Stations of the Cross in the Valley



Explore the Roanoke Valley while reflecting on the story of Jesus' crucifixion.

As we journey through this Lenten season, it is important to hear again the story of Jesus' crucifixion. To give opportunity for deeper reflection and new insights from this powerful story, you are invited to visit stations throughout the Roanoke valley listed below. You may complete the stations in a timeframe that makes sense for you and your family. It would be helpful for you to bring a BIble and perhaps something to take notes with as you go about the stations.

Each of the stations are listed below with a coordinating text, short reflection and prayer. As you approach each station, read the scripture passage and see how this new place you are reading it in resonates or conflicts with the scene of the text. You are then invited to move to the reflection and prayer. Take as long as you need at each station, give yourself time to delve into the story, the setting, and how God is speaking to you through them.

A Google map of each location can be found here.

OPENING PRAYER
Holy God, as we journey through this familiar story, help us to understand it anew. Show us, O God, where and why we find ourselves here again and again, and move us toward a more just future centered on your boundless love and compassion for the world. Amen.

Station One: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
Location: Virginia Western Community Arboretum (Open sunrise to sunset) 3094 Colonial Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 24015
Scripture Passage: Matthew 26:36-41
Reflection: This scripture passage reveals to us how overcome Jesus was with emotion as he approached his crucifixion. Through his grief, he turns to the solace of prayer in nature. The

power of relationship with God, expressed through this prayer propelled him forward on this difficult and lonely journey. Even in this time of crisis, Jesus' disciples could not keep themselves from sleeping. Even though they failed Jesus, Jesus still walked towards the cross for them, for us, for the world.
Prayer: Faithful God, It was in a garden that your son felt the weight of his impending death and in his distress he turned to you in prayer. Help us to remember to turn to you in prayer for all things, challenges and joys. For it is relationship with you that sustains us through the trials and triumphs of our life. In the name of the crucified and risen Jesus we pray, Amen.

Station Two: Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested
Location: Straight Street Ministry, 333 Luck Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 24016
Scripture Passage: Mark 14:43-46
Reflection: As Judas arrives on the scene there is certainly the potential for confrontation even violence as a crowd with swords and clubs gathers. Ironically, it is a kiss that betrays Jesus. It is Jesus' peaceful willingness to be handed over that moves the story of the passion towards a violent conclusion at the cross. The feeling of betrayal persists. For many young people a sense of abandonment leads them to places of safety like Straight Street.
Prayer: Steadfast God, with a kiss your Son is betrayed into hands that will bring about suffering and pain. Give us we pray a renewed sense of the gravity of turning our hearts and minds from you. Forgive us when we sacrifice faithful living for earthly comfort. Empower us to care for those who have been disappointed by those in authority. And may that care be experienced especially by young people whose home life is challenging. We ask this in the name of Jesus who willingly sacrifices for us. Amen.

Station Three: Jesus is denied by Peter
Location: Rescue Mission, 402 4th St SE, Roanoke, VA 24013
Scripture Passage: Matthew 26:69-75
Reflection: Even though Peter and Jesus have been close companions for several years, as Jesus goes to the cross, Peter denies knowing Jesus at all. How lonely and painful that denial must have been for Jesus. The Rescue Mission is a place that serves members of our community who themselves are experiencing pain and isolation. People experiencing homelessness, addiction, and hardships often become ostracized from their loved ones and communities.
Prayer: Persistent God, when we deny others in our community for who they are, we deny you. Be the bridge over the chasms that separate us, bring company to the lonely, and establish shelter for those in need. We ask this in the name of the one whose persistent and redemptive love cannot be denied, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Station Four: Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilot
Location: Roanoke Courthouse, 315 Church Ave SW #2, Roanoke, VA 24016
Scripture Passage: Luke 23:13-25
Reflection: Jesus' trial by Pilate is a sure sign that justice has its prejudicial edges. The truth is the innocent are punished. The influence of the vocal public is real. As you consider Jesus' trial consider the trials happening in our courthouse. How often are the innocent punished right here? How much does public outcry or public silence impact those verdicts?
Prayer: Sovereign God, your judgment is always marked by your heart of grace. We pray this

day that we might receive your gifts of grace faithfully then share them faithfully as we seek to live justly. We pray today for all those in our justice system both the guilty and the innocent asking for your care. Do give us courage to examine systems that perpetuate inequality and courage to make changes. We pray in the name of the one convicted though no crime was committed, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Station Five: Jesus is scourged at the pillar and crowned with thorns
Location: Roanoke Diversity Center, 425 Campbell Ave SW, Suite 111
Roanoke, VA 24016
Scripture Passage: John 19:1-3
Reflection: Jesus, though completely innocent, is condemned to death. As though crucifixion is not enough, he is tortured, beaten by words and actions. On their pedestals of power, the authorities abuse Jesus. Unfortunately, our world is still marred by the abuse of innocent people today. Those who are considered to be different because of who they are, where they come from, how they express themselves, or who they love. Our call as Christians is to denounce hatred and discrimination and celebrate that our God of abundance creates people in a great beauty of diversity. As you take in the Roanoke Diversity Center, see what signs are in the windows? How might those signs be connected to God's creation and our call to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.
Prayer: Creative and Abundant God, we give you thanks for the wonder of your creation. When we see words and actions that stem from intolerance and hatred, move us to stand for what is right. Inspired by the compassion of your son, help us to bring about a world where no one has to fear being exactly who you wonderfully made them to be. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Station Six: Jesus carries the cross
Location: The drive up to the Mill Mountain Star or you may choose to hike a trail up to the star, perhaps with a weighted backpack
Scripture Passage: John 19: 16-17
Reflection: Historians tell us that the cross Jesus carried weighed at least over 150 pounds. But it was not just the cross that Jesus carried, he carried the sting of betrayal, the loneliness from his disciple's denial, the pain of his beatings, and the sin of the whole world. As Jesus carried his cross to the mountain top of Golgotha, he was mocked and scorned by the crowd. As you head to this mountain top, reflect on the enormity of Jesus' experience in the moment. The burden Jesus carries reminds us of the painful burdens carried by others, some in public, some in private. How can Jesus' love help us to be people who help shoulder the burdens of others and not just stare and judge from the sidelines.
Prayer: God of the weary and over burdened, your son carried the weight of the cross and the sin of the world up to Golgotha. Though he was innocent, his great love led him to continue forward. Let the boundless compassion shown by Jesus lead us to be people who seek to share the burdens of others. For it was you who said, "Come all you who are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." In Jesus' name, Amen.

Station Seven: Jesus is crucified
Location: Mill Mountain Star, 2000 J B Fishburn Pkwy, Roanoke, VA 24014
Scripture Passage: John 19: 18-22

Reflection: There they crucified him - at Golgotha - on top of a hill near the city. Jesus crucifixion is not only horrific, and painful, and filled with suffering, it is also public. On a hilltop, near the city Jesus is crucified for all the world to see. There is no more public place in Roanoke than the star. Likely while at the star you are not alone. As you look out over the valley and see the homes it is clear you are not alone. Jesus though dies a very public death with a multilingual label "King of the Jews" all by himself. It is Jesus, alone, who dies for the sake of the world.
Prayer: God for all people, save us by way of your sacrifice. We pray to be reminded that Jesus' death on the cross is an event of suffering and despair and yet ultimate sacrifice. There are people everywhere with both needs and agendas. While we hope to live faithfully as community, remind us that you are king always. In the name of the crucified Lord we pray. Amen.

Station Eight: Jesus promises his kingdom to a thief
Location: Roanoke County Jail, 401 E Main St, Salem, VA 24153 or Botetourt County Jail, 205 N Roanoke St, Fincastle, VA 24090
Scripture Passage: Luke 23:39-43
Reflection: Even as Jesus is dying on the cross, he offers grace to a thief who has been condemned to death. Jesus' actions remind us that no one is outside of the compassion of God. As you view the jail, notice the structure of the building, the isolation, and the barriers. Pray for the people who are imprisoned within the stone and fencing. eThat they may know Jesus remembers them, and that they would know that through the cross, nothing separates them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
Prayer: Holy God, your innocent son was condemned to death alongside thieves. As he himself is dying an excruciating death, Jesus takes time to extend grace to a convicted criminal. May this remind us always that God's judgement and forgiveness are beyond our control or comprehension. As disciples of Christ, propel us to live lives that remind everyone, and especially those who are outcasts, that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace. We pray in the name of the one who so loved the entire world. Amen.

Station Nine: Jesus speaks to his mother and the beloved disciple
Location: Calling the Powers statue by Lawrence Reid Bechtel (Located in Vic Thomas Park on the Roanoke River Greenway near Black Dog Salvage), 902 13th St SW, Roanoke, VA 24016
Scripture Passage: John 19:25-27
Reflection: When Mary finds out she is carrying the Christ Child, she sings with joy about the mighty works of God. Years later, It's hard to imagine how Mary felt to see not only the Messiah, but her very son, beaten and condemned to death. In one of his final acts, Jesus asks his disciple John to care for Mary. As you meditate on the "Calling the Powers" statue, pause to remember the powerful witness of Mary and the depth of her despair to watch Jesus, her son, die.
Prayer: Holy God, Parent of All, We give thanks for the humble, faithful, and brave witness of your servant Mary. Who not only bore our savior, but walked with him to the cross. Help us, we pray, to remember those around us who are grieving and, like John, support them in their times of need. Through the power of your abiding spirit, we pray. Amen.

Station Ten: Jesus dies on the cross

Location: Wasena Park, 1119 Wiley Dr SW, Roanoke, VA 24015
Scripture Passage: Luke 23:44-46
Reflection: Jesus' death on the cross impacts everything. The sun doesn't shine in the middle of the day. The temple curtain tears. The world all of it is upended. All the while Jesus' trust in God never fails. Jesus trusts that his dying will ensure God's intention to save. Jesus dies for the whole creation - all of it. Here at the park enjoy being in the middle of creation. And as you do value the gift of Jesus saving it and you.
Prayer: God of heaven and earth, as Jesus trusts you enough to breathe his last we are humbled by your trust in humanity to steward and care for creation. Fill us with love for the creation that surrounds us. Call us by way of that love to care for it always. We pray in the name of the savior of the world, Jesus. Amen.

Station Eleven: Jesus is placed in the tomb
Location: St. Philip Scattering Garden, 8115 Williamson Rd., Roanoke, VA 24019
Scripture Passage: Matthew 27:57-60
Reflection: Matthew's gospel tells the story of a proper burial. It certainly indicates the certainty of Jesus' death. And with the great stone rolled into place the scene is set for Easter and no explanation other than resurrection (some supposed Jesus' body was stolen). Here in the scattering garden reflect on the ways we honor the dead. Let your mind drift to a memory of someone who has been special to you. Recall Jesus' burial. Count on Jesus' resurrection.
Prayer: God of new life, we give thanks for those who have died and honor their lives with us. We pray that we might live into the story of Jesus with wonder and awe even as we anticipate the Easter celebration of his resurrection promise. We pray in the name of the resurrected Jesus. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER
God of the cross, the tomb, and the resurrection, Try as we might, we will never understand or experience the fullness of your sacrifice and suffering. While we can never fully comprehend, we are humbled and we are grateful beyond words. Empower us to live lives of thanksgiving in response to the gift of boundless love and grace we experience through the cross. May our meditation on your passion lead us to more boldly care for the suffering, the accused, and the vulnerable in our world today. We pray as our crucified savior taught us, Our Father, which 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 them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

We hope that this unique Stations of the Cross experience was a meaningful one for you. Please mark your calendars on March 29, the Monday of Holy Week, for a Fireside Faith discussion of Stations of the Cross in the Valley at St. Philip.