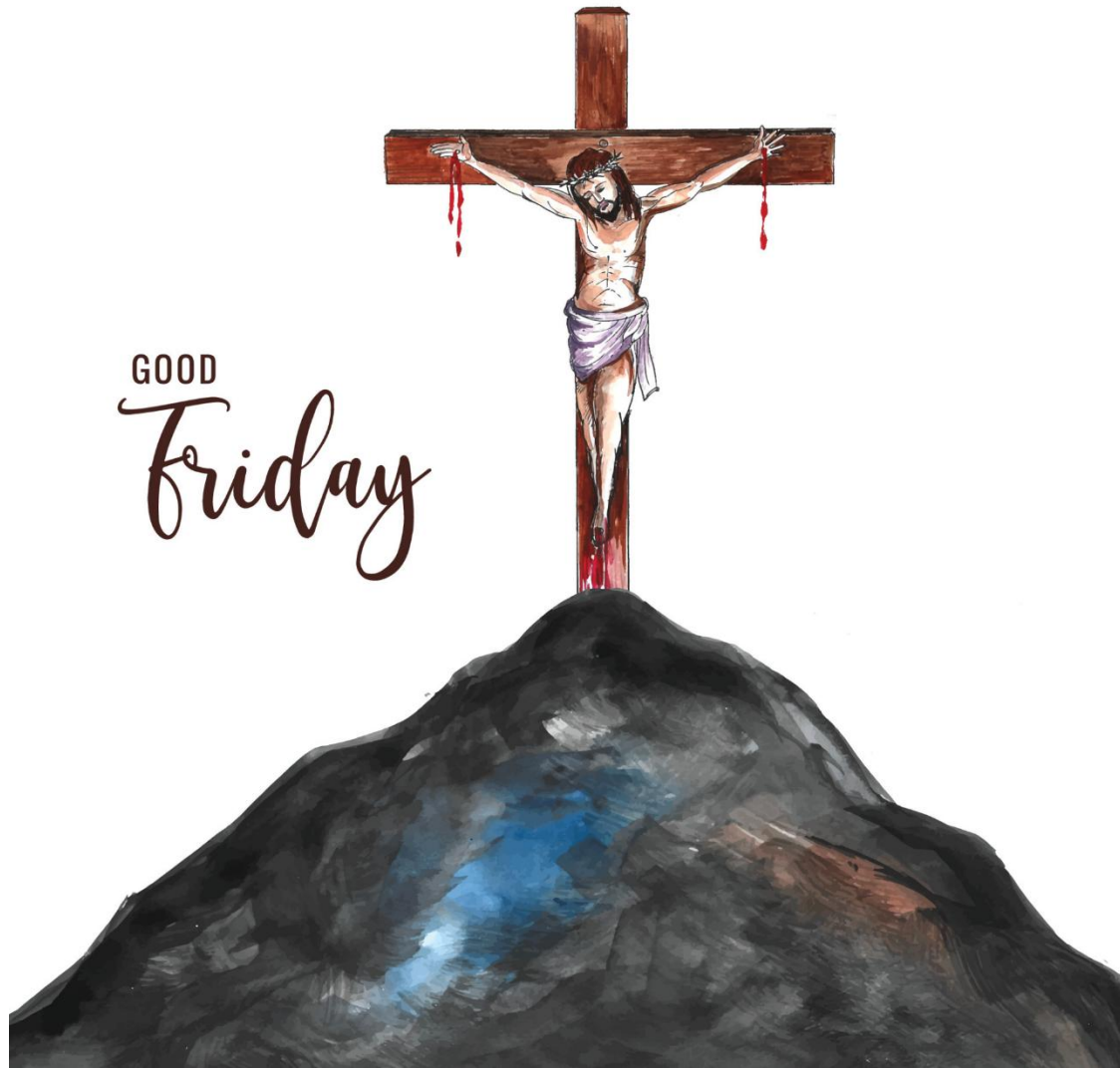


St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church
Good Friday Tenebrae
April 3, 2026 6:30pm



Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John's passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ's death offers life to all. We gather in solemn devotion, but always with the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life. We depart silently, and we anticipate the culmination of the Three Days in the Easter Vigil.

Tenebrae

Good Friday

Many of the events surrounding the last days in the life of Christ are shrouded in darkness. In the fourth century a solemn observance known as Tenebrae was celebrated. The service involved the extinguishing of candles as a reminder of the darkness that covered the earth after the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The word Tenebrae means, in Latin, ‘darkness.’

The service begins in silence and ends in almost total darkness. The candles are gradually extinguished, symbolic of the gradual flight and denial of the disciples and friends of Jesus after the crucifixion. As we see the pageant unfolding we are reminded of our own falling away and the consequence of separation from God. However, one light still remains, the light of Christ can never be extinguished.

A Note on Holy Week Scriptural References to “The Jews”

As Christians, we live under the burden of a sad and violent history of anti-Semitism, in the sobering shadow of the Shoah (Holocaust), and with the painful awareness of current events in Israel/Palestine. It is important to us to be clear about what our sacred texts mean when they make reference to “the Jews,” especially during Holy Week, when we contemplate Jesus’ death.

When the crucifixion narratives speak of “the chief priests and leaders of the people,” they are referring to officials who collaborated closely with the Roman systems of oppression and were viewed with contempt by much of the Jewish community of their time. They are never to be identified with the Jewish people, past or present.

It may be helpful to recall the cultural context of our Christian scriptures, emerging as they did from a small, originally Jewish community of believers in Jesus, who for reasons of faith in him as the Messiah, were eventually “put out of the synagogues” (John 9:18-23), their places of worship. In John’s usage especially, “the Jews” functions as a technical term for those among the people who did not accept Jesus as Messiah. It is a term that reflects the growing antagonism and mutual recrimination that developed in the latter part of the first century between church and synagogue. The gospels’ use of the term “the Jews” should never be understood, therefore, as a blanket condemnation of Jews in particular or in general.

It is one of the bitter ironies of history that our sacred texts have been used to justify the persecution of the covenant people who were and are forever God’s first love.

Written by the Reverend Dr. JMary Luti. Used with permission.

LITURGY OF GOOD FRIDAY

GATHERING

*The liturgy begins in silence after all have been seated.
At the beginning, you will hear the sound of the hammer on the crucifixion nails.
Please observe silence for reflection and prayer.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray together.

C: Almighty God, look with loving mercy on your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given over to the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

The fourth servant poem promises ultimate vindication for the servant, who made his life an offering for sin. The servant pours himself out to death and is numbered with the transgressors, images that the early church saw as important keys for understanding the death of Jesus.

¹³ See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high. ¹⁴ Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals—¹⁵ so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

⁵³ Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering^[s] and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. ⁴ Surely, he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹ They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. ¹¹ Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:16-25

In the death of Jesus, forgiveness of sins is accomplished and access to God is established. Hence, when we gather together for worship and when we love others, we experience anew the benefits of Jesus' death.

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds,” ¹⁷ he also adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” ¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

¹⁹ Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM: “O Savior of the World” -Goss



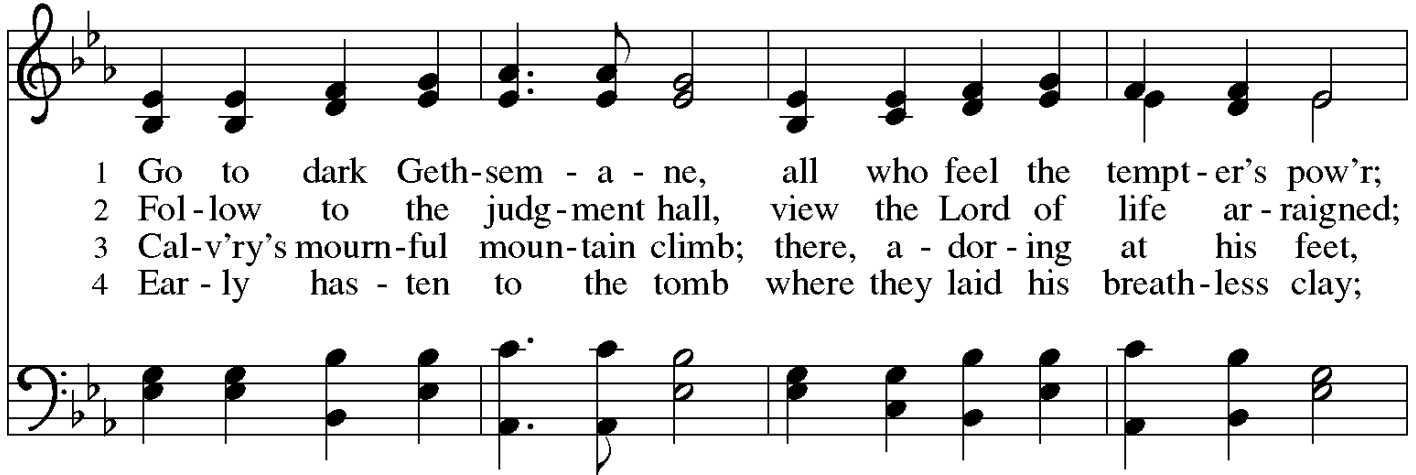
THE PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

John 18:1-11

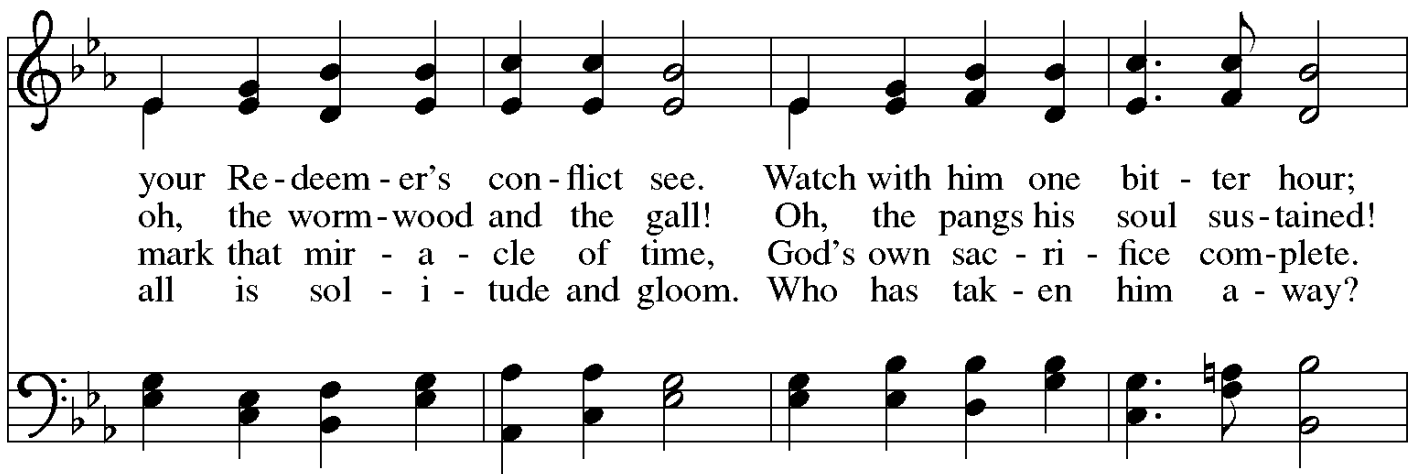
✠ *First candle is extinguished*

HYMN ELW #347 *Go to Dark Gethsemane* (verses 1-3)

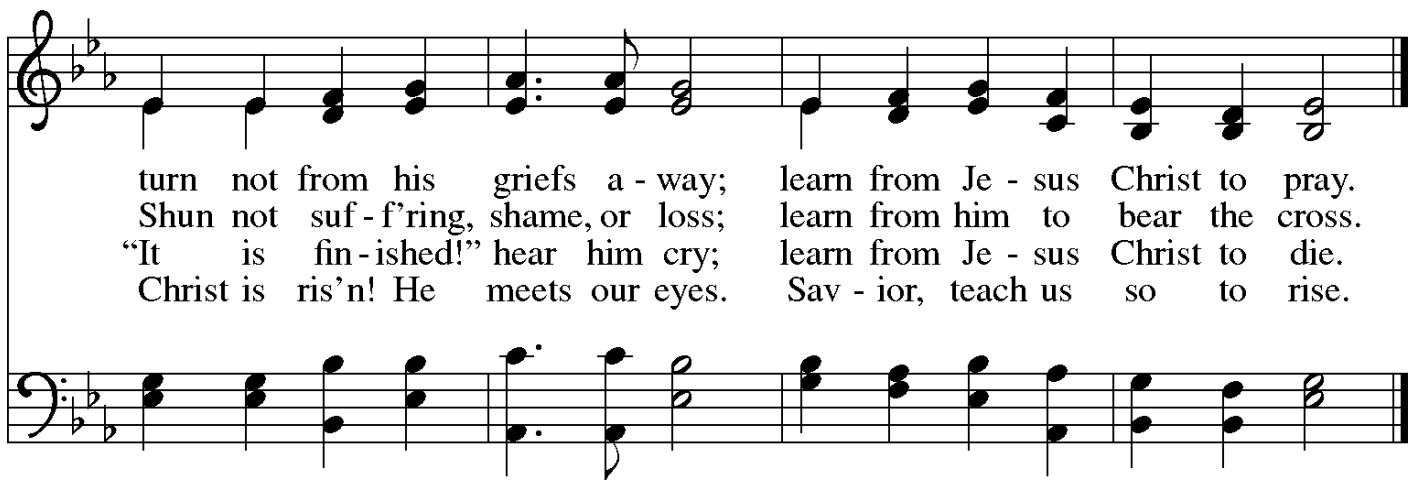
HYMN ELW #347 *Go to Dark Gethsemane*



1 Go to dark Geth-sem - a - ne, all who feel the tempt - er's pow'r;
2 Fol - low to the judg - ment hall, view the Lord of life ar - rained;
3 Cal - v'ry's mourn - ful moun - tain climb; there, a - dor - ing at his feet,
4 Ear - ly has - ten to the tomb where they laid his breath - less clay;



your Re - deem - er's con - flict see. Watch with him one bit - ter hour;
oh, the worm - wood and the gall! Oh, the pangs his soul sus - tained!
mark that mir - a - cle of time, God's own sac - ri - fice com - plete.
all is sol - i - tude and gloom. Who has tak - en him a - way?



turn not from his griefs a - way; learn from Je - sus Christ to pray.
Shun not suf - f'ring, shame, or loss; learn from him to bear the cross.
"It is fin - ished!" hear him cry; learn from Je - sus Christ to die.
Christ is ris'n! He meets our eyes. Sav - ior, teach us so to rise.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854

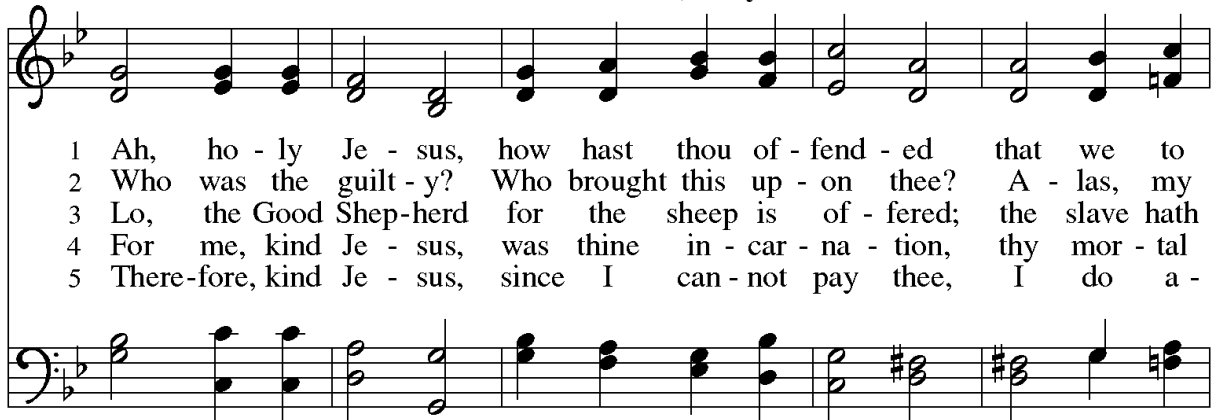
Music: GETHSEMANE, Richard Redhead, 1820-1901

John 18:12-27

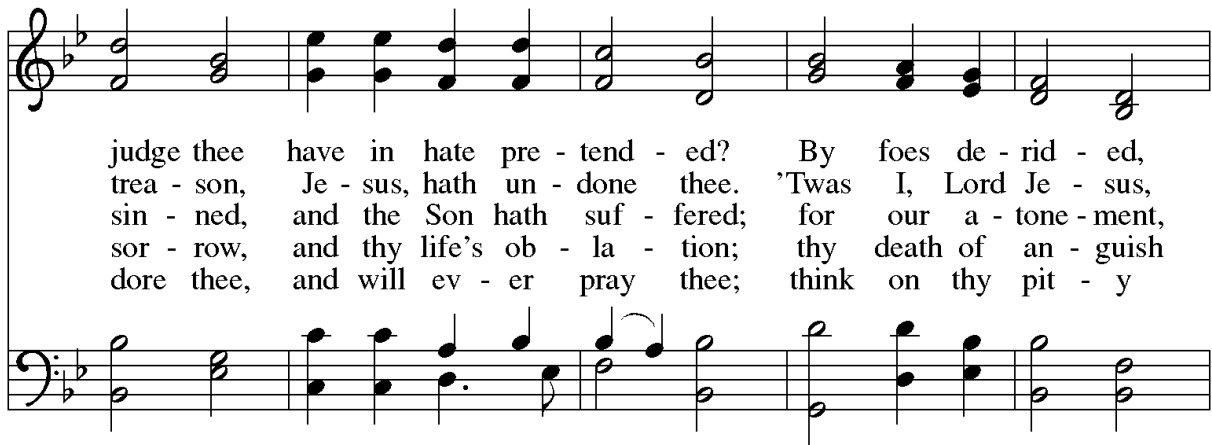
✠ *Second candle is extinguished*

HYMN ELW #349 Ah, Holy Jesus (verses 1-3)

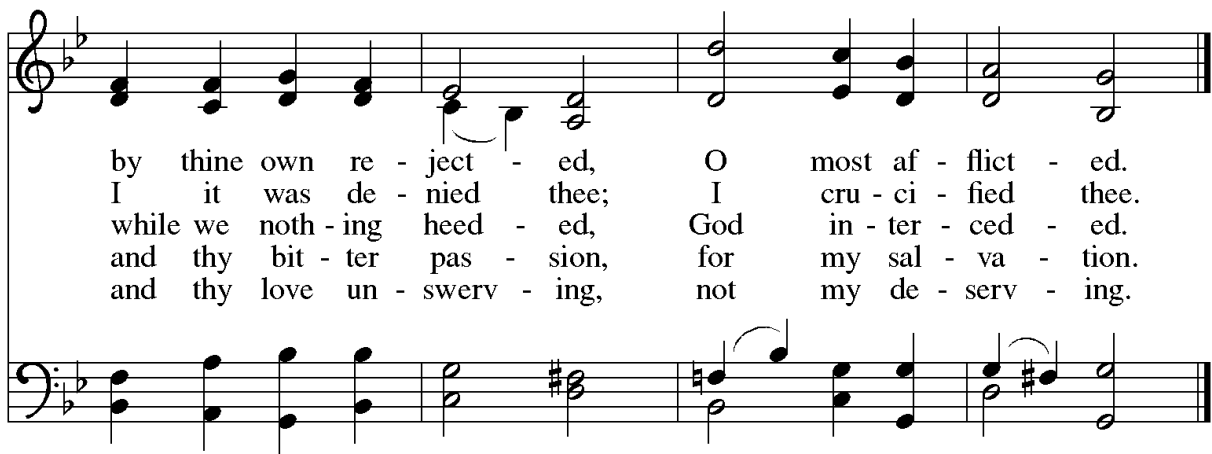
HYMN ELW #349 Ah, Holy Jesus



1 Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how hast thou of - fend - ed that we to
2 Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on thee? A - las, my
3 Lo, the Good Shep-herd for the sheep is of - fered; the slave hath
4 For me, kind Je - sus, was thine in - car - na - tion, thy mor - tal
5 There-fore, kind Je - sus, since I can - not pay thee, I do a -



judge thee have in hate pre - tend - ed? By foes de - rid - ed,
trea - son, Je - sus, hath un - done thee. 'Twas I, Lord Je - sus,
sin - ned, and the Son hath suf - fered; for our a - tone - ment,
sor - row, and thy life's ob - la - tion; thy death of an - guish
dore thee, and will ev - er pray thee; think on thy pit - y



by thine own re - ject - ed, O most af - flict - ed.
I it was de - nied thee; I cru - ci - fied thee.
while we noth - ing heed - ed, God in - ter - ced - ed.
and thy bit - ter pas - sion, for my sal - va - tion.
and thy love un - swerv - ing, not my de - serv - ing.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647; tr. Robert Bridges, 1844–1930, alt.
Music: HERZLIEBSTER JESU, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

John 18:28-40

✠ *Third candle is extinguished*

HYMN ELW #349 Ah, Holy Jesus (verses 4-5)

6- Welcoming all, Worshipping God, Serving others

John 19:1-7

✠ *Fourth candle is extinguished*

HYMN ELW #351 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (verses 1-2)

HYMN ELW #351 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

1 O sa - cred head, now wound - ed, with grief and shame weighed down,
2 How pale thou art with an - guish, with sore a - buse and scorn;
3 What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank thee, dear - est friend,
4 Lord, be my con - so - la - tion; shield me when I must die;

now scorn - ful - ly sur - round - ed with thorns, thine on - ly crown;
how does thy face now lan - guish, which once was bright as morn!
for this thy dy - ing sor - row, thy pit - y with - out end?
re - mind me of thy pas - sion when my last hour draws nigh.

O sa - cred head, what glo - ry, what bliss till now was thine!
Thy grief and bit - ter pas - sion were all for sin - ners' gain;
Oh, make me thine for - ev - er, and should I faint - ing be,
These eyes, new faith re - ceiv - ing, from thee shall nev - er move;

Yet, though de - spised and gor - y, I joy to call thee mine.
mine, mine was the trans - gres - sion, but thine the dead - ly pain.
Lord, let me nev - er, nev - er out - live my love to thee.
for all who die be - liev - ing die safe - ly in thy love.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676, based on Arnulf of Louvain, d. 1250; tr. composite
Music: HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN, German melody, c. 1500; adapt. Hans Leo Hassler, 1564–1612;
arr. Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685–1750

John 19:8-16a

✠ *Fifth candle is extinguished*

HYMN ELW #351 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, (verses 3-4)

7- Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others

John 19:16b-22

† Sixth candle is extinguished

HYMN ELW #353 Were You There (verse 1)

HYMN ELW #353 Were You There

1 Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? Were you there?
2 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
3 Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
4 Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
5 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there?

Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? Were you there?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there?

Refrain

Oh, some-times it caus-es me to trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.

Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? Were you there?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there?

Text: African American spiritual
Music: WERE YOU THERE, African American spiritual
Arr. © 1999 Augsburg Fortress.

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John 19:23-30

✠ *Seventh candle is extinguished.*

HYMN ELW #353 Were You There, (verses 2-3)

John 19:31-42

HYMN ELW #353 Were You There, (verses 4-5)

Silence for Reflection

HANDBELL CHOIR: “Go to Dark Gethsemane” -Kinyon

THE BIDDING PRAYER

P: Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy church throughout the world.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ. By your Holy Spirit guide the church and gather it throughout the world. Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your name, and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for Yehiel and Paul our bishops, for staff, musicians and all servants of the church, and for all the people of God.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold our bishops, pastors, other ministers, and lay leaders. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the church, and help each of us in our various vocations to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for those preparing for baptism.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you continue to bless the church. Increase the faith and understanding of those preparing for baptism. Give them new birth as your children, and keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for our sisters and brothers who share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you give your church unity. Look with favor on all who follow Jesus your Son. Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith, and keep us united in the fellowship of love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and your teaching to Moses. Hear our prayers that the people you called and elected as your own may receive the fulfillment of the covenant's promises. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for the Muslim people, children of God's covenant with Abraham, and who also adore the one merciful God.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, the children of your covenant are more numerous than the grains of sand. Grant to all who share faith in you, the merciful judge of all humanity, to live in peace and tranquility. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for those who do not share our faith or do not believe in God.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names or honor mystery in diverse ways. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of the love made known to us in your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for God's creation.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you are the creator of a magnificent universe. Hold all the worlds in the arms of your care and bring all things to fulfillment in you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for all those living in war zones, seeking refuge and being sent into battle.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you have compassion on the lowly and poor, you throw down the oppressors. Save all those who are victims of war in Ukraine, the countries of the Middle East and anywhere that there is crisis. Guide those fleeing violence and protect those who are sent into war. Change the hearts of evildoers, and let peace be victorious. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for those who serve in public office.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you are the champion of the poor and oppressed. In your goodness, give wisdom to those in authority, so that all people may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray for those in need.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary and new courage to those who have lost heart. Heal the sick, comfort the dying, give safety to travelers, give strength to those who battle addiction, free those unjustly deprived of liberty, and deliver your world from falsehood, hunger, and disease. Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask.

During the pause additional prayers may be spoken out loud.

C: Our Father, who art in heaven

**hallowed be Thy name,
thy 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 trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

HYMN ELW#616 Jesus, Remember Me *(Sung three times)*

HYMN ELW #616 Jesus, Remember Me

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Text: Luke 23:42; Taizé Community

Music: REMEMBER ME, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

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WE LEAVE THE SERVICE THIS EVENING IN SILENCE

after the Christ candle departs contemplating our Lord's crucifixion, but also anticipating the celebration of His resurrection on Easter morning.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING IN THE WORSHIP

Ushers: Dennis Lucchesi, Bob Rasmussen

Readers: Kelly Sachse, Karen Rasmussen, Bonnie Zimmermann

<i>This Week at SSM</i>			
Saturday, 4/4 Easter Vigil	5:00pm	Worship	Ushers: Larry & Sue Stasiewski
			Readers: Pam Maschke, John Rech, Bonnie Zimmermann
			Communion Set Up: Betty Kroll
			Communion Server: Heidi Hennessy
Sunday, 4/5 Easter	7:00am	Prayer Garden Worship	Ushers: Diane Moraza, Patti Nelson
			Reader: Diane Maraza
			Communion: Diane Moraza and Patti Nelson
	8:15am	Easter Breakfast	
	9:30am	Worship	Ushers: Dennis Lucchesi, John Muroi, Jim Palasz, Bob Rasmussen
			Reader: Bonnie Daleness
Communion Set Up: Tracy & Jason Covert			
		Communion Servers: Tracy & Jason Covert, Cathy Peterson	

St. Stephen the Martyr Welcome Statement

St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church is a spiritual community grounded in the belief of Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others.

Recognizing that there are those who have historically experienced rejection within congregational life, we strive to welcome and affirm the participation of all people into our community of faith – people of all ages, races and ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, physical and mental abilities, educational backgrounds, family statuses, and economic circumstances.

We are driven to be a welcoming congregation, offer a safe place to worship, and celebrate the diversity of God’s family. We are committed to racial equity and invite all people to join us in our faith journey toward greater love, understanding, and mutual respect.

We proclaim that we are an open and affirming congregation, and you are invited to join us.