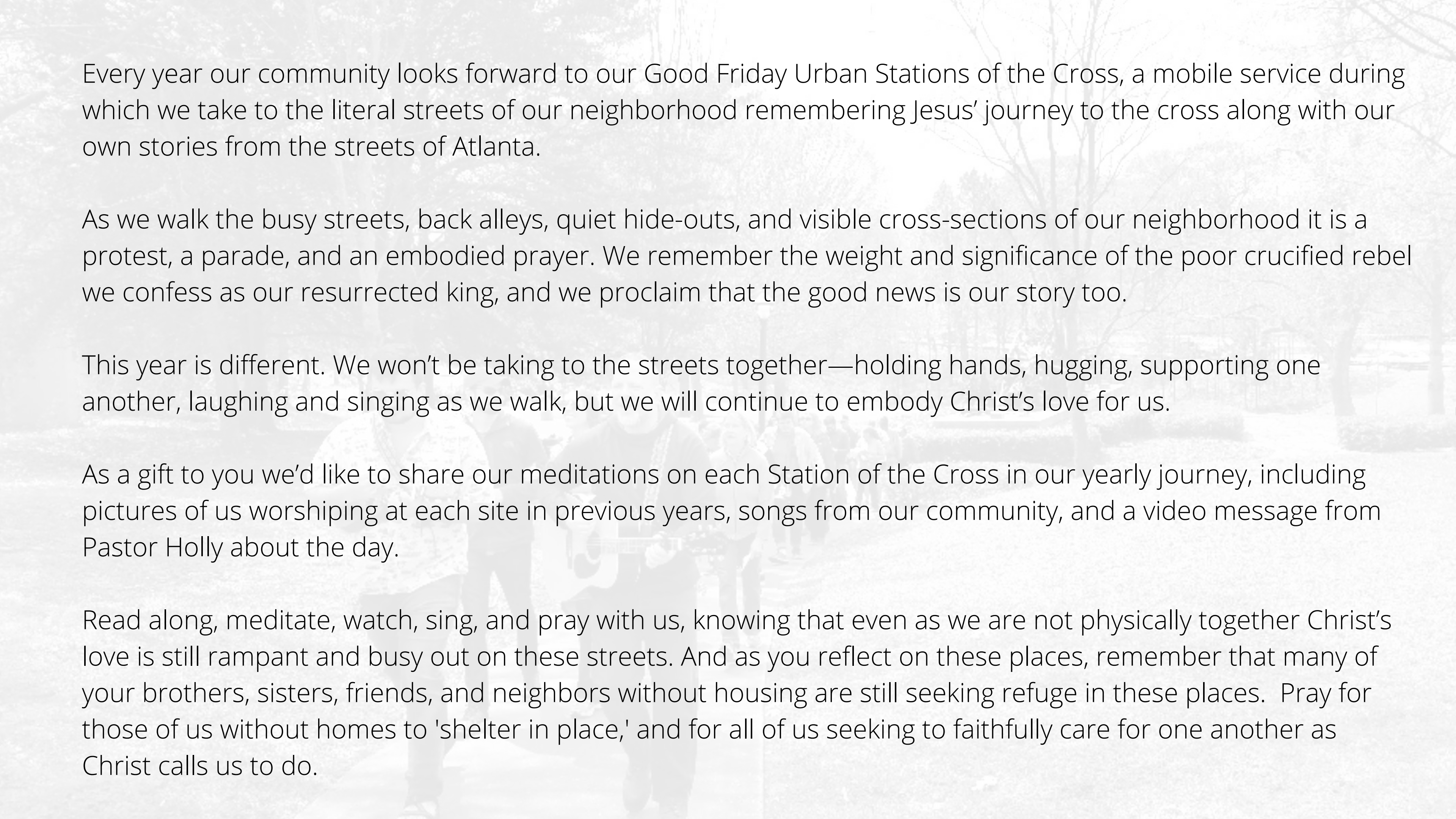


# Good Friday

Urban Stations of the Cross

Mercy Community Church  
Atlanta, GA



Every year our community looks forward to our Good Friday Urban Stations of the Cross, a mobile service during which we take to the literal streets of our neighborhood remembering Jesus' journey to the cross along with our own stories from the streets of Atlanta.

As we walk the busy streets, back alleys, quiet hide-outs, and visible cross-sections of our neighborhood it is a protest, a parade, and an embodied prayer. We remember the weight and significance of the poor crucified rebel we confess as our resurrected king, and we proclaim that the good news is our story too.

This year is different. We won't be taking to the streets together—holding hands, hugging, supporting one another, laughing and singing as we walk, but we will continue to embody Christ's love for us.

As a gift to you we'd like to share our meditations on each Station of the Cross in our yearly journey, including pictures of us worshiping at each site in previous years, songs from our community, and a video message from Pastor Holly about the day.

Read along, meditate, watch, sing, and pray with us, knowing that even as we are not physically together Christ's love is still rampant and busy out on these streets. And as you reflect on these places, remember that many of your brothers, sisters, friends, and neighbors without housing are still seeking refuge in these places. Pray for those of us without homes to 'shelter in place,' and for all of us seeking to faithfully care for one another as Christ calls us to do.



To begin, you can view Pastor Holly's message about Good Friday on our Youtube channel here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG\\_Ifbm6qPo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG_Ifbm6qPo)

We also invite you to listen to these songs between meditations or while you're reading.

<https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCqaxsqF6THtw74BscPGhqcw/videos>

Were You There When They Crucified My Lord  
Wisdom of the Cross  
In Your Mercy, Save Me (Psalm 31)





## **JESUS PRAYS**

### **THE GOSPEL: JOHN 17.20-26**

## **IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: Freedom Park**

### **A MEDITATION**

Jesus prays for us—each one of us. On his way to trial and torture by his enemies, on his way through betrayal and abandonment by his friends—on his way to the cross—Jesus prays for us. Jesus prays that we may all be one, just as he and God are one. By his life, Jesus has shown us that to be one with God is to do God's work. It is to heal and feed. It is to resist and welcome. It is, finally, to lay down our lives. It is, simply, to love as God loves. This is the prayer of Jesus for us.





## **JESUS IS ARRESTED** **THE GOSPEL: JOHN 18.1-11**

### **IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: Freedom Park** **A MEDITATION**

We have gathered in a 'garden,' just like Jesus and his friends did. Into the garden come the police. The police are led there by one who is part of the community. As it was then, so it is now. Sometimes, like Judas, we sell out one another to the violence of the system because of our greed. Sometimes, like Peter (who cuts off the ear of another poor man, a slave of the High Priest), we use the same violence the system uses against us against one another because it is the only way we know. Yet Jesus shows us another way. The powers that be confront the power of I AM—and fall back. Love faces up to the violence of the system, even if it means suffering, knowing that in the end life will win out over death.





## **JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST THE GOSPEL: JOHN 18.12-27**

### **IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: The Bridge Sculpture A MEDITATION**

This monument reminds us of a day called Bloody Sunday in 1965, Selma, Alabama. On that day, police attacked peaceful protestors with clubs and tear gas as they marched for voting rights for all Americans, regardless of race. Hands bound, Jesus stands before the high priest. Hands bound, protestors face police in Selma, Alabama. Hands bound, poor people, the homeless, immigrants, still stand before the rich and before judges in courts. Hands bound, will we still fight for freedom? We confess that like Peter, we are afraid and perhaps would like to pretend that we do not belong to the poor man Jesus and his revolutionary ideas, either.





**JESUS BEFORE PILATE**  
**THE GOSPEL: JOHN 18.28-40**

**IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: The Cut (the Back Alley)**  
**A MEDITATION**

We stand at a corner, the cross of busy streets and a forgotten alley. This alley-way cuts through the heart of our neighborhood, overshadowed by big houses and high-price rentals, bustling businesses and beautiful places of worship. Many of us walk it every day. For some of us, it is home. Still others of us may never have even known it was here. Today it is a place of choosing. Today, even as then, the presence of Jesus among us forces us to choose, to take sides. Do we, like the Jewish authorities, want to appear 'clean,' while doing the dirtiest of deeds? Do we, like Pilate, that twisting, turning politician, just want the whole mess to go away? Or do we, like both of them, prefer violence—officially-sanctioned violence, no less—so that we may cover up our rejection of the truth? Today our way of the cross takes us down this alley. But which way will we choose tomorrow?





## **JESUS TORTURED AND CONDEMNED THE GOSPEL: JOHN 19.1-16**

### **IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: The Cut (the Back Alley) A MEDITATION**

This alleyway is also a place of hiding for some of us, out of sight from the humiliating stares of the public. It is a home of sorts too, yet also a place of bitterness and pain, a place where we come to find relief—in whatever way we can get it—from our pain. Is your cry of suffering, oh Jesus, when you were whipped, beaten, humiliated, and spat upon, not the same cry that we hear in the mouths of our sisters and brothers today? Archbishop Oscar Romero teaches us, 'in the crucified people of history, the crucified God becomes present to us.'





## **JESUS IS CRUCIFIED**

### **THE GOSPEL: JOHN 19.17-30**

## **IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: 910 Ponce de Leon**

### **A MEDITATION**

An expensive new apartment building towers where once stood '910,' the old Open Door Community—friends and neighbors known for their radical hospitality and prophetic voice. When 910 could no longer sustain its work, we proposed to buy the building so it might continue as a refuge and shelter for those of us living on the streets of our city. The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta and leaders of the Open Door instead decided to sell the property to developers. What was once a welcome shelter to the poor, has become housing we cannot afford. Here we remember that Jesus was also brought to a place on the margins of society and died naked, a criminal, with other poor people. It is love that liberates us from the need to stand in judgment or condemnation. But it is also love that is forced to take up the cross because it will always be considered wrong to lead others toward life—abundant life—in systems dominated by death.





**JESUS IS BURIED**  
**THE GOSPEL: JOHN 19.31-42**

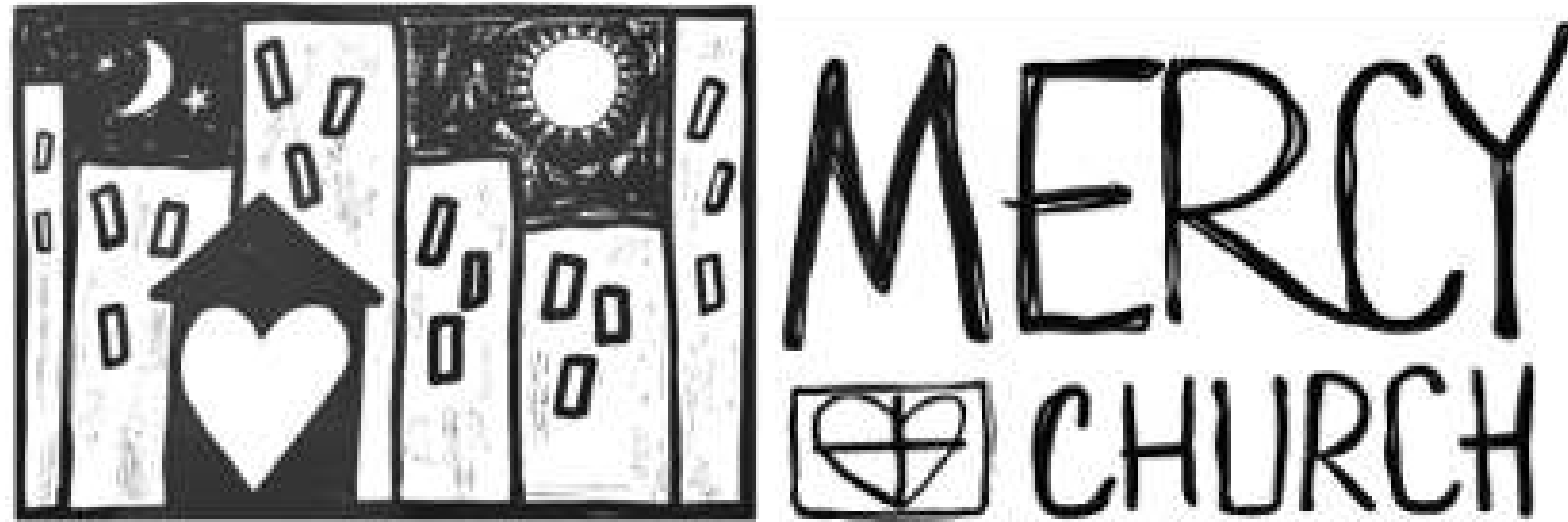
**IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: Mercy Community Church**  
**A MEDITATION**

Jesus is buried. It is finished. Death is real. We smell death. Even in our own space, we can smell death: no jobs with dignity, no housing for the poor, violence among us, war for the sake of profit and greed, hatred because our skin is black or brown, control and abuse of women, bigotry, misinformation, the startling truth that not all of us have somewhere to 'stay at home,' that not all of us have the same freedoms, choices, and protection. The smell of death surrounds us! We, like Joseph of Arimathea, like Nicodemus, like Mary who will come later, lay Jesus in the tomb. And we wonder like they did, is this the end? So we pray. And we wait.









[mercyatl.org](http://mercyatl.org)