



ST NICHOLAS
ANGLICAN CHURCH, BIRCH CLIFF



Stations of the Cross
The Sonnets of Malcolm Guite

Wednesday, March 27
7:30pm Contemplative service

Welcome to St. Nick's!

As we continue our journey through Holy Week that leads to the joyful celebration of the Resurrection this coming Sunday, we are blessed that you have joined us.



Washrooms

Our washrooms are downstairs, which you can get to by the staircase near the left-side chapel, or by the elevator, also in the chapel. For help with the elevator, speak to one of our sidespeople.

Accessibility

In this service, we will process around the church to the stations that follow Christ's journey through the cross. If you need to stay in one place, you're free to make yourself comfortable in our accessibility pew, and you'll be able to hear the entire service.



Better Sight and Sound

Large-print copies of this leaflet are also available: just ask a sidesperson. If you have difficulty hearing, we have audio-assistive devices that will help you hear the service better.

Offertory

If you wish to make a monetary gift while you're here, you can place your offering on the plate at the back of the church on your way in or out. There are guest envelopes in the pews you can use. Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$20. You can also make an e-offering through Canada Helps, using this QR code.



Participating in tonight's service...

Officiant:	The Rev. Andrew MacDonald
Organist:	Mr. Bill Goodfellow
Server:	Wendy Barber
Readers:	Michael Braley, Joy Horswill, Sonia Halloran, Dennis Newman
Livestreamer:	Sharon Endugesick
Sidesperson:	Joan Alkerton

**Thank you for being with us tonight.
In this holiest of weeks, may God's love be with you.**

About tonight's readings



The readings for tonight's Stations of the Cross service come from the sonnets of Malcolm Guite. Malcolm Guite is a British poet, priest, academic, and songwriter known for his profound exploration of faith, theology, literature, and culture through his poetry and writings.

He studied English literature at Cambridge University, where he developed a deep passion for poetry and theology. Throughout his academic journey, he explored the intersection of literature, spirituality, and Christian theology, which greatly influenced his poetic voice and style.

One of Guite's notable contributions to contemporary poetry is his series of sonnets inspired by the church calendar, including collections focused on Advent, Lent, and Easter. These sonnets offer profound reflections on the Christian liturgical seasons, inviting readers into a deeper contemplation of the mysteries of faith.

Guite's poetry reflects a rich tapestry of influences, drawing inspiration from literary classics, biblical narratives, and the natural world. His works often explore themes of redemption, love, beauty, and the search for meaning in a complex world. He is celebrated for his mastery of traditional poetic forms, such as sonnets, as well as his ability to infuse contemporary relevance into timeless themes.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Guite felt called to ministry and was ordained as an Anglican priest in the Church of England. He has served in various pastoral roles, including chaplaincy at Girton College, Cambridge, where he continued to engage with students and scholars on matters of faith and culture.

Prelude

Opening Prayers

Leader: In the name of God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Holy God, incline your ear to us; make haste to answer when we call.

People: **Incline your ear to us; make haste to answer when we call.**

Leader: Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come before you.

People: **Incline your ear to us;**

Leader: Hide not your face from me in the day of my trouble.

People: **Make haste to answer when we call.**

Leader: You, O Lord, endure for ever, and your name from age to age.

People: **Incline your ear to us;**

Leader: You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to have pity upon her.

People: **Make haste to answer when we call.**

Leader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

People: **Incline your ear to us: make haste to answer when we call.**

Leader: Let us pray. *(a time of silence is kept)*

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation,
That we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts,
whereby you have given us life and immortality: through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Following this prayer, the congregation is invited to gather at the first station. You'll need to bring this leaflet with you to sing the hymn verses as we go.

Verse: **When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.**

First Station – Jesus is sentenced to death

Leader: We lift our hearts to you, O Christ, in adoration and praise.

People: For you are the source of our redemption, and the light of the world.

Reader: The very air that Pilate breathes, the voice with which he speaks in judgement, all his powers of perception and discrimination, choice, decision, all his years, his days and hours, his consciousness of self, his every sense, are given by this prisoner, freely given. The man who stands there making no defence, is God. His hands are tied, his heart is open. And he bears Pilate's heart in his and feels that crushing weight of wasted life. He lifts it up in silent love. He lifts and heals. He gives himself again with all his gifts into our hands. As Pilate turns away a door swings open. This is judgement day.

Malcolm Guite (I)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy, but first suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace: through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.**

Second Station – Jesus takes up his cross

Leader: We honour you, O Christ, and give thanks for your sacrifice.

People: Your cross is our hope and salvation.

Reader: He gives himself again with all his gifts
and now we give him something in return.
He gave the earth that bears, the air that lifts,
water to cleanse and cool, fire to burn,
and from these elements he forged the iron.
From strands of life he wove the growing wood,
he made the stones that pave the roads of Zion.
He saw it all and saw that it is good.
We took his iron to edge an axe's blade,
we took the axe and laid it to the tree,
we made a cross of all that he has made,
and laid it on the one who made us free.
Now he receives again and lifts on high
the gifts he gave and we have turned awry.

Malcolm Guite (II)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

Third Station – Jesus falls the first time

Leader: We exalt you, O Christ, and give thanks for your boundless grace.

People: **Through your holy cross, you have restored us to life and healed our brokenness.**

Reader: He made the stones that pave the roads of Zion
and well he knows the path we make him tread.
He met the devil as a roaring lion
and still refused to turn these stones to bread,
choosing instead, as Love will always choose,
this darker path into the heart of pain.
And now he falls upon the stones that bruise
the flesh, that break and scrape the tender skin.
He and the earth he made were never closer,
divinity and dust come face to face.
We flinch back from his *via dolorosa*,
he sets his face like flint and takes our place,
staggers beneath the black weight of us all
and falls with us that he might break our fall.

Malcolm Guite (III)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers,
that by the reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand
upright: grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all
dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our
Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: **Grant us grace to follow you.**

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

Verse: **Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.**

Fourth Station – Jesus meets his mother

Leader: We glorify you, O Christ, and praise your unfailing love.

People: Your cross, our hope; your love, our redemption.

Reader: This darker path into the heart of pain
was also hers whose love enfolded him
in flesh and wove him in her womb. Again
the sword is piercing. She, who cradled him
and gentled and protected her young son
must stand and watch the cruelty that mars
her maiden making. Waves of pain that stun
and sicken pass across his face and hers
as their eyes meet. Now she enfolds the world
he loves in prayer; the mothers of the disappeared
who know her pain, all bodies bowed and curled
in desperation on this road of tears,
all the grief-stricken in their last despair,
are folded in the mantle of her prayer.

Malcolm Guite (IV)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

O God, who willed that in the passion of your Son, a sword of grief
should pierce the soul of his own mother: mercifully grant that your
Church, having shared with her in his passion, may be made worthy to
share in the joys of his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and
ever.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: In the Cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.**

Fifth Station – Simon carries the cross

Leader: We honour you, O Christ, and give thanks for your sacrifice.

People: Your cross is our hope and salvation.

Reader: In desperation on this road of tears
bystanders and bypassers turn away.
In other's pain we face our own worst fears
and turn our backs to keep those fears at bay,
unless we are compelled as this man was,
by force of arms or force of circumstance,
to face and feel and carry someone's cross
in Love's full glare, and not his backward glance.
So Simon, no disciple, still fulfilled
the calling: 'take the cross and follow me'.
By accident his life was stalled and stilled,
becoming all he was compelled to be.
Make me, like him, your pressed man and your priest,
your *alter Christus*, burdened and released.

Malcolm Guite (V)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve:
bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of
others; that with wisdom, patience and courage, they may minister in his
Name to the suffering, the friendless and the needy; for the love of him
who laid down his life for us, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me;
Lo!, it glows with peace and joy.**

Sixth Station – A woman wipes Jesus' brow

Leader: We glorify you, O Christ, and praise your unfailing love.

People: **Your cross, our hope; your love, our redemption.**

Reader: Bystanders and bypassers turn away
and wipe his image from their memory.
She keeps her station. She is here to stay
and stem the flow. She is the reliquary
of his last look on her. The bloody sweat
and salt-tears of his love are soaking through
the folds of her devotion and the wet
folds of her handkerchief, like the dew
of morning, like a softening rain of grace.
Because she wiped the grime from off his skin,
and glimpsed the godhead in his human face
whose hidden image we all bear within,
through all our veils and shrouds of daily pain
the face of God is shining once again.

Malcolm Guite (VI)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory: through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: **Grant us grace to follow you.**

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

Verse: **When the sun of bliss is beaming,
light and love upon my way,
from the Cross the radiance streaming,
adds more lustre to the day.**

Seventh Station – Jesus falls a second time

Leader: We exalt you, O Christ, and give thanks for your boundless grace.

People: Through your holy cross, you have restored us to life and healed our brokenness.

Reader: Through all our veils and shrouds of daily pain,
through our bruised bruises and re-opened scars,
he falls and stumbles with us, hurt again
when we are hurt again. With us he bears
the cruel repetitions of our cruelty;
The beatings of already beaten men,
the second rounds of torture, the futility
of all unheeded pleading, every scream in vain.
And by this fall he finds the fallen souls
who passed a first, but failed a second trial:
the souls who thought their faith would hold them whole
and found it only held them for a while.
Be with us when the road is twice as long
as we can bear. By weakness make us strong.

Malcolm Guite (VII)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race,
you sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature,
and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great
humility: mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering,
and also share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the Cross are sanctified,
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.**

Eighth Station – The women weep for Jesus

Leader: We glorify you, O Christ, and praise your unfailing love.

People: **Your cross, our hope; your love, our redemption.**

Reader: He falls and stumbles with us, hurt again,
but still he holds the road and looks in love
on all of us who look on him. Our pain
as close to him as his. These women move
compassion in him as he does in them.
He asks us both to weep and not to weep.
Women of Gaza and Jerusalem,
women of every nation where the deep
wounds of memory divide the land
and lives of all your children, where the mines
of all our wars are sown: Afghanistan,
Iraq, the Cote d'Ivoire... he reads the signs
and weeps with you, and with you he will stay
until the day he wipes your tears away.

Malcolm Guite (VIII)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace, the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children and our children's children; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: **Grant us grace to follow you.**

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

Verse: **In the Cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.**

Ninth Station – Jesus falls a third time

Leader: We exalt you, O Christ, and give thanks for your boundless grace.

People: **Through your holy cross, you have restored us to life and healed our brokenness.**

Reader: He weeps with you, and with you he will stay
when all your staying power has run out.
You can't go on, you go on anyway.
He stumbles just beside you when the doubt
that always haunts you, cuts you down at last
and takes away the hope that drove you on.
This is the third fall and it hurts the worst,
this long descent through darkness to depression
from which there seems no rising and no will
to rise, or breathe or bear your own heart beat.
Twice you survived; this third will surely kill,
and you could almost wish for that defeat;
except that in the cold hell where you freeze,
you find your God beside you on his knees.

Malcolm Guite (IX)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: **Grant us grace to follow you.**

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

Verse: **Thou art the Way, to thee alone,
from sin and death we flee:
and he would the Father seek
must seek him, Lord, by thee.**

Tenth Station – Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Leader: We lift our hearts to you, O Christ, in adoration and praise.

People: For you are the source of our redemption, and the light of the world.

Reader: You can't go on, you go on anyway;
he goes with you, his cradle to your grave.
Now is the time to loosen, cast away
the useless weight of everything but love.
For he began his letting go before,
before the worlds for which he dies were made,
emptied himself, became one of the poor,
to make you rich in him and unafraid.
See, as they strip the robe from off his back;
they strip away your own defences too.
Now you could lose it all and never lack;
now you can see what naked Love can do.
Let go these bonds beneath whose weight you bow,
his stripping strips you both for action now.

Malcolm Guite (X)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Saviour gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: Thou art the truth; thy word alone
true wisdom can impart;
thou only canst inform the mind,
and purify the heart.**

Eleventh Station – Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Leader: We honour you, O Christ, and give thanks for your sacrifice.

People: Your cross is our hope and salvation.

Reader: See, as they strip the robe from off his back
and spread his arms and nail them to the cross;
the dark nails pierce him and the sky turns black,
and love is firmly fastened onto loss.
But here a pure change happens. On this tree,
loss becomes gain, death opens into birth.
Here wounding heals and fastening makes free;
Earth breathes in heaven, heaven roots in earth.
And here we see the length, the breadth, the height
where love and hatred meet and love stays true,
where sin meets grace and darkness turns to light.
We see what love can bear and be and do,
and here our saviour calls us to his side:
his love is free, his arms are open wide.

Malcolm Guite (XI)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross, that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honour of your Name.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: Thou art the Life; the rending tomb
proclaims they conquering arm;
and those who put their trust in thee
nor death nor hell shall harm.**

Twelfth Station – Jesus dies on the Cross

Leader: We exalt you, O Christ, and give thanks for your boundless grace.

People: Through your holy cross, you have restored us to life and healed our brokenness.

Reader: The dark nails pierce him and the sky turns black:
we watch him as he labours to draw breath.
He takes our breath away to give it back,
return it to its birth through his slow death.
We hear him struggle, breathing through the pain,
who once breathed out his spirit on the deep,
who formed us when he mixed the dust with rain
and drew us into consciousness from sleep.
His spirit and his life he breathes in all,
mantles his world in his one atmosphere.
And now he comes to breathe beneath the pall
of our pollutions, draw our injured air
to cleanse it and renew. His final breath
breathes us, and bears us through the gates of death. *Malcolm Guite (XII)*

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and forever.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life,
grant us that way to know,
that truth to keep, that life to win,
whose joys eternal flow.**

Thirteenth Station – Jesus is taken off the cross

Leader: We honour you, O Christ, and give thanks for your sacrifice.

People: Your cross is our hope and salvation.

Reader: His spirit and his life he breathes in all;
now on this cross his body breathes no more.
Here at the centre everything is still,
spent, and emptied, opened to the core.
A quiet taking down, a prising loose,
a cross-beam lowered like a weighing scale:
unmaking of each thing that had its use.
A long withdrawing of each bloodied nail.
This is ground zero, emptiness and space,
with nothing left to say or think or do
But look unflinching on the sacred face
that cannot move or change or look at you.
Yet in that prising loose and letting be
he has unfastened you and set you free.

Malcolm Guite (XIII)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you, and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercy's sake.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

We follow the crucifer to the next station as we sing...

**Verse: Giver of the perfect gift,
only hope of human race
hear the prayer our hearts uplift,
trembling at thy throne of grace.**

Fourteenth Station – Jesus is laid in the tomb

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Here at the centre everything is still:
before the stir and movement of our grief
which bears its pain with rhythm, ritual,
beautiful useless gestures of relief.
So they anoint the skin that cannot feel,
and soothe his ruined flesh with tender care,
kissing the wounds they know they cannot heal,
with incense scenting only empty air.
He blesses every love that weeps and grieves
and makes our grief the pangs of a new birth.
The love that's poured in silence at old graves
renewing flowers, tending the bare earth,
is never lost. In him all love is found
and sown with him, a seed in the rich ground.

Malcolm Guite (XIV)

Leader: Let us pray.

(a time of silence and reflection is kept)

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we, who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism, may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

People: Amen.

Leader: Christ our companion,

People: Grant us grace to follow you.

You may return to your seat as we sing...

**Verse: Who can save us, Lord, but thou?
Let thy mercy show thy power.
Lo, we plead thy promise now,
in this the accepted hour.**

Closing Prayers at the Altar

Leader: We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

People: In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Leader: Let us pray.

(silence is kept)

Gracious and loving Creator, we offer our gratitude for liberating us from the chains of darkness and ushering us into the kingdom through Christ's death and resurrection. May this journey through his cross awaken us to the fullness of life, and may Christ's boundless love lift us to everlasting delights, that through his enduring grace, we may be transformed and lifted into the eternal embrace of joy and peace. In the unity of the Holy Spirit, who breathes life into all creation, now and forevermore.

People: Amen.

Leader: And now let us pray as our Saviour taught us, saying,

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Amen.**

Leader: May Christ crucified draw you to himself, that you may find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this night and always.

People: Amen.

**Verse: Oh! May these our holy days,
blest by thee, with thee be passed,
that with purer, nobler praise,
we may keep thy feast at last.**

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Holy Week & Easter



Palm Sunday, March 24

8:30 & 10:30am Communion & Blessing of Palms

Holy Wednesday, March 27

7:30pm Stations of the Cross

Maundy Thursday, March 28

8:00pm Institution of Lord's Supper & Gethsamane Watch

Good Friday, March 29

10:30am Solemn Liturgy & Prayers

Easter Sunday, March 31

8:30 & 10:30am Easter Communion & Music

A poster for a Free Neighbourhood Easter Egg Hunt. The background is a lush green lawn. In the foreground, a woven wicker basket is tipped over, spilling numerous colorful Easter eggs. The eggs are decorated with various patterns, including stripes, floral designs, and abstract shapes. The text 'Free Neighbourhood Easter Egg Hunt' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font across the top. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for St Nicholas Anglican Church, Birch Cliff, and the text 'Saturday, March 30, 10am - 11am' and 'ST NICHOLAS ANGLICAN CHURCH, BIRCH CLIFF'.

Free Neighbourhood Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 30, 10am - 11am

ST NICHOLAS
ANGLICAN CHURCH, BIRCH CLIFF