



Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

April 7, 2023

Artist Statement Why Have You Foresaken Me?

Lauren Wright Pittman | Inspired by Matthew 27:27-50

Digital Painting

My research for this piece began with imagery of Christ's mockery. Image after image had contorted, almost inhuman, figures torturing Christ and reveling in brutality, while Jesus was at peace. It seems the artists depicted Jesus leaning hard into his divinity, almost transcending the embarrassment, abandonment, and pain, but all I could think of when I read the text was how devastating and lonely it is to be misunderstood and made to be a joke. I felt that, in the last moments of Jesus' life, he'd be thrust into his humanity.

An art piece that was particularly intriguing to me was Christ of Saint John of the Cross by Salvador Dalí. It has such a harsh downward angle on the cross; it visually connected me to Christ's mockery in a new way. It pushed me to consider different perspectives from which artists and people of faith have been engaging with this horrifying event, both physically and theologically.

One visual perspective I couldn't find was one looking directly down on Jesus's face. At first I thought of this as the ultimate position of mockery—looking down Jesus' nose during the most excruciating moments of his thirty-three years. Everyone mocked him. It must've felt like this mockery was closing in on him. I wonder what his internal world was like... Were there parts of him echoing the mockery of the soldiers, chief priests, scribes, elders, and bystanders?

As I began to sketch Christ from this perspective, my thoughts and feelings about the piece took a hard turn. I was thinking about the text as I was holding my five-month-old little boy. He had a fever and was inconsolable. I felt desperate to offer him comfort and solace; it felt like my heart was breaking open. And then it occurred to me: this perspective I was drawing was not a position of mockery, it was metaphorically the perspective of God the Creator

looking at her son who was screaming out in agony. In order to find the expression on Christ's face, I referenced images of children crying; their expressions were raw, real, and unencumbered. This perspective shift reveals something profound to me about the heart of God, and I connect with it in a new way after becoming a mother.

This image represents the deep lament of God. It holds the desperation of a parent and the betrayal of a loved one. These acts of abuse, cruelty, and indignity were fired at the Creator of the Universe by the very beings into whom God breathed life. Perhaps God is crying out to us, "Why have you forsaken me?"

One of my colleagues, Denise Anderson, reminded me that in Jesus' crying out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," he is quoting scripture. So I read Psalm 22, and found lament woven with praise, and humanity dancing with divinity. Instead of creating a mandala with mockery closing in on Jesus, I imaged the verses of Psalm 22. These images of grief and gratitude ripple out from Jesus' mouth and become a foundation, a grounding in his faith in this moment. In the visual, the moments of lament are faded while the images of adoration and praise shimmer a bit more brightly. The psalm gives him the fortitude to rest, and to offer up his last breath.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Order of Worship Good Friday

Welcome and Opening Prayer | *Rev. Lauren Efird*

† **Hymn** | *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* (vv. 1, 3, and 4; pg. 3)

Meditation on the Cross | *The Solemn Reproaches* | *Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome*

Leader: Holy God, holy and strong,

All: Holy immortal one, have mercy upon us.

† **Hymn** | *How Deep the Father's Love for Us* (pg. 4)

Communion | *Rev. Efird*

Prayer of Confession: Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be obedient disciples. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we've not loved our neighbors, and we've not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us for what we have done and for what we've left undone, and free us for joyful obedience through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mystery of Faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Stripping of the Altar | *Surely, He Hath Borne Our Griefs* | *Evan Copley*

Lesson I | *The Arrest* | *Rev. Efird*

Hymn | *What Wondrous Love* (v. 1; pg. 5)

Lesson II | *The Trial* | *Rev. Spears-Newsome*

Hymn | *O Sacred Head* (v. 1; pg. 6)

Lesson III | *The Denial* | *Rev. Efird*

Hymn | *What Wondrous Love* (v. 2; pg. 5)

Lesson IV | *The Sentencing* | *Rev. Spears-Newsome*

Hymn | *O Sacred Head* (v. 2; pg. 6)

Lesson V | *The Crucifixion* | *Rev. Efird*

Hymn | *What Wondrous Love* (v. 3; pg. 5)

Lesson VI | *The Death* | *Rev. Spears-Newsome*

Hymn | *O Sacred Head* (v. 3; pg. 6)

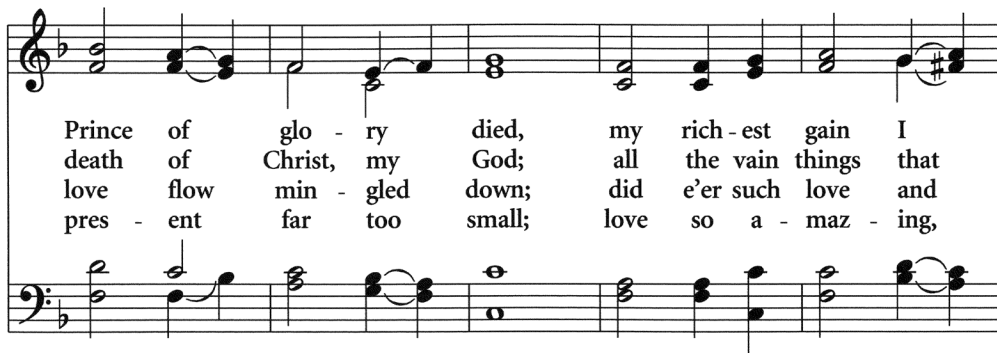
Lesson VII | *The Burial* | *Rev. Efird*

Musical Response | *Were You There* | *Rev. Randy Palmer*

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross



1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross, on which the
 2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the
 3. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, sor - row and
 4. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a



Prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
 death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that
 love flow min - gled down; did e'er such love and
 pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss, and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
 charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
 sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
 so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

How Deep the Father's Love

1. How deep the Fa-ther's love for us, how vast be-yond all mea -
 2. Be - hold the Man up - on a cross, my sin up - on His shoul -
 3. I will not boast in an - y - thing: no gifts, no power, no wis -

sure; that He should give His on - ly Son to
 ders; a - shamed, I hear my mock - ing voice call
 dom; but I will boast in Je - sus Christ; His

make a wretch His trea - sure. How great the pain of sear - ing loss; the
 out a - mong the scof - fers. It was my sin that held Him there un -
 death and res - ur - rec - tion. Why should I gain from His re - ward? I

Fa - ther turns His face a - way as wounds which mar the Cho - sen
 til it was ac - com - plished. His dy - ing breath has brought me
 can - not give an an - swer. But this I know with all my

One bring man - y un - to glo - ry.
 life; I know that it is fin - ished.
 heart: His wounds have paid my ran - som.

What Wondrous Love

Unison

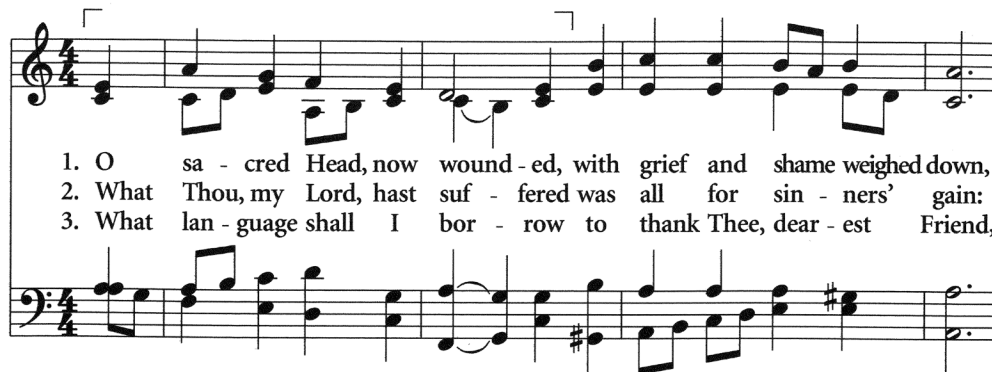
1. What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What
 2. When I was sink-ing down, sink-ing down, sink-ing down, when
 3. To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing; to
 4. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and

won-drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is
 I was sink-ing down, sink-ing down, when I was sink-ing
 God and to the Lamb, I will sing. To God and to the
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on. And when from death I'm

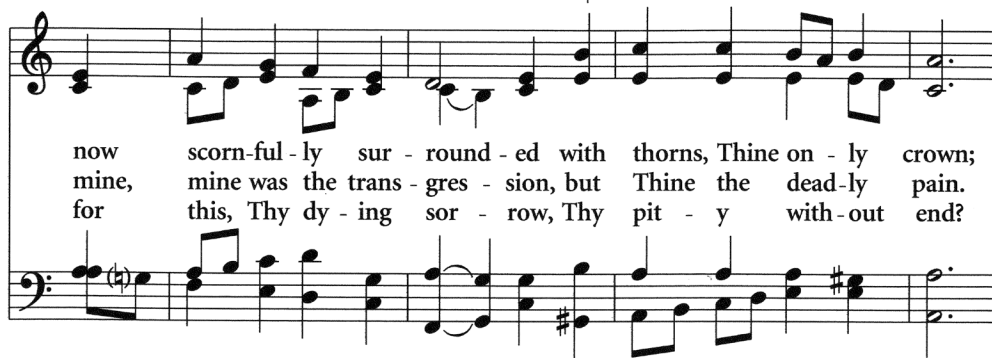
this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dread-ful curse for my
 down be - neath God's righ-teous frown, Christ laid a - side His crown for my
 Lamb Who is the great "I Am," while mil-lions join the theme, I will
 free I'll sing and joy - ful be; and through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing

soul, for my soul, to bear the dread-ful curse for my soul.
 soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side His crown for my soul.
 sing, I will sing; while mil-lions join the theme, I will sing.
 on, I'll sing on; and through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing on.

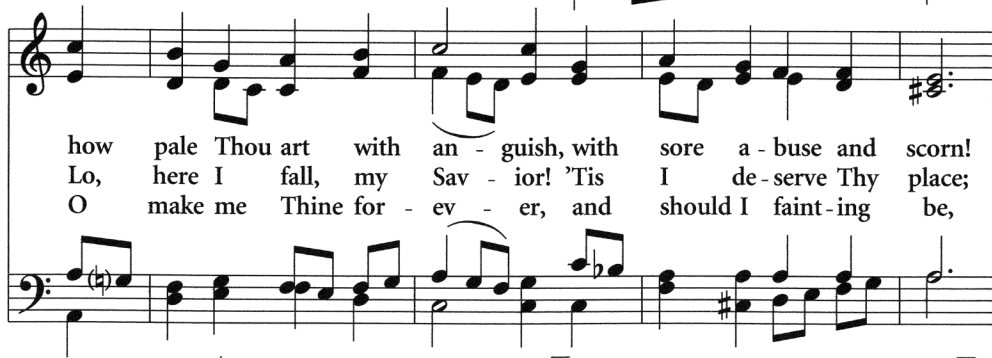
O Sacred Head



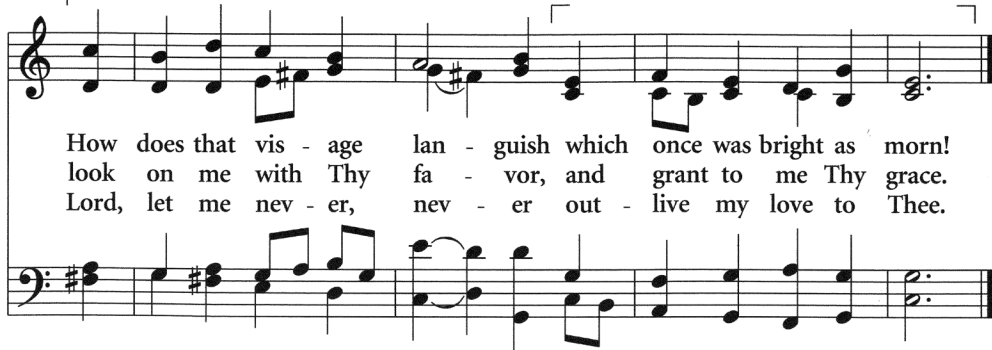
1. O sa - cred Head, now wound - ed, with grief and shame weighed down,
 2. What Thou, my Lord, hast suf - fered was all for sin - ners' gain:
 3. What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank Thee, dear - est Friend,



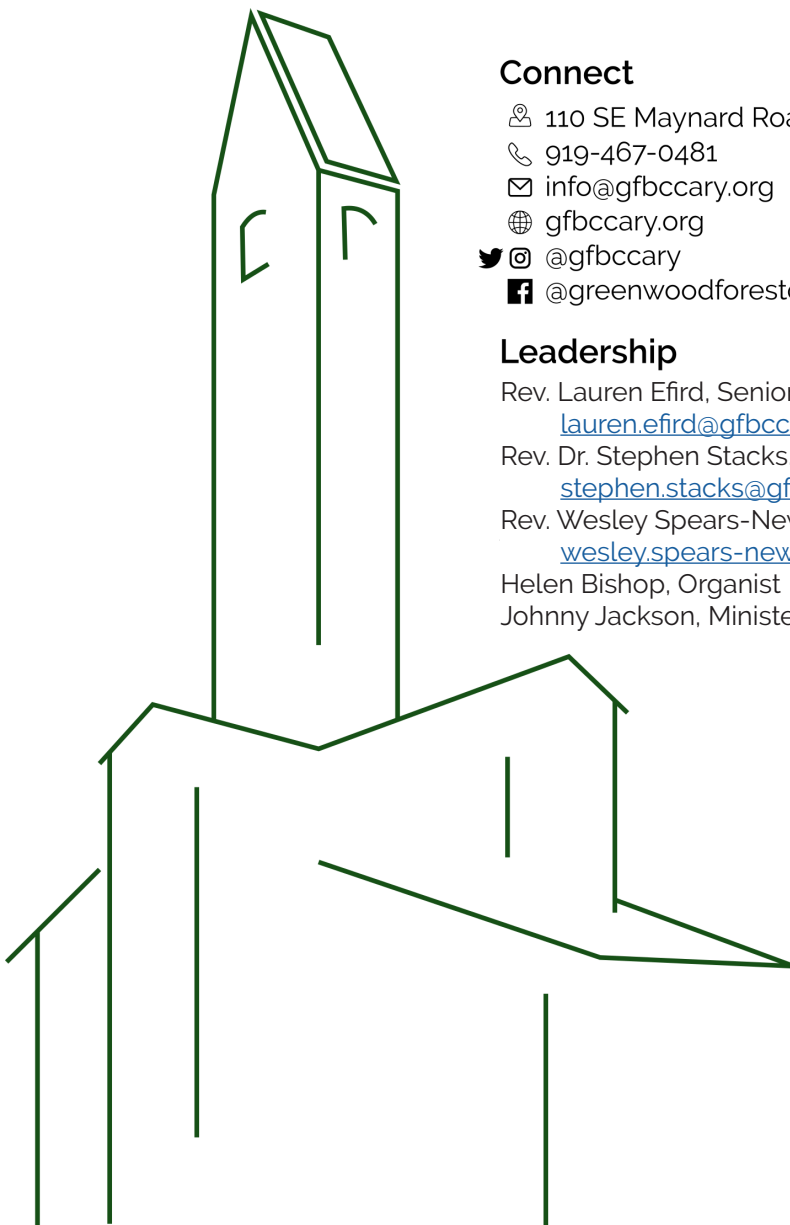
now scorn-ful - ly sur - round - ed with thorns, Thine on - ly crown;
 mine, mine was the trans - gres - sion, but Thine the dead - ly pain.
 for this, Thy dy - ing sor - row, Thy pit - y with - out end?



how pale Thou art with an - guish, with sore a - buse and scorn!
 Lo, here I fall, my Sav - ior! 'Tis I de - serve Thy place;
 O make me Thine for - ev - er, and should I faint - ing be,



How does that vis - age lan - guish which once was bright as morn!
 look on me with Thy fa - vor, and grant to me Thy grace.
 Lord, let me nev - er, nev - er out - live my love to Thee.



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