but the fullest revelation of God's self-giving love—a love that precedes sin and is made visible in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In praying this Way of the Cross, the Church is formed for its mission: to follow Christ in the way of love, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

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The Way of the Cross – for St. James Episcopal Church

OPENING PRAYER

Presider: Lord Jesus Christ,
we come not as spectators but as companions on the way.
As we follow you on this road of sorrow,
slow our pace and quiet our hearts.
Open us to the mystery of your love—
love that heals, restores, and reconciles,
love that remains faithful even when the road leads through suffering.
Let these stations shape us
into people of courage, people of compassion, and people of hope.
Amen.

STATION I – JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR:

“I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.”

— Isaiah 50:6

PRESIDER

Jesus stands before the combined weight of Roman authority
and religious leadership—systems shaped by fear,
political calculation, and the desire to preserve order.
Truth is present, but inconvenient.
Justice is possible, but costly.

Here we see how power—civil and religious—can cooperate in condemning the innocent when courage gives way to expediency. Jesus does not defend himself, not because truth is weak, but because love alone will carry him further than argument ever could.

LECTOR

This station calls us to examine how judgment is passed, how voices can be ignored, and what we are willing—or unwilling—to risk for what is right.

PRAYER (ALL)

Lord Jesus,

**you were condemned though innocent,
caught in systems more concerned with
control than truth.**

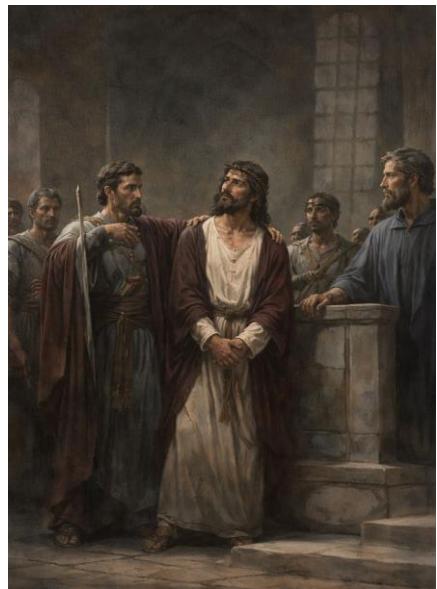
**Be near to all who suffer under unjust judgment
and to all whose dignity is dismissed or denied.**

**When love can repair what is broken,
give us courage to act.**

When truth is costly, give us strength not to remain silent.

**Teach us to trust your justice
when human justice fails.**

Amen.



TRISAGION

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

STATION II – JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases.”

— Isaiah 53:4

PRESIDER

The Cross is placed upon Jesus’ shoulders—
real weight, rough wood. This is not yet a
symbol of hope, but an instrument of suffering
and death.

Jesus does not seek pain for its own sake. He
accepts the Cross because love, in a wounded
world, sometimes requires bearing what
cannot be avoided.



LECTOR

This station asks us to consider the burdens we carry,
and how love sometimes calls us
not to escape hardship,
but to meet it faithfully.

PRAYER (ALL)

**Jesus our Savior,
you accepted the Cross out of love for the world.
When our burdens feel heavy,**

**help us discern what we are called to carry
and what we must entrust to you.**

**When love can lighten another's load,
give us generosity.**

**When the Cross cannot be removed,
give us endurance, assurance, and trust
that you walk beside us still.**

Amen.

Trisagion

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
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STATION III – JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity.”

— Isaiah 53:3

PRESIDER

Under the weight of his Cross, Jesus stumbles and falls. This fall reveals not failure of faith, but the limits of the human body.

Here, Jesus knows exhaustion. Jesus knows collapse. Jesus knows what it is to fall before the journey is finished.

LECTOR

This station invites us to give up the illusion that love or faith will spare us from weakness or suffering.

PRAYER (ALL)

Lord Jesus,
you know the strain of carrying
more than the body can bear.
When we fall through exhaustion,
illness, or grief,
meet us without judgment or
shame.
When love can restore our
strength,
receive our gratitude.
When we cannot rise on our own,
hold us in your mercy
and teach us to receive your help
as grace.
Amen.



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STATION IV – JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

Simeon said to Mary, “A sword will pierce your own soul too.”

— Luke 2:35

PRESIDER

Jesus meets his mother along the way.

This encounter holds the full range of love’s power and its limits.

So often, love heals what is broken, restores what has been damaged, and brings life where despair once ruled. But on this road to Calvary, love meets suffering it cannot prevent.

Mary cannot protect her son. Jesus cannot spare his mother the pain of watching. And yet, neither one turns away.



LECTOR

This station teaches us
that love does not fail
when it cannot fix what is broken.
It becomes presence, fidelity,
and shared sorrow.

PRAYER (ALL)

**Compassionate Christ,
you know the healing power of love
and the anguish of love that meets its limits.
Be near to all who labor to mend what is broken—
in bodies, relationships, and communities—
and be near to all who must accept suffering**

they cannot remove.

When love can heal, give us courage and hope.

When love must simply remain,

give us the strength to stay present

and the faith to trust

that no act of love is ever wasted.

Amen.

Trisagion

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STATION V – SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS CARRY THE CROSS

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

— Galatians 6:2

PRESIDER

Simon is drawn from the crowd without warning. He does not choose this moment, yet he is changed by it.

By lifting the Cross of Jesus, Simon shares the burden love has already taken up. What begins as interruption becomes participation in grace.

LECTOR

This station reminds us that help offered—willingly or not—can still become holy.

PRAYER (ALL)

Lord Jesus,
you allowed another to help carry
what weighed you down.
Open our eyes to the needs of others
that may interrupt our plans.
When love can ease another's
burden, make us generous.
When the call to serve comes
unexpectedly,
shape our reluctance into
compassion.
Teach us that shared weight
can become a place of grace.

Amen.



Trisagion

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STATION VI – VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“And we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son.”— John 1:14

PRESIDER

A woman steps forward with no power to change the outcome. She offers only tenderness. According to tradition, Christ's image is left upon the cloth. Christ, the image of the invisible God, leaves his likeness wherever love meets suffering. In a small act of courage, mercy becomes revelation.

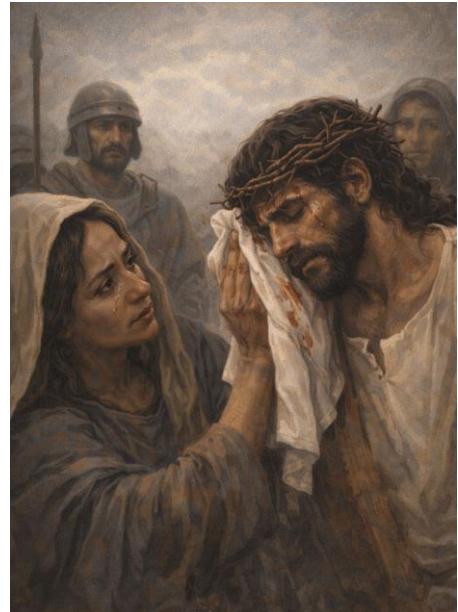
LECTOR

This station teaches us
that love does not need to be large
to be real.

PRAYER (ALL)

**Gentle Savior,
give us courage to offer compassion
even when we cannot fix what is broken.
Help us recognize your face
in those who suffer quietly or publicly.
When love can bring relief,
let us act boldly.
When love can only offer presence,
teach us to trust
that even small acts of mercy
can leave lasting marks.**

Amen.



Trisagion

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STATION VII – JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd.”

— Psalm 22:15

PRESIDER

Jesus falls again. The road stretches on.
The burden remains. This is the weariness of
persistence, when strength must be
summoned repeatedly and relief does not
come.

LECTOR

This station speaks to those who endure
chronic pain, long grief, or repeated
disappointment.



PRAYER (ALL)

Lord Jesus,
you know the fatigue of carrying on.
When love has already given much
and the road still stretches ahead,
be our strength.

When healing comes slowly or not at all,
give us grace for endurance
and trust that perseverance itself
can be an act of love.

Amen.

Trisagion

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STATION VIII – JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“Do not weep for me,
but weep for yourselves and for your children.”
— Luke 23:28

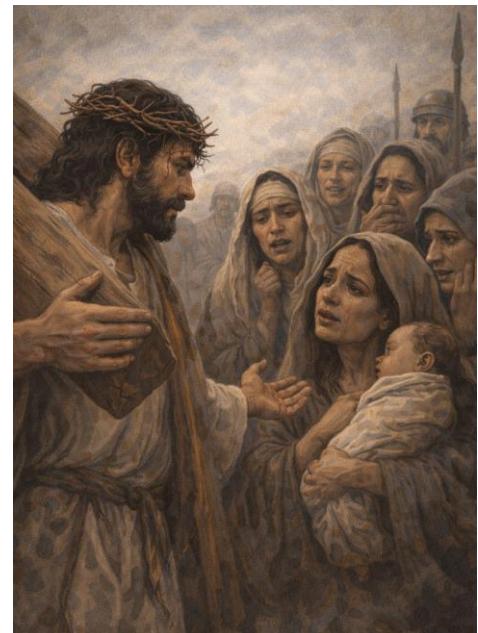
PRESIDER

Jesus pauses to speak truth, not to silence
grief, but to deepen grief into understanding.

He calls others to see suffering clearly and to
recognize how injustice shapes the future.

LECTOR

This station calls us beyond sympathy
toward transformation.



PRAYER (ALL)

**Christ our teacher, give us hearts that feel deeply
and minds willing to change.**

**When love can correct what harms,
give us courage to act.**

**When truth unsettles us, keep us from turning away.
Lead us toward lives shaped by justice, mercy, and responsibility.
Amen.**

Trisagion

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STATION IX – JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

**V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.
R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.**

LECTOR

“I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.”
— Psalm 22:14

PRESIDER

This final fall brings Jesus to the edge of his endurance. There is no strength left to prove anything—only love that refuses to abandon the journey to Calvary.

LECTOR

At this station we learn that salvation is not achieved through heroics, but through love that remains faithful to the end.



PRAYER (ALL)

Lord Jesus,
when we are utterly spent,
carry us when we cannot continue.
When our love feels exhausted,
hold us in your mercy.
Teach us to trust that even here,
when nothing remains but love itself,
you are still at work—still loving.
Amen.

Trisagion

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STATION X – JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“They divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

— Psalm 22:18

PRESIDER

Jesus is stripped of dignity and control, exposed to shame and cruelty.
The one through whom all things were made stands vulnerable before the world.

Here, humiliation becomes public spectacle. Power asserts itself by taking what little remains—privacy, agency, and honor.

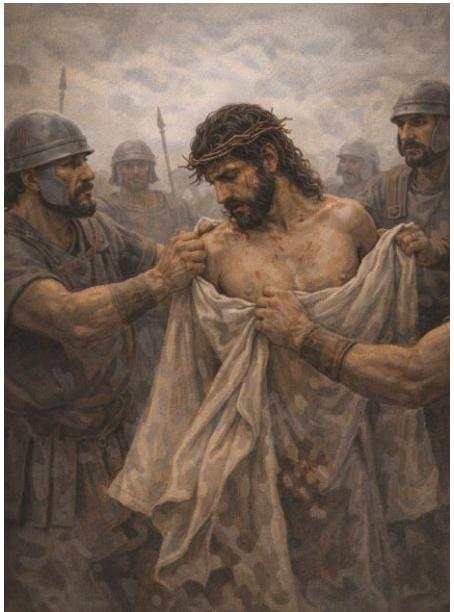
Even here, Jesus continues to show us the heart of God. Stripped and exposed, he is no less beloved. His dignity is not granted by those who humiliate him, nor can it be taken away by what they do.

LECTOR

This station confronts us with how easily dignity can be taken from us, and how fiercely it is held in the life of Christ.

PRAYER (ALL)

Humble Christ,
be near to all whose dignity has been violated.
Heal wounds caused by shame and exposure.
When love can restore what was taken,
give us courage to act.
When healing takes time,
teach us reverence, patience, and care
for every body and every life you call sacred.
Amen.



Trisagion

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

STATION XI – JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“They have pierced my hands and my feet.”

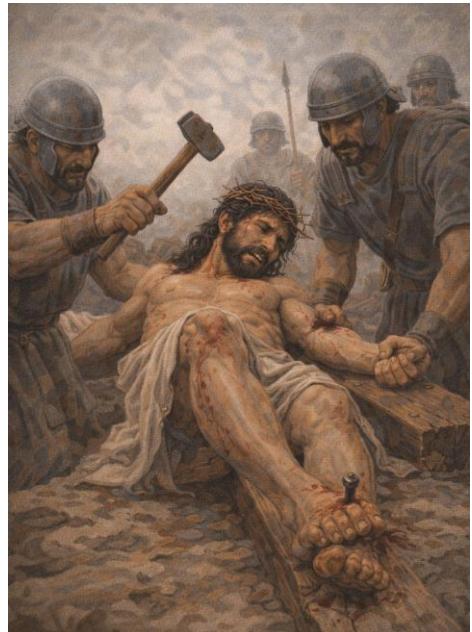
— Psalm 22:16

PRESIDER

The Cross is fixed in place. Nails bind flesh to wood. What was freely chosen is now forcibly secured. Jesus is bound not by force alone, but by love that will not let go— love that refuses to abandon the world even when the cost is unbearable.

LECTOR

This station reveals the cost of faithfulness in a violent world: love that stays, love that endures, love that remains when turning away would be easier.



PRAYER (ALL)

Crucified Lord,

**forgive us when we turn away from suffering
because it asks too much of us.**

**When love calls us to costly faithfulness,
give us courage.**

**When we feel bound by fear or injustice,
draw us into solidarity with all who suffer,**

and shape our lives by your self-giving love.

Amen.

Trisagion

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STATION XII – JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“Into your hand I commit my spirit.”

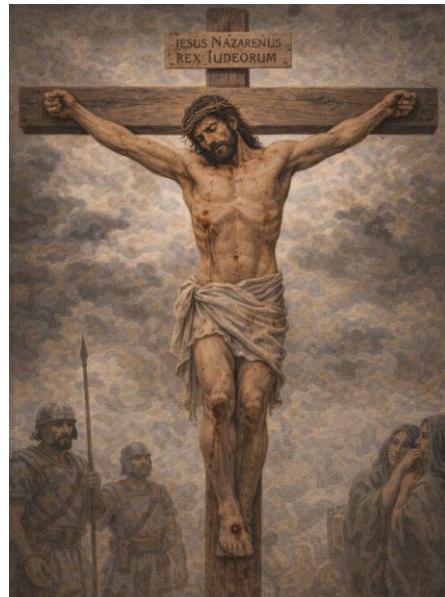
— Psalm 31:5 / Luke 23:46

PRESIDER

Jesus breathes his last. His body, stretched and broken, finally grows still.

The breath that once spoke words of healing, forgiveness, and hope is released into the silence of Calvary.

This is not a moment of defeat, but of complete self-giving. Nothing is held back. Love is poured out to the end.



On the cross, Jesus entrusts himself fully to God—releasing breath, releasing control,

releasing life itself.

He does not escape death; he goes through it.

PRAYER (ALL)

Lord Jesus Christ,

**receive into your care all who are dying,
all who grieve,
and all whose hearts feel broken
beyond repair.**

**When love cannot prevent death,
hold us in hope.**

**Help us trust that even here,
love has not failed
and death does not have the final word.**

Amen.

Trisagion

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Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

STATION XIII – JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“Then Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.”
— Matthew 27:59

PRESIDER

The body of Jesus is entrusted to loving hands.

The violence has ended. Now begins the quiet, holy work of mourning.

Those who remain must touch what has been wounded, care for what has been broken, and love what can no longer respond. Grief does not hurry. It moves slowly, tenderly, bearing the weight of love that has nowhere to go.

LECTOR

This station honors the tenderness that remains after loss.

PRAYER (ALL)

**Lord of compassion,
be present in the quiet work of grief.
Comfort all who must tend the dead
and all who carry sorrow
into the days ahead.
When love can console,
let it flow freely.
When grief must simply be borne,
give us patience, gentleness, and hope.
Amen.**



Trisagion

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

STATION XIV – JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

V. We worship you, O Christ, and we follow you.

R. For by your Cross, you show us the way of love.

LECTOR

“And so because it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.” — John 19:42

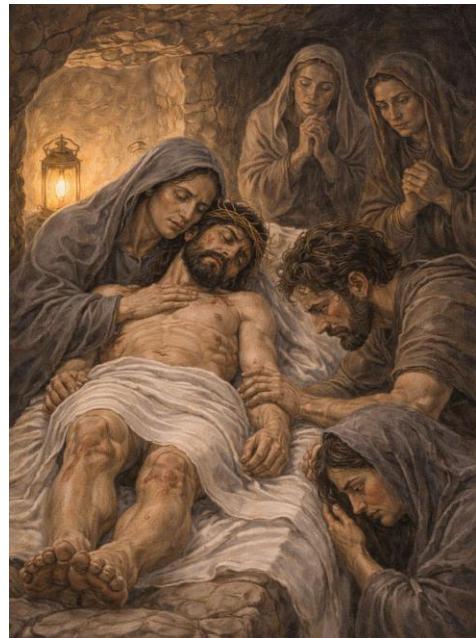
PRESIDER

The stone is rolled into place. The story appears finished. Silence settles in.

Nothing happens here—and yet everything waits. This is the stillness between loss and new life, the space where grief rests and hope has not yet found words.

LECTOR

This station teaches us to trust love in the waiting.



PRAYER (ALL)

Faithful Lord,

be with us in the stillness

between loss and new life.

**When answers are absent and hope feels hidden,
teach us to wait with trust.**

When love must be patient, hold us fast in your promises

until resurrection breaks forth in your time and in your way.

Amen.

Trisagion

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

CLOSING PRAYER (Presider)

Lord Jesus Christ, we have walked with you on the way of the Cross and have seen a love that does not turn away. As we leave this space, open our eyes and our hearts.

Help us to recognize you not only in suffering and need, but in moments of kindness, in shared work and quiet joy, and in the ordinary grace of daily life.

Now send us out to live what we have prayed—to walk gently, to love generously, and to trust that your grace goes before us and abides with us always.

For you live and reign, now and forever.

ALL: AMEN.

Presider: Go in peace, following the way of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God.