



GRACE LUTHERAN



Good Friday

GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 3, 2026
12:00 PM & 6:30 PM

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EXPLANATION OF THE SERVICE OF DARKNESS

This service is patterned after the ancient office of *Tenebrae*. The word “Tenebrae” means “darkness.” The purpose of the service is to impress upon us the terrible reality of sin, which led our Savior Jesus to die on the cross for us.

A total of eight candles are used. Seven of these candles represent the seven last sentences which our Lord spoke from the cross, and the eighth is the Christ Candle. This service is divided into seven sections with select Scriptures from the Passion Readings; a conflation of the four Gospel accounts into one narrative.

As the candles are extinguished one by one, the chancel area becomes increasingly dark. By this visual experience, we are reminded of the darkness that covered the earth at the time Jesus was crucified. It also reminds us of the spiritual darkness that would have continued to cover the whole earth if the “Light of the World” had not come.

The exit of the Christ Candle at the end of the service signifies Christ’s death and burial. Even so, we are filled with hope because that special light is not extinguished. This symbolic item reminds us of the eternal light of God’s love and His never-ending presence with us. Although this time of worship is quiet and solemn, we still will depart from this place eagerly awaiting the entrance of the Christ Candle at the Easter Vigil service and the joy of the Easter resurrection on Easter morning!

This year, as you listen to the Passion Readings, take special note of Christ’s demeanor of faithfulness and His composure of love. Even when our Lord was being punished in our place, His righteous character continued showing forth right actions. He displayed the direct opposite of what we’ve labeled “**the seven deadly sins.**” These are particular sins of heart. They are also known as “capital sins” since they often lead us into a host of further devious and sinful actions.

But even when He suffered, Christ remained perfect, for He is the perfect righteousness of God. It is this righteousness that is freely given to us through the gift of faith. “*But now the righteousness of God has been made known, ... This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*” (Romans 3:21-22)

*(The * indicates when the congregation is invited to stand.)*

WELCOME

***STATIONING OF THE CROSS**

(The people turn and face the cross as it is carried from the back to the front. The following versicles and response is said at three stations, the first station when the procession begins.)

1st Station:

Pastor: Behold, the Salvation of the world was hung on a cross.

People: **Oh, come let us worship Him.**

2nd Station:

Pastor: Behold, the Salvation of the world was hung on a cross.

People: **Oh, come let us worship Him.**

3rd Station:

Pastor: Behold, the Salvation of the world was hung on a cross.

People: **Oh, come let us worship Him.**

***INVOCATION OF GOD'S HOLY NAME**

Pastor: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

***GOOD FRIDAY RESPONSES** *(Based on the Seven Last Words)*

Jesus: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, in this life we will never know the full extent of Your suffering for us.

People: **Because You asked Your Father to forgive the people who put you on the cross, we trust that You have also forgiven us of our sins.**

Jesus: "Truly, truly I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Pastor: Because You promised everlasting life to the criminal who believed in You,

People: **we can be confident that, in spite of our sins, we may also live with You forever.**

Jesus: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Pastor: Because You were forsaken by Your very own Father,

People: **we believe that we will never be abandoned by our God.**

Jesus: "Dear woman, behold your son." "Behold your mother."

Pastor: Because You showed concern for Your mother,

People: **we can rely on Your never-failing care for us also.**

Jesus: "I thirst."

Pastor: Because You endured the pain of thirst,

People: **we now have access to the Living Water.**

Jesus: "It is finished!"

Pastor: Because You declared that the work of redemption has been finished,

People: **we have no need to doubt if we have been saved.**

Jesus: "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit."

Pastor: Because You laid down Your life and gave up Your spirit,

People: **we have life.**

Pastor: Let us pray to our Savior together:

People: **Lord Jesus, You carried our sins in Your own body on the cross so that we might have life. By Your Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith in You. Help us to believe that You have died the death we deserved to die. Because of Your sacrifice, we are made alive and given the promise of a life that will never end. Grant us courage to share Your story with our families, friends, and communities because this gift of life is for everyone. All this we ask in Your name, Jesus, because You alone are our Lord and Savior. Amen.**

***HYMN OF THANKFULNESS**

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us" (vv. 1-3)

- 1. How deep the Father's love for us, How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss. The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One Bring many unto glory.**
- 2. Behold the Man upon a cross, My sin upon His shoulders.
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished.**

3. **I will not boast in anything: No gifts, no pow'r, no wisdom.
But I will boast in Jesus Christ: His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer.
But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom.**

(Please be seated.)

THE SERVICE OF DARKNESS

Pastor: Come now, let us all listen to the story of The Passion: how Jesus paid the painful price for the forgiveness of our deadly sins with His perfect life in our place and the shedding of His holy and innocent blood.

I. THE PASSION READING: EVENING AGONY IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

MEDITATION (Fully Committed)

PRAYER (against Sloth)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, You embody zeal for God's purposes and You show us full commitment. You ARE love for God and compassion for people. You prayed so fervently in the Garden that Your sweat fell to the ground as drops of blood.

People: **Put away from us all sloth and inactivity of body, mind and spirit. Kindle in us a fire that continually burns for You. Strengthen our weakness, so that whatever our hands take up and whatever our minds seek to accomplish, we do it earnestly, striving to please You with all of our heart. Amen.**

HYMN VERSE **"Go to Dark Gethsemane"** (v. 1-2) *Hymn 436*
(During the singing of this hymn, the first candle is extinguished.)

**Go to dark Gethsemane, All who feel the tempter's pow'r;
Your Redeemer's conflict see, Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away; Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.**

**Follow to the judgment hall, View the Lord of life arraigned;
Oh, the wormwood and the gall! Oh, the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suff'ring, shame, or loss; Learn from Him to bear the cross.**

II. THE PASSION READING: ARREST AND LATE-NIGHT TRIAL AT THE PALACE OF THE HIGH PRIEST

MEDITATION (Composed)

PRAYER (against Wrath)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, when You were reviled, You reviled not and on the cross You prayed for those who crucified You. Keep us from the deadly sin of wrath and let it not consume our hearts.

People: **Let not our feelings of frustration or irritation or impatience with others prevent us from exhibiting love. Grant us quiet strength, gentleness and patience, that refraining from fierce anger and resentment, we may overcome evil with good, and for Your sake, love our enemies. Amen.**

HYMN VERSE **“Jesus I Will Ponder Now”** (vv. 1 & 2) *Hymn 440*
(During the singing of this hymn, the second candle is extinguished.)

**Jesus, I will ponder now On Your holy passion;
With Your Spirit me endow For such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith May the image cherish
Of Your suff’ring, pain, and death That I may not perish.**

**Make me see Your great distress, Anguish, and affliction,
Bonds and stripes and wretchedness And Your crucifixion;
Make me see how scourge and rod, Spear and nails did wound You,
How for them You died, O God, Who with thorns had crowned You.**

III. THE PASSION READING: DENIAL IN THE COURTYARD OF THE HIGH PRIEST AND EARLY MORNING SESSION OF THE SANHEDRIN

MEDITATION (Faithful no matter the cost)

PRAYER (against Lust)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, You love purity and You remain holy. Even so, You were pleased to take up our human nature and be born of the Virgin Mary. Mercifully look upon our sinful infirmity and save us from our lusts.

People: Create in us clean hearts and renew right spirits within us. Help us put away evil thoughts and conquer sinful desires. Pierce our flesh with a holy fear of God, so that we serve the Lord with chaste bodies and pure hearts. Amen.

HYMN VERSE “O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken” (vv. 1-3) *Hymn 439*
(During the singing of this hymn, the third candle is extinguished.)

O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession,
What dark transgression?

They crown Thy head with thorns, they smite, they scourge Thee;
With cruel mockings to the cross they urge Thee;
They give Thee gall to drink, they still decry Thee;
They crucify Thee.

Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is my sins for which Thou, Lord, must languish;
Yea, all the wrath, the woe, Thou dost inherit,
This I do merit.

IV. THE PASSION READING: MORNING TRIAL AT PILATE’S JUDGMENT HALL

MEDITATION (Devoted to Giving)

PRAYER (against Greed)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, though You were rich, yet for our sakes, You became poor, so that through Your poverty, we might become rich. Grant that greed for earthly possessions may die in us and a strengthened desire for heavenly things be alive in us.

People: Keep us from selfish expenditures and vain acquisitions, that we may always have plenty to give to those in need. Move us to give not reluctantly or under compulsion, but cheerfully, that we may be loved by God and enjoy heavenly treasures. Amen.

HYMN VERSE **“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”** (vv. 1-2) *Hymn 449*
(During the singing of this hymn, the fourth candle is extinguished.)

**O sacred Head, now wounded, With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded With thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory, What bliss, till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.**

**What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered Was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression, But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor, And grant to me Thy grace.**

V. THE PASSION READING: MID-MORNING SENTENCING AT GABBATHA

MEDITATION (Unselfish and Perfectly Altruistic)

PRAYER (against Envy)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, You are the pattern of true love. You make the commandments consist in love for God and love for neighbor. Grant us also to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

People: **Put to death in our hearts all envy, harshness, jealousy and ill-will. Fill our spirits with love, kindness and compassion; so that we rejoice in the success of others, sympathize in their sorrows, and enter into heavenly fellowship. Amen.**

HYMN VERSE **“Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted”** *Hymn 451*
(vv. 1-3, Cantor/Choir sings verse 1, Congregation sings verses 2 & 3)
(During the singing of this hymn, the fifth candle is extinguished.)

Choir: *Stricken, smitten, and afflicted, See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected; Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet, David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it: 'Tis the true and faithful Word.*

ALL: Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning, Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning, Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him, None would intervene to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him Was the stroke that justice gave.

ALL: Ye who think of sin but lightly Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly, Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed, See who bears the awful load;
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed, Son of Man and Son of God.

VI. THE PASSION READING: MID-DAY CRUCIFIXION AT GOLGATHA

MEDITATION (Thirsting for Righteousness)

PRAYER (against Gluttony)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, to teach us abstinence and control of our bodies, You fasted and prayed for forty days and forty nights. Grant that we may serve only the Lord our God and not our bellies.

People: **With contentment, let us live soberly and modestly and not be given to gluttony or drunkenness. Fill us with spiritual food and drink, that we receive Living Water which satisfies our souls and Bread which endures unto eternal life. Amen.**

HYMN VERSE [12:00] "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (verse 3) *Hymn 436*
(During the singing of this hymn, the sixth candle is extinguished.)

**Calv'ry's mournful mountain climb; There, adoring at His feet,
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete.
"It is finished!" hear Him cry; Learn from Jesus Christ to die.**

CHORAL ANTHEM [6:30] "He Was Wounded" *Hal Hopson*
(Grace Chorale)

VII. THE PASSION READING: MID-AFTERNOON DEATH AT GOLGATHA

MEDITATION (Thank You Jesus)

PRAYER (against Pride)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, You are the pattern of humility. You emptied Yourself of glory and took upon the form of servant, becoming obedient to death, even death upon a cross.

People: **Root out of us all pride and conceit, that we recognize ourselves as poor, miserable sinners, deserving of nothing but death. Let us glory only in You, for You alone are Lord. Not to us, O Lord, but to Your Name, be all glory, praise and honor. Amen.**

PSALM VERSES *(Chanted by Cantor)*

Psalm 22:1-2, 7-8, 22-23, 30-31

(During the singing of this Psalm, the seventh candle is extinguished.)

THE PASSION READING: LATE-AFTERNOON BURIAL AT THE GARDEN TOMB

John 19:38-42

Removal of the Christ Candle

Sealing of the Tomb

(The congregation is asked to leave silently after hearing this final loud sound.)

THE PARTICIPANTS

<i>Officiant</i>	<i>The Rev. Charles T. Reich</i>
<i>Liturgists</i>	<i>(12:00) Jaxon Gerken, Vicar Stephen</i>
<i>Passion Readers</i>	<i>The Rev. Steven M. Braun, Tammi Straughn</i>
<i>Organist</i>	<i>Thomas Schulteis</i>
<i>Cantors</i>	<i>(12:00) Thomas Schulteis</i> <i>(6:30) Robert Garst & Thomas Schulteis</i>
<i>Accompanist (6:30 PM)</i>	<i>Valerie Groskopf</i>
<i>Sound Technician</i>	<i>Josh Woods</i>
<i>Cross Bearer</i>	<i>Andrew Woods</i>
<i>Acolyte</i>	<i>Aaron Woods</i>
<i>Elder on Duty</i>	<i>(12:00) Tammi Straughn, (6:30) Karen Nelson</i>
<i>Greeters</i>	<i>(12:00) Jim Campbell & Linda Davy, (6:30) Ed & Nikki Smith</i>
<i>Ushers</i>	<i>(12:00) Rob & Bonnie Petersilge,</i> <i>(6:30) Nick Nicholson, Chris Nuzum, Dr. Ken Rogers,</i> <i>Mark Sensabaugh, Barry Walker</i>

