

30th Ecumenical Zurich Way of the Cross 2026

In remembrance of Jesus' suffering and death –
the hardship and suffering of people today seen from a different perspective.
Rising up in his name.
Rising with him.

An ecumenical service in Zurich.
Good Friday, 3 April 2026, 12.00 – 14.00

Six stations in the city centre:

Station 1: Start at Dreikönigen Church (12 noon)

Impulse **Nicole Becher**
Prayer **Peter Spichtig**

Station 2 Tessinerplatz

Inspiration **Lars Simpson**
Prayer **Bettina Lichtler**

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Station 3 Quai area near Beethovenstrasse

Inspiration **Markus Muntwiler**
Prayer **Herbert Anders (Italian)**

Station 4 Town Hall Complex

Reflection **Martin Conrad**
Prayer **Thomas Risel**

Station 5 Münsterhof

Reflection **Christophe Kocher**
Prayer **Kathrin Rehmat** Reformed Church

Station 6 St Peter's Church (ends at 2 pm)

Reflection **Amanda Ehrler**
Prayer **Jackie Sellin**, Anglican Church

www.kreuzweg-zuerich.ch

Station I: Dreikönigen Church

GONG

SILENCE

Welcome: Peter Spichtig

A warm welcome to the 30th Ecumenical Way of the Cross here in Zurich. Let us set out together and follow the Cross of Christ. The first station is here at the Church of the Three Kings.

At the end of the station, the cross will be carried out of the church first and we shall all follow it. Please stay behind the cross and the person wearing the safety vest throughout the entire route.

We follow the cross. We do this in silence. At each of the six stations, we shall hear a Bible passage, receive a reflection and pray.

We follow Christ on his Way of the Cross, and as we contemplate his suffering, we also reflect on the suffering of so many people in our present time and world.

GONG

Brief silence

Bible passage *Matthew 2:1–12 – from the Zurich Bible*

Andreas Müller-Crepon

¹ When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men from the East came to Jerusalem ² and asked, 'Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We have seen his star rise and have come to pay him homage.' ³ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And he summoned all the chief priests and scribes of the people and enquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They replied, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶ "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means the least among the principalities of Judah; for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men in secret and sought to learn from them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and do him homage.' ⁹ At the king's command they set out,

and behold, the star they had seen rising went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

¹¹ And they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother; they fell down before him and paid him homage, opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² But because a dream had warned them not to return to Herod, they took another route home to their own country.

Reflection **Nicole Becher**, Evangelical Methodist Church

Here we are in the Church of the Three Kings. The name commemorates the Three Wise Men. The Bible, in the Gospel of Matthew, tells of astrologers, wise men who were alerted to the birth of Jesus by a special star and set out on an unknown road to find him.

Based on the three precious gifts these men gave to the child, it was later inferred that there were three people who had enough money for the journey and the gifts – perhaps three kings? Early on, depictions began to associate these three with different parts of the world: wise and powerful men from all over the world set out to visit the child in the stable. For the message of God's love, which the child later conveyed through his words and life, applies to all people. And no power, no wealth and no nationality outweighs the love of God.

This message still holds true today – and it is equally true that people have always struggled with it. Even Christians, even today. The tendency to invoke one's Christian faith to oppress others is on the rise. The tendency to invoke one's Christian faith to put oneself first is on the rise. The tendency to openly and shamelessly assert claims to power is on the rise. It is forgotten or deliberately concealed that God's message applies equally to all.

It is forgotten or deliberately concealed that we are loved through grace and not through merit.

It is forgotten or deliberately concealed that no nationality, no wealth and no power is recognition or reward from God.

The journey of the wise men began under a lucky star. When they ceased to look to it and instead turned to human power structures and hierarchy, they were in danger of straying from the path.

Let us not forget, or deliberately conceal for our own benefit, that God loves. Unconditionally. Even unto the cross.

Hymn ‘Stay here and watch with me’ *(twice)*

Prayer by Peter Spichtig OP, Catholic Church

Great God,

We marvel in gratitude

that you seek to be with us.

In your Son you became human,

poor and small like us.

Into the hand of every child

that comes into this world,

you inscribe your name.

Help us to trust in the infinite love

that your Spirit keeps alive within us.

Move people to to care for one another

and to encourage and support those

who devote their energies to the service of the common good.

Strengthen those working in the media

in their commitment to the truth,

that they may get to the bottom of things

and call out injustices.

And give us hope and strength

as we take small steps towards a reconciled world

through Jesus Christ, your Son, our brother,

who lives and reigns with you in the power of the Spirit,

God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Kyrie chant

Procession with singing

Station 2: Tessinerplatz

GONG STRIKE when everyone has arrived

SILENCE

Bible passage *John 18:33–40*

Andreas Müller-Crepon

³³ Pilate went into the praetorium, summoned Jesus and said to him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ ³⁴ Jesus replied, ‘Is that your own idea, or have others told you about me?’ ³⁵ Pilate replied: “Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶ Jesus replied, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my people would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jewish authorities. But my kingdom is not from here.’ ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, ‘So you are a king after all?’ Jesus replied, ‘You say that I am a king. I was born for this, and I came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’ ³⁸ Pilate asked him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jewish leaders and told them, ‘I find no grounds for condemning him.’ ³⁹ But it is your custom that I release someone to you at the Passover. Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?’ ⁴⁰ Then they shouted again, saying, ‘Not him, but Barabbas.’ Barabbas was a thief.

Reflection **Lars Simpson**, Christian Catholic Church

Pontius Pilate’s question to Jesus still rings in our ears: ‘What is truth?’

Today the question arises: “Who determines the truth?”

Where and how can we even recognise the truth anymore? Truth is distorted and threatened when power and the lust for power come into play. Time and again, we see in our world how the truth is twisted to preserve the powerful and their plans for power. There are – unfortunately! – plenty of examples of this in current world politics.

But as we are standing right in front of the FIFA Museum, I shall focus on this international sports organisation. Since 1932, Zurich has been the headquarters of world football’s governing body. The way this organisation has behaved on the world stage in recent years shows just how quickly the truth is twisted to maintain prestige and fame. Behind the façade, innocent people pay the price for the lies. Just as in war, so too in sport. One example: the 2022 FIFA World Cup in the Arab Gulf state of Qatar. This global sporting event was the most expensive of all time: A total of 220 billion dollars.

However, this global sporting event was made possible by thousands of migrant workers: they built **seven** gigantic new stadiums and an airport in record time in the scorching heat. Exactly how many of them lost their lives

in the process is a matter of dispute. This raises the urgent question: 'What is the truth?'

The Qatari government and FIFA have officially announced that only three people lost their lives. Human Rights Watch, however, takes a different view. The human rights organisation reports that more than 6,500 people lost their lives during the construction of the stadiums for the World Cup in Qatar. They hold FIFA partly responsible for the exploitation.

One might well ask whether the truth stands any chance at all when power and money come together?

Let's not stop looking and asking, 'What is the truth?'

Song "Stay here and watch with me" (2x)

Prayer **Bettina Lichtler**, Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich
Jesus Christ, God among people,

You have shown us truth and humanity – against all hypocrisy and without self-interest. We wish to follow you.

When the truth is distorted and concealed: Help us to be vigilant.

When images and news stories are fabricated to deceive us into believing they are true: Help us to look closely.

When clicks and likes become more important than seeking out the real story: help us to remain critical.

What is truth? Who can we trust?

We have heard you say: 'I am the way, the truth and the life'—

We place our trust in you. Your faithfulness and love show us what it takes to be trustworthy.

We place our hope in you. You have gone before us, through death, through all that is deadly – for us, into life.

We are committed to the truth, as you lived it. It is not always clear-cut.

But it calls us to be compassionate towards one another.

Amen.

Kyrie chant

GONG

Proceed in silence

Station 3: Quay (near Beethovenstrasse)

GONG

SILENCE

Bible passage *John 19:4–5* Andreas Müller-Crepon

⁴ And Pilate went out again to the people and said to them, ‘Look, I am bringing Jesus out to you, so that you may know that I find no fault in him.’ ⁵ Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, ‘Behold, what a man!’

Reflection Markus Muntwiler

We are here on the shores of Lake Zurich. For many people, a shore means salvation on the journey to Europe. The shore stands for the hope of peace, protection, freedom and a new life – in contrast to war, persecution and poverty in their homeland. That is why we are wearing life jackets as a symbol of the many boat refugees in Italy, Spain and Greece.

“Behold, what a man!” is one of Pilate’s famous lines from the interrogation of Jesus. Uttered in the heat of the moment, it has remained in the collective memory of humanity as one of the enduring statements about Jesus. “Behold, what a man!”

What kind of person do we see when we hear this?

- I see the people who come to Europe in their boats.
- But I also see people in my everyday working life who want to escape their hardships and challenges.
- I see people who cause trouble and cost a lot of time and money.
- I see people being sent back and forth by social services.
- I see people who are being deported because nobody really wants to look after them.

Just as Pilate was overwhelmed by Jesus, so too am I often overwhelmed by many people. Engaging with them would mean taking responsibility, rather than washing my hands of the matter.

Pilate looks at Jesus and says: “Behold, what a man!”

And we look at Jesus and say: “Behold, what a God!”

And with that we say: “Jesus, you are our hope, and Jesus, you help us when we are overwhelmed.”

Hymn ‘Stay here and watch with me’ (twice)

Prayer by Herbert Anders (in Italian)

Jesus, we are thinking of all those who are on a journey. Men, women, young people, and babies in their mothers' wombs. You too were once a child born on the street. Therefore we pray to you: guide the journey of migrants. Lead them along safe paths. May the waves at sea be calm. Fill their encounters with a spirit of kindness. Many of us are migrants too. We come from distant countries or from other towns here in Switzerland. Here we have found work, fellowship, and a home that has become a haven. Thank you for the welcome we have experienced upon arriving in this city. We have become at one with it. Having received, help us to remain open to giving as well. We wish to be welcoming towards the needs that present themselves before us, those of our neighbours, those of those far away, and those of those who are on the move. Amen

Kyrie chant

GONG

Proceed in silence

8

Station 4: Town Hall complex

GONG

SILENCE

Bible passage *Psalm 22:16–22* Andreas Müller-Crépon

My strength is dried up like a potsherd; / my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you have laid me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me, / a pack of evildoers has encircled me. They have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; they stare and gawk at me. They divide my garments among themselves and cast lots for my robe. But you, O Lord, do not stand aloof! You, my strength, come quickly to my aid! Deliver my life from the sword, my only possession from the power of the dogs! Save me from the lion's mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen! - / You have answered me.

Reflection: Martin Conrad, Catholic Church

Here a person cries out against the threat posed by overwhelming powers. He is powerless, defenceless, helpless, made a laughing stock, naked. Nothing and no one protects him. Jesus, nailed naked and defenceless to the cross, takes this experience upon himself. In him, the human being who is at the mercy of others becomes visible.

We have just crossed the Schanzengraben and from here we can see Zurich's Bauschänzli – the remains of the fortifications built from the mid-17th century onwards. Zurich sought to protect itself from external threats with these defences. Yet even these ditches and ramparts were of no use. At the end of the 18th century, foreign troops marched in and occupied the city. Defence systems failed. Then as now.

Humanity today is also under threat. There are many wars and conflicts worldwide, but uncertainty also lies at our doorstep, in our everyday lives. We surround ourselves with firewalls, passwords, algorithms – out of fear of what humanity itself has created. Whether technology and artificial intelligence bring salvation or disaster – we do not know. Yet we are at the mercy of events, helpless and defenceless, overwhelmed by fortune or misfortune. Others cast lots over our lives. Over our data. Our time. Our lives.

With Jesus on the cross, we bring before God the many people who suffer under this reality. And ourselves. We place ourselves, together with Jesus, in God's hands – and trust, together with the psalmist: You have given me an answer.

Hymn 'Stay here and watch with me' (twice)

Prayer: Thomas Risel, Lutheran Church

You, God in Jesus Christ on the cross,

You are near, not far away!

In all the dangers of our lives, in all threats and helplessness:

You have experienced this yourself and experience it with us today.

You say: Your strength is made perfect in weakness.

So be my strength, come quickly to my aid!

This world often frightens me, and the fear comes so close, so many threats, things, events that overwhelm me, that I can no longer control.

We stand beneath the cross and ask You:

Open Your hands to us, take us into Your heart.

Bless us and the world, and let us become a blessing, not a curse.
You alone work wonders: our prayer to You is like breathing. Grant us and the world peace and comfort, security and hope.
Do not keep yourself at a distance.
Turn this Good Friday world towards the good, towards resurrection into life.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Kyrie chant

GONG

Proceed in silence

Station 5: Münsterhof

GONG

SILENCE

10

Bible passage *Mark 8:37–38* **Andreas Müller-Crépon**

Jesus says: What good is it for a person to gain the whole world if they lose their life in the process? What could a person give in exchange for their life?

Reflection: Christophe Kocher, Zurich Reformed Church

We are standing here in the immediate vicinity of the famous Paradeplatz. In Swiss Monopoly, it is the final square – the most expensive one: a symbol of wealth, influence and the logic of 'always more'. It is here, in particular, that Jesus' words resonate in a special way: "What good is it for a person to gain the whole world if they lose their life in the process?"

Today we follow Jesus on his way to the cross. He has lost his standing and freedom, has been humiliated and left at the mercy of power. And yet he remains free within and does not lose himself. For his life is not founded on power, money or the supposed freedom to be able to afford everything... on that which promises security yet cannot provide it.

Jesus knows: life can neither be bought nor secured. And whoever seeks to secure it at any price ultimately loses themselves – and often acts at the expense of others. Life in abundance can only be received – through trust in God and an open hand towards our fellow human beings.

Our society urges us to seek fulfilment in consumption and wealth. Yet the frenzy of consumption knows no satisfaction.

It thrives on the fact that we always want more – and yet never have enough. It keeps us awake through images and content that make us dependent and keep us trapped in a constant state of desire. We want more and more, and may have more and more. We become slaves, and live our lives without truly living them.

This is precisely what Jesus addresses, to show us that God does not meet us in power and wealth, but in our humanity and vulnerability.

That is why the same applies here – whoever you are:

- Your worth does not depend on what you possess.
- Your dignity does not depend on your visibility.
- And your life is more than what you consume.

Song ‘Stay here and watch with me’ *(twice)*

Prayer: Kathrin Rehmat, Reformed Church (in French)

O God, have mercy on us!

We find it hard today to recognise true goodness.

We breathe in great anxiety, and your eternal dwellings find little room in this volatile market. The treasure that no thief can find, the treasure that no moth can eat, the treasure that sparkles in an earthen vessel and in the heavens is very often invisible.

You cannot be bought. Thank God.

Preserve our sense of dignity; grant us upright humility. We pray to you, awaken our conscience.

Have mercy on us! Amen

Kyrie

GONG

Proceed in silence

GONG

SILENCE

Bible passage: *Matthew 26:69–74a* **Andreas Müller-Crepon**

Peter was still sitting outside in the courtyard. Then a servant girl came up to him and said, 'You're one of Jesus's followers, aren't you, that Galilean!' But Peter denied it loudly: 'I don't know what you're talking about.' When he went out into the outer courtyard afterwards, another servant girl noticed him and said in front of everyone, 'That man is one of Jesus of Nazareth's followers too!' But Peter denied it again, and this time he even swore: "I don't know the man at all!" A short time later, some other people who had been standing nearby came up to Peter and said: "Of course you're one of his friends! Your accent gives you away." Then Peter cried out: "I swear to you: I don't know this man!"

Reflection: **Amanda Ehrler**, Roman Catholic Church

We are here in St Peter's, the oldest and, for a long time, the only parish church in Zurich. At the conclusion of our Way of the Cross, the evangelist Matthew reminds us of the denial that Jesus suffered at the hands of Peter, one of his closest friends. 'I do not know this man,' Peter says three times, unequivocally and loudly before the angry crowd.

Jesus is very close by. He is being interrogated, mocked, tortured, paraded before the crowd, driven towards Golgotha with the cross. "I do not know this man." Peter, full of fear and horror, feels his life and limb are under threat. By denying his friend, he tries to save his own skin.

What about us? Do we dare to stand by ourselves and others, even in threatening situations? Are we not quick to show our allegiance to those who are celebrated and acclaimed? But what about our attitude towards people who have been stripped of their human dignity and find themselves on the margins of society? People affected by poverty, who have committed crimes, who are disadvantaged by life, disfigured by illness and old age.

Every day, people pass us by, each carrying their own cross. We are free to turn towards these people, to stand by them, or to turn away like Peter: 'I do not know these people.'

For Peter, his lowest point marked a decisive turning point. He realised what he had done. He wept bitterly. The Bible tells us nothing of how he managed to rise again and make a fresh start. Good Friday is an invitation to look within ourselves, to rise from our lowest points with renewed strength, turning towards people and their fates. I know these people.

Hymn: ‘Bless the Lord, my soul’ (*twice*)

Prayer: Jackie Sellin, Anglican Church

Dear Lord, the one rejected, mistreated, denied three times.

The one Peter turns away from even as you walk towards the cross, towards our redemption.

Forgive us when we turn away from you in our fear, confusion and mistrust.

Forgive us when we turn away from you in our actions, when we fail to recognise you in the eyes, in the face, in the body of those who are suffering: the tortured, rejected, ignored, hated of our societies.

Forgive us when we fail to respect the dignity of all your people, when we fail to stand up for the dignity of all your people.

Give us strength, courage and hope to stand up, speak out and reach out to the disfigured, the poor, the disadvantaged, the rejected, to say to them “I know you”, “I recognise you”, you are my neighbour, my brother, my sister, in Christ.

Help us to weep when we deny you by denying them, and to transform our tears of weakness into loving action and recognition of you,

of you in them and of you in us.

In your holy and loving name. Amen.

**Introduction (Cornelia Camichel Bromeis) to
THE LORD’S PRAYER – *Padre nostro* – *Notre Père* – *Our Father***

We pray together the prayer that Jesus gave us, in the language of our choice

Our Father in heaven!

Hallowed be thy name.

May your 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 those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

Announcement of the collection (Kathrin)

The collection for the 2026 Ecumenical Way of the Cross is for the Neve Shalom peace work in Israel/Palestine: <https://nswas.ch>
Bank details: Swiss Friends of Neve Shalom
Postal account: IBAN: CH88 0900 0000 1572 8328 6
COOP Bank: IBAN CH 98 0844 0256 6415 6200 1

A reference to the unity of the Cross and the Resurrection and Invitation to Good Friday liturgies and Easter services (Lars)

Blessing (Cornelia Camichel Bromeis; Luis Varandas) (spoken)

May your hands affirm love and reconciliation, and not hold on to what you have in abundance and can share.
May you walk your path on feet that lead you towards your neighbour and do not falter in the face of bold steps.
May you have a backbone that allows you to live uprightly and sincerely, and that does not bow to oppression, tyranny and power.
May the strong and merciful God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless you

Hymn: 'Bless the Lord, my soul'

All celebrants proceed to the exit whilst the congregation sings.

COLLECTION

At the door / exit