

HIS FINAL STEPS

LED TO THE PLACE OF THE SKULL

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

April 7, 2023

THE SERVICE OF DARKNESS

On Good Friday, the Christian Church remembers the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. Although our remembrance is solemn, it is not a message of gloom. It is a message of adoration toward Jesus, the Lamb of God. On this day almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus offered up his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world.

The Service of Darkness—often called *Tenebrae* (Latin for “darkness”)—guides us to reflect deeply on Jesus’ sufferings for our sake as well as the great cost of our forgiveness.

On the altar burn seven candles along with the Christ Candle. The candles will be extinguished as the service progresses. At the end of the service, the Christ Candle is removed from the chancel, leaving the sanctuary in *tenebrae* for silent prayer.

The service is closed by a loud sound, called the *strepitus* (Latin for “crash” or “loud noise”). The *strepitus* has been interpreted by worshippers in a number of ways. Some see it as a symbol to remind us of the stone that was rolled in front of Jesus’ tomb to shut it; others see it as a statement of the cataclysmic nature of Christ’s sacrifice; still others view it as foreshadowing the rending of Christ’s tomb at his resurrection on Easter morning.

The Christ Candle, which is still burning, is returned to its place at the end of the service before the congregation departs the church, leaving a symbolic glimmer of gospel hope pointing forward to Easter morning amidst the darkness that necessitated Good Friday.

Please note: The mood of the service is most solemn, encouraging worshipers to reflect deeply upon their own lives in the light of the suffering of our Lord. **No closing blessing is pronounced, and the congregation exits the church in silence.**

HIS FINAL STEPS

In our Lenten services, we have been walking with our Savior on the final steps of his journey to the cross. How humbling and comforting to learn that Jesus knew exactly what lay ahead. Yet Jesus took his final steps to the cross for you and for me.

SILENT MEDITATION

*In reverence of the solemn nature of Good Friday, there will be no music prior to the service.
Please take this time to privately and silently meditate on the message and meaning of Good Friday.*

OPENING HYMN

Go to Dark Gethsemane | 104



1 Go to dark Geth - sem - a - ne, All who feel the
2 Fol - low to the judg - ment hall; View the Lord of
3 Cal - v'ry's mourn - ful moun - tain climb; There, a - dor - ing
4 Ear - ly has - ten to the tomb Where they laid his



tempt - er's pow'r; Your Re - deem - er's con - flict see.
life ar - raigned. Oh, the worm - wood and the gall!
at his feet, Mark that mir - a - cle of time,
breath - less clay; All is sol - i - tude and gloom.



Watch with him one bit - ter hour; Turn not from his
Oh, the pangs his soul sus - tained! Shun not suf - f'ring,
God's own sac - ri - fice com - plete. "It is fin - ished!"
Who has tak - en him a - way? Christ is ris'n! He



griefs a - way; Learn of Je - sus Christ to pray.
pain, or loss; Learn of him to bear the cross.
hear him cry; Learn of Je - sus Christ to die.
meets our eyes. Sav - ior, teach us so to rise.

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son ✚ and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

excerpts from Psalm 22

M: Today we gather together in sorrow and yet in adoration. We reflect upon the wrath that our sins deserve and the great price that was paid to secure our forgiveness. We also reflect upon the fact that our forgiveness is indeed complete.

The suffering of the Savior in our place was prophesied numerous times throughout the Old Testament. One such prophecy was written roughly 1,000 years before Christ by King David in Psalm 22, with words that our Savior himself spoke from the cross:

M: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

C: Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

M: My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

C: Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises.

M: But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

C: All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

M: "He trusts in the LORD," they say, "let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

C: Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet.

M: All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.

C: They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

M: But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

C: I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you.

M: For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one;

C: he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

M: All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,

C: and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,

M: for dominion belongs to the LORD

C: and he rules over the nations.

M: All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;

C: all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive.

M: Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord.

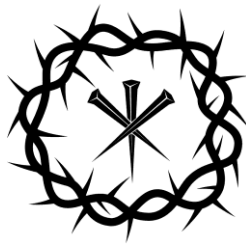
C: They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn:

All: He has done it!

PRAYER

M: God Most Holy, look with mercy on this your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, be given over into the hands of the wicked, and suffer death upon the cross. Keep us always faithful to him, our only Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.



The Word

As the service progresses, candles on the altar are extinguished, followed by a time for silent meditation, a prayer, and one verse of a hymn (#119 and #120).

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

^{52:13}Look, my servant will succeed.

He will rise. He will be lifted up. He will be highly exalted.

¹⁴Just as many were appalled at him—

his appearance was so disfigured that he did not look like a man,
and his form was disfigured more than any other person—

¹⁵so he will sprinkle many nations,

and kings will shut their mouths because of him,
because they will see something they had never been told before,
and they will understand something they had never heard before.

^{53:1}Who has believed our report,

and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

²He grew up before him like a tender shoot

and like a root from dry ground.

He had no attractiveness and no majesty.

When we saw him, nothing about his appearance made us desire him.

³He was despised and rejected by men,

a man who knew grief,
who was well acquainted with suffering.

Like someone whom people cannot bear to look at,

he was despised,
and we thought nothing of him.

⁴Surely he was taking up our weaknesses,

and he was carrying our sufferings.

We thought it was because of God

that he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted,

⁵but it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced.

He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶We all have gone astray like sheep.

Each of us has turned to his own way,
but the Lord has charged all our guilt to him.

⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth.

Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that is silent in front of its shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

⁸He was taken away without a fair trial and without justice,
and of his generation, who even cared?

So, he was cut off from the land of the living.

He was struck because of the rebellion of my people.

⁹They would have assigned him a grave with the wicked,
but he was given a grave with the rich in his death,
because he had done no violence,
and no deceit was in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him
and to allow him to suffer.

Because you made his life a guilt offering, he will see offspring.

He will prolong his days,
and the Lord's gracious plan will succeed in his hand.

¹¹After his soul experiences anguish, he will see the light of life.
He will provide satisfaction.

Through their knowledge of him, my just servant will justify the many,
for he himself carried their guilt.

¹²Therefore I will give him an allotment among the great,
and with the strong he will share plunder,
because he poured out his life to death,
and he let himself be counted with rebellious sinners.

He himself carried the sin of many,
and he intercedes for the rebels.

The first candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

M: Almighty God, through the suffering and death of your only Son, you paid for our sins. Give us a deep hatred of sin and give us a deep appreciation of your grace. Teach us to confess our sins and to trust fully in your Son's sacrifice for forgiveness. Grant us also a tender spirit toward sinners, and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The congregation sings:

Were You There | **119** (1)

(short musical intro)

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

SECOND LESSON

Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest, who has gone through the heavens, namely, Jesus the Son of God, let us continue to hold on to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. ¹⁶So let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

^{5:7}In the days of his flesh, he offered prayers and pleas with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. ⁹After he was brought to his goal, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him,

The second candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

M: Almighty God, we could not approach you, a holy God, as unrighteous sinners, so you sent your only Son to provide intercession as our great high priest. Bless us

with a firm faith in your promise of peace through him and therefore confidence to approach you in worship, praise, and prayer. Give us strength to obey you and to live in the righteousness given to us by Christ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The congregation sings:

Were You There | 119 (2)

(no musical intro)

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

please stand

GOSPEL

John 19:17-30

¹⁷Carrying his own cross, he went out to what is called the Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him with two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the middle.

¹⁹Pilate also had a notice written and fastened on the cross. It read, "Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews."

²⁰Many of the Jews read this notice, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.

²¹So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but that 'this man said, "I am the King of the Jews.'""

²²Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

²³When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. They also took his tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it. Instead, let's cast lots to see who gets it." This was so that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

They divided my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing.

continued...

So the soldiers did these things.

²⁵Jesus' mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene were standing near the cross.

²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son!" ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother!" And from that time this disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸After this, knowing that everything had now been finished, and to fulfill the Scripture, Jesus said, "I thirst."

²⁹A jar full of sour wine was sitting there. So they put a sponge soaked in sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

³⁰When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished!" Then, bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.

The third candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

M: Almighty God, your Son demonstrated perfect obedience to your commandments, perfect love for others, and perfect fulfillment of your prophecies every moment of his life. Purify our attitudes and pour out your blessing on our hearts, our homes and relationships, and our devotion to your Word. By your Spirit, fashion your church on earth to be a reflection of the heavenly family into which you have adopted us and bring us at last to your heavenly home above; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The congregation sings:

Were You There | **119** (3)

(no musical intro)

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.


I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.


be seated

HYMN OF THE DAY


God Was There on Calvary | 140



1 God was there on Cal - va - ry, God the
2 All the world on Cal - va - ry, Cru - ci -
3 Sin was there on Cal - va - ry, All the
4 Love was there on Cal - va - ry, Stream - ing
5 Life was there on Cal - va - ry, Flow - ing



Fa - ther's on - ly Son, Dy - ing that the
fied the Prince of life, Pierced the hands of
sins of ev - 'ry - one, Laid up - on God's
from the heart of God, Reach - ing out for
from his wound - ed side, Spent that death it -



world might live, There on Cal - va - ry.
God's own Son, There on Cal - va - ry.
sin - less Lamb There on Cal - va - ry.
ev - 'ry - one There on Cal - va - ry.
self might die There on Cal - va - ry.

Verse 6...

6 We were there on Calvary;
We were pardoned, saved, set free,
Saved to live eternally —
Blessed Calvary!

SERMON

Luke 23:26-33

His Final Steps Led to the Place of the Skull

²⁶As they led him away, they seized Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country. They placed the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷A large crowd of people was following him, including women who were mourning and wailing for him. ²⁸Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹Be sure of this: The days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never gave birth, and the breasts that never nursed.’ ³⁰Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹For if they do these things to the green wood, what will happen to the dry?”

³²Two other men, who were criminals, were led away with Jesus to be executed.

³³When they came to the place called The Skull, they crucified him there with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left.

please stand

CONFESSION OF SINS

Lord, to You I Make Confession | 302 (1,4)

(short musical intro)

**Lord, to you I make confession: I have sinned and gone astray;
I have multiplied transgression, Chosen for myself my way.
Led by you to see my errors, Lord, I tremble at your terrors.**

**Lord, on you I cast my burden—Sink it in the depths below!
Let me know your gracious pardon; Wash me, make me white as snow.
Let your Spirit leave me never; Make me only yours forever.**

ABSOLUTION

M: On the cross Jesus was forsaken for your sins in your place, and he declared with his final words, “It is finished.” The perfect blood he shed has washed away your

sins forever. Your salvation is complete. Our Savior told his disciples, "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven." Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✚ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

be seated

OFFERING

"The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. The one who sows generously will also reap generously. Each one should give as he has determined in his heart, not reluctantly or under pressure, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:6,7).

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Merciful God, today we are reminded not only of your justice but also of your love. Continually lead us to recognize the seriousness of our sinfulness. Continually grant us the peace that your forgiveness brings. As we meditate on the following psalms and extinguish these final candles, give us a greater appreciation of the gracious price paid for that peace by our Savior.

M: "LORD, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God. Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Savior." (*Psalms 38:21,22*)

The fourth candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

M: Almighty God, we thank you for not forsaking us in our sinful condition. We thank you for sending Jesus to come to our aid. We thank you that through his bearing the curse of sin we are blessed with righteousness and peace. Guide us in thankful living and continue to come to our aid in the midst of every temptation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The congregation sings...

The congregation sings:

What Wondrous Love Is This | 120 (1)

(short musical intro)

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!

What wondrous love is this, O my soul!

What wondrous love is this That caused the Lord of bliss

To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,

To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

M: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes." (*Psalm 118:17*)

The fifth candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

M: Almighty God, your Son hungered, thirsted, was mocked, rejected, beaten, and crucified for us. Kindle in our hearts a desire not to reject him but to embrace him as our only Savior. Continue to align us with his Word and build us up in his love that we can marvel all the more at what you did for us that first Good Friday; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The congregation sings:

What Wondrous Love Is This | 120 (2)

(no musical intro)

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,

When I was sinking down, sinking down,

When I was sinking down Beneath God's righteous frown,

Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,

Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

M: "I will not die but live and will proclaim what the LORD has done." (*Psalm 118:17*)

The sixth candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

M: Almighty God, you have saved us from eternal death and have given us eternal life through Jesus as promised throughout the millennia. What you have so faithfully proclaimed to us let us faithfully proclaim to others. Give us hearts that pour forth your Word in speech and song that more can join our praise of you in your eternal presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The congregation sings:

What Wondrous Love Is This | 120 (3)

(no musical intro)

**To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great I Am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing.**

M: "No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough—so that they should live on forever and not see decay...But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead; he will surely take me to himself." (*Psalm 49:7-9,15*)

The seventh candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

M: Almighty God, your only Son gave up his precious life to redeem us and free us from the powers of Satan, sin, and death. Grant us the power to live in your name in newness of life. Point us now to Easter morning when we will celebrate Jesus' resurrection as the firstfruits of the resurrection of all the dead. Confirm our faith, deepen our repentance, and strengthen our resolve, that we may come to your eternal heavenly rest; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The congregation sings...

The congregation sings:

What Wondrous Love Is This | 120 (4)

(no musical intro)

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing his love for me,

And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,

And through eternity I'll sing on.

LORD'S PRAYER

M: Hear us, merciful Father, as we pray in your Son's holy name:

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.

CLOSING HYMN

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross | 125



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine,



On which the Prince of glo - ry died,
Save in the death of Christ, my God.
Sor - row and love flow min - gled down.
That were a trib - ute far too small;



My rich - est gain I count but loss
All the vain things that charm me most,
Did e'er such love and sor - row meet
Love so a - maz - ing, so di - vine,



And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
De - mands my soul, my life, my all.

The Christ Candle is removed from the chancel, and the lights in the sanctuary are completely darkened, leaving the church in darkness for silent meditation.

A message of hope and a loud noise break the silence.

The Christ Candle is returned to its place and the lights of the sanctuary are softly lit.

Those who desire to do so may remain for silent prayer and meditation. May the Lord bless your meditation and your expectation of Jesus' victory on Easter morning.

The congregation departs in silence.

SERVING IN WORSHIP

Presiding Minister
Accompanist

Pastor Brock Groth
Irene Bakken

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YOU WILL NOT
ABANDON ME
TO THE GRAVE
NOR WILL YOU
LET YOUR HOLY
ONE SEE DECAY

The Festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord

Saturday, April 8

10:00 am | Easter Egg Hunt @ St. Paul's School

Sunday, April 9

6:30 am | Easter Worship

7:30 am | Easter Breakfast

9:00 am | Easter Worship

