

Reader 6

Michael Regier

I am Hate, and, I, too was there. And how I hated this One. But you see I hated everybody, for I am hate. I do love my job well, and I intended to destroy this teacher of love. And I tried, believe me, I tried, but what were the results? He said, "Father forgive..." I couldn't even make this One hate that miserable wretch hanging beside him who asked for mercy. He wouldn't curse his tormentors, he wouldn't curse his Father, and, worst of all, he wouldn't curse himself for going through with this foolish endeavor. Oh how I hated him, but I couldn't make him hate me. This One is my greatest failure of all time.

Were You There Blue hymnal 257, vs. 3

Emily Martin

Reader 7

Donald Finks

I am Death, and, I, too was there. Unlike my colleagues, I did not fail. Sooner or later everyone falls beneath my power, and this One was no different from the rest. Yes, he made a lot of grand promises; even referring to himself as Resurrection and Life. Bu today I proved that all, even this one, must submit to my eternal darkness. I proved that the peace, joy and the love this One spoke of will melt away in my presence. Tonight I reign victorious, and this One lies defeated.

This war is over!

I have won!

I am Death and the victory is mine!

~~ The congregation leaves in silence



Good Friday Service *I Was There*

March 30, 2018 • 6:30 PM
First Mennonite Church – Denver

Welcome

Glenn Balzer

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross Blue hymnal 259

Emily Martin

Opening Prayer:

Glenn Balzer

Suffering God, you became one of us, taking our shame, guilt and sin. As we walk in these days make us deeply aware of the suffering around us, in our homes, our neighborhoods, our cities and towns.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, make us deeply attentive to the forgotten, the lost, lonely, oppressed, denied, mocked and afflicted. May the sacrifice of your Son save us as others see salvation through us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Litany:

Glenn Balzer

Lord Jesus,
by your cross and resurrection
deliver us
by your witness to the truth
deliver us
by your passion and death
deliver us
by your victory over the grave
deliver us
from the lust of power
deliver us
from the conspiracy of silence
deliver us
from the worship of weapons
deliver us
from the slaughter of innocents
deliver us
from the nightmare of hunger
deliver us
from the peace that is no peace
deliver us
from security that is no security
deliver us
from the politics of terror
deliver us
from the plundering of the earth's resources
deliver us
from the dispossession of the poor
deliver us
from the despair of this age
deliver us
by the light of the gospel
give us peace
by the good news for the poor
give us peace
by your healing of our wounds
give us peace

I was quite effective against his disciples. One of them denied even knowing him, and they all ran like frightened children. I felt certain that I could destroy him. I longed to hear his voice beg for mercy. I longed to hear him promise to leave the country and abandon his foolish mission. I longed to hear this, but he remained silent. He refused to defend himself; he refused to retract anything he said. To be sure, he felt my presence, but I couldn't destroy him. I have failed.

Were You There Blue hymnal 257, vs. 2

Emily Martin

Reader 4

Ernie Kandel

I am Shame, and, I, too was there. Perhaps I failed because he was so used to me by now. I have been with this One since his birth. I was in the manger, the "Kings' "cradle. I was beside him in Nazareth when his friends and neighbors ran him out of town as a false prophet. I was in the sneering faces of his tormentors. I was the crown of thrones around his head. I was in the dice that the soldiers threw as they gambled for his clothing. I was in the sign that they hung over his head. I was in the cross itself, making it heavier as he carried it. I was there, but I could not break his spirit.

Reader 5

Lynn Williams

I am Agony, and, I, too was there. I did not let this One forget my presence for one minute. I burned into his forehead with the thorns. I caused the sweat to trickle into his lash marks. I caused him to fall with weariness under the burden of the cross. Then I attacked him as brutally as I could. I ran across his body as the nail pierced his flesh. I caused his tongue to swell and burn with thirst. I beat upon him with the hot rays of the sun, causing his body to dehydrate.

As I was increasing my attack to its strongest, I leaped for joy. I thought I had succeeded. I heard him cry, "my God, my God, why?" But my celebration was premature, for with his final words, he entrusted himself into God's hands. I am Agony, and I inflicted him greatly, but, I, too, fail to destroy him.

by faith in your word
give us peace
by hunger and thirst for justice
give us peace
by the coming of your kingdom
give us peace
Amen.

Reading: Psalm 22

Pastor Jane Dick

Were You There Blue hymnal 257, vs. 1

Emily Martin

Reader 1

Stephanie Phibbs

I am Doubt, yes I was there. I was there through the whole ordeal. But I was with this One all along, right from the very beginning. I was there in the wilderness. It was I who said, if you be the Son of God, command these stones be turned into bread." I was trying to convince this One even then that it was foolish for believing that he was the Promised One, that he could have any effect on humankind and its destiny. But this One was too strong for me then. He pushed me aside and began his work. But I am not to be dismissed that easily.

I followed and I attacked him again and again. But I went about it in a different way. I lashed out through his followers, those who came to hear his teachings. But again I failed. For his words warmed even the saddest of hearts, the blind received their sight, the lame walked, and the dead returned to life.

But I was not to be outdone. I remain with his followers, and some of them I won. Through my efforts, some of them sought ways to trap him, discredit him, and finally destroy him. I even worked my way into his circle of friends. I convinced one of them to betray him.

It took a lot of doing, but I had him where I wanted him. Because of me he said, "Let this cup pass from me." He was wondering if it had to be this way. He was doubting the climax of his mission. Yes, he knew that I was there. He had seen my presence in the face of his followers, and once again he was feeling my attempt to surround him.

I am Doubt.
And I was there.

I was there, but I failed to destroy him. Once again he dismissed me with, "Not my will, but thine be done." I was there, but this One overcame me.

Reader 2

Margaret Williams

I am Sorrow, and I was there; believe me, I was there. I, too, attacked the One with a vengeance. Many have fallen from the broken heart that I inflict, but not this One. Many have abandoned their goals, their hopes and dreams, and have chosen to live in self-pity. But again, he did not.

I did my best to defeat him. I reminded him constantly that he was unwanted in this world. I came to him as rejection, scorn, and ridicule. I tried to tell him he was ridiculous for loving those who did not want him. I did my best, but I, too, failed.

Oh, I brought him plenty of heartache. I cause tears to fill his eyes on many occasions. But I could not break him; I couldn't even make him feel sorry for himself. Even as he was struggling under this cross, his thoughts were on others. He said, "Daughter of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children." I inflicted myself heavily upon him, but could not destroy him.

Reader 3

Wanda Brotherton

I am Fear, and I was there. I literally surrounded this One. I was with him in the garden. It was I who placed those great drops of sweat upon his forehead. I danced at him in the soldiers flaming torches, and I winked at him in the glistening of their swords and spears. I was present in every crack of the whip, and I was in the descending hammer that drove the nails through his hands and feet.