

STEADFAST LOVE

A LENTEN PLAYLIST

THE HANGING TREE

from THE HUNGER GAMES

STRANGE FRUIT

by BILLIE HOLIDAY

"Hanging Tree" Lyrics:

Are you, are you coming to the tree?
They strung up a man they say who murdered three
Strange things did happen here, no stranger would it
be if we met at midnight in the hanging tree

Are you, are you coming to the tree?
Where dead man called out for his love to flee
Strange things did happen here, no stranger would it
be if we met at midnight in the hanging tree

Are you, are you coming to the tree?
Where I told you to run so we'd both be free
Strange things did happen here, no stranger would it
be if we met at midnight in the hanging tree

Are you, are you coming to the tree?
Wear a necklace of hope side by side with me
Strange things did happen here, no stranger would it
be if we met at midnight in the hanging tree

"Strange Fruit" Lyrics:

Southern trees bear strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant south
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop

Reflection:

"The Hanging Tree" is considered a rebellious and banned song in the world of The Hunger Games, by Suzanne Collins. It speaks truth to the heinous human rights violations carried out by the Capitol and so-called Peacekeepers of the dystopian land, Panem, that once was the United States. It fuels resistance by reminding the tributes—the poor young people ordered to kill one another for Capitol entertainment—of the evils of empire, their shared enemy.

It is hard not to note the similar imagery of "The Hanging Tree" and the other playlist song for this day, "Strange Fruit." Billie Holiday's song describes lynching trees, where bodies of persecuted Black Americans hung in the southern U.S.

One also may note similarities in the images of these people—political dissenters, social scapegoats, and our Jesus—hanging in death at the hands of the powerful.

Meditate on the following lyrics in light of the Passion story.

"The Hanging Tree"
necklace of hope
strange things did happen
we'd both be free

"Strange Fruit"
strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees
blood at the root
strange and bitter crop

DO NOT BE FAR FROM ME

April 18, 2025, 6:30pm

Schertz
united methodist church

GOOD FRIDAY

ENTRANCE

Gathering please gather in silence

*Greeting

Leader: Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

All: That we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

Let us pray: Almighty God,

your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross
so that he might draw the whole world to himself.

Grant that we, who glory in this death for our salvation,
may also glory in his call to take up our cross and follow
him; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Hymn

Were You There
African-American Spiritual

UMH #288

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

***Call to Worship**

On this Holy Friday, we follow Jesus through a sham trial and up the hill to Golgotha, all the while questioning:

My God, my God, where are you?

We follow the women who held vigil at the foot of the cross, all the while despairing:

My God, my God, where are you?

We come near to Jesus as soldiers mock him, all the while crying out:

My God, my God, where are you?

We sit in grief and dismay, once again confronted with the horrible reality of sin and evil in our world that people just like us would crucify Love Incarnate. And all the while, God sits with us, saying:

My child, my child, I am here.

PROCLAMATION & RESPONSE

The Psalter

from Psalm 22

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night but find no rest.

3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4 In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm and not human, scorned by others and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me; they sneer at me; they shake their heads;

8 "Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver-- let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"

9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

10 On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

16 For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they bound my hands and feet.

17 I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me;
18 they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.

19 But you, O LORD, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!

20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!

22 I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

24 For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the

afflicted; he did not hide his face from me but heard when I cried to him.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him
shall praise the LORD. May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the
LORD.

The Passion Story

John 18-19:42, NRSV

Sermon

“Do Not Be Far From Me: Hayden Mussi
The Shroud of Turin”

MEDITATION AT THE CROSS

Hymn

Ah Holy Jesus

UMH #289

Hymn by Johann Heerman; Tune: HERZLIEBSTER JESU

Ah Holy Jesus, how hast thou offended,
that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted!

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee!
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee!

The Reproaches

Response: **Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy and immortal One,
have mercy upon us.**

Lord's Prayer

SENDING FORTH

***Hymn**

O Sacred Head Now Wounded UMH #286

Latin Hymn; Tune: PASSION CHORALE

O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame laid down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, thine only crown
How pale thou art in anguish, with sore abuse and scorn
How does that visage languish,
which once was bright as morn!

***Dismissal with Blessing**

please depart in silence