The Venerable Rena Turnham
Palm Sunday
April 1, 2023
St. John's Episcopal Church - Minneapolis
Matthew 27:11-54

"Gateway to Hope"

In the name of the one that makes all things new. Amen.

Perhaps there's not much more to be said at this point.

There's certainly a lot to FEEL.

Let's pause for a moment and dwell in what we find so deeply disturbing *about the Passion* and sit in what is horrifying to imagine.

It's easy to look away, isn't it?

I invite us to sit with our discomfort and pay attention to what's happening inside our bodies.

Where do YOU feel it?

My heart is aching heart. And there's something in the pit of my stomach and my shoulders feel stiff.

What we just heard in the Passion is hard to hear, hard to wrap our brains around and hard to reconcile in our hearts.

We want to look away.

If we look away from the crowds that demanded that Jesus be crucified, if we look away from authority that succumbed to the will of the mob, and if we look away when Jesus called out and took his last breath, then the fullness of the Paschal mystery will elude is.

If we choose to look away from the suffering in our own lives, and we're unable to make a connection to human suffering in the tragic events of the present, then we'll be looking away.

We'll be looking away from the tent cities we drive by.

We'll be looking away from the six people who died in the Nashville school shooting.

We'll be looking away from the 39 US migrants who died this week in Juarez, Mexico.

We'll be looking away from the violence perpetrated on members of the trans community.

This is where Jesus went and where we are called to be—to the people, and in the circumstances we'd rather look away from. Even from ourselves and our own lives. This is where God works in us and through us and in our communities.

This is where transformation and healing happen.

This is why we find ourselves HERE huddling together as followers of Jesus:

seeking sanctuary in the brokenness of our lives and our communities,

finding belonging,

walking The Way of Jesus,

making meaning,

conquering our fear,

healing and being healed,

and finding HOPE… so we can BE THAT HOPE in a world that so desperately needs it.

It's here that we begin our Holy Week pilgrimage, not at the joy of the empty tomb, and the promise fulfilled, but with Jesus as he triumphantly enters into Jerusalem to where "The earth shook, and the rocks were split': our gateway to Hope.

Amen