

READING ONE

Service leader: Jesus is becoming more and more popular with the people - and also more and more unpopular with the government. He knows the time is drawing near when he'll be arrested. So he goes off to the garden with his friends, and he says to them,

"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." He goes a little further, falls with his face to the ground and prays, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Then he returns to his disciples and finds them...*sleeping*?!! "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asks Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

READING TWO

Service leader: So we've got rid of our bed, our laziness and complacency. When we were dismantling it we discovered a backdrop for our Easter garden, and we also now have a tomb. Jesus' death is getting closer and closer - but the soldiers just need some way of getting hold of him. One of Jesus' friends, the one called Judas Iscariot, goes to the chief priests and says:

"What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they count out for him thirty pieces of silver. Judas arranges a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Later on Judas goes up to Jesus and says, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and he kisses him. Jesus replies, "Friend, do what you came for."

The soldiers step forward, seize Jesus and arrest him.

READING THREE

(No intro. Cue will be end of Confession. Start as soon as service leader has finished praying.)

Then the governor's soldiers take Jesus and gather the whole company of soldiers around him. They take off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twist together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand as a sceptre. Then they kneel in front of him and mock him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they say. They spit on him, and take the staff and use it to strike him on the head again and again. After they mock him, they take off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they lead him away to crucify him.

Afterwards, they divide up his clothes by throwing dice. And, sitting down, they keep watch over him there. Above his head they place the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. (*said sarcastically*)

READING FOUR

(No intro. Cue will be end of previous song, during which items found under pews will be hung on the cross at the front of church.)

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness comes over all the land. At three o'clock Jesus cries out in a loud voice, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Immediately one of the onlookers runs to get a sponge. He fills it with wine vinegar, puts it on a staff, and offers it to Jesus to drink. The rest say, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

And Jesus cries out again in a loud voice, then gives up his spirit. (*Music to start softly.*)

At that moment the curtain of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shakes, the rocks split. (*short pause*)

Surely he was the Son of God?

Please stand as we sing our final song.