Rethinking Religion

SACRIFICE

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH | Bangor, WI

March 29, 2024

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.

<u>Please note</u>: 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**.

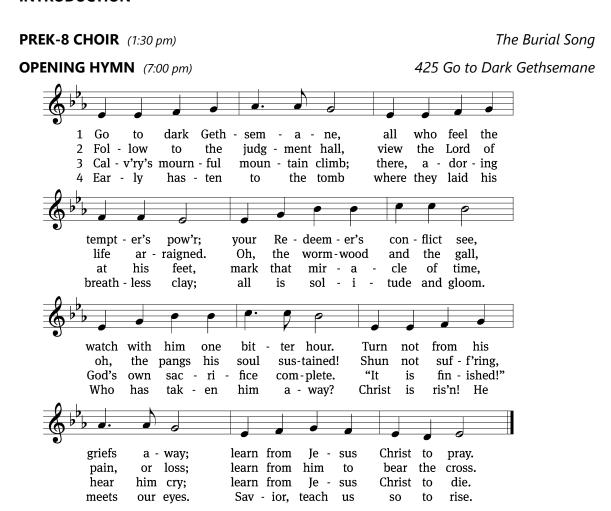
GOOD FRIDAY

"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" (Isaiah 53:5).

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.

INTRODUCTION



DIALOGUE OF REMEMBRANCE

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. **By his holy cross he has redeemed the world.**

Remember his words, for they give us light. Remember his works, for they show us God's mercy.

Remember his grace, for it is greater than our sin. Remember his glory, for it shines from the cross.

Remember his pain, for he took it up willingly. Remember his sorrow, for it became our joy.

Remember his life, for it was perfect before God. Remember his death, for it was ours.

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. **By his holy cross he has redeemed the world.**

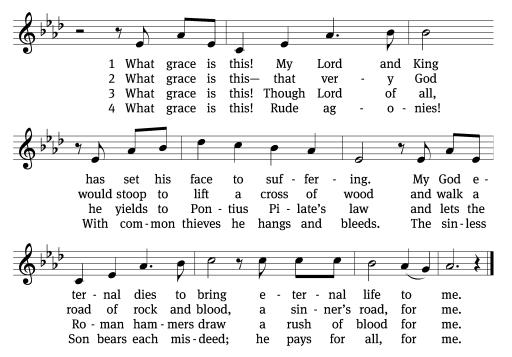
PRAYER

Let us pray.

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 now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.





What grace is this! Once wrapped in cloths and gently laid in manger-trough, he's taken, dead, from wretched cross and wrapped again for me.

Verse 6...

6 What grace is this? How can it be? He wears this raw humility to lift me to eternity. Such grace—sweet grace—for me.

Text: Laurie F. Gauger, b. 1965 Tune: G. A. Hennig, b. 1966

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SCRIPTURE John 18:1–14

¹After saying these things, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden. He and his disciples went into it.

²Now Judas, who was betraying him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas took the company of soldiers and some guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

⁴Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

⁵"Jesus the Nazarene," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus told them.

Judas, the betrayer, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus told them, "I am he," they backed away and fell to the ground.

⁷Then Jesus asked them again, "Who are you looking for?"

"Jesus the Nazarene," they said.

⁸"I told you that I am he," Jesus replied. "So if you are looking for me, let these men go." ⁹This was to fulfill the statement he had spoken: "I did not lose any of those you have given me."

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup my Father has given me?"

¹²Then the company of soldiers, their commander, and the Jewish guards arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they led him to Annas, because he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. ¹⁴Now it was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews, "It is better that one man die for the people."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The first candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away my sin.

The congregation sings:

526 What Wondrous Love Is This st. 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!

SCRIPTURE John 18:15–27

¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple kept following Jesus. That disciple was known to the high priest, so he went into the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. ¹⁶But Peter stood outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and talked to the girl watching the door and brought Peter in.

¹⁷"You are not one of this man's disciples too, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter.

"I am not!" he said.

continued...

¹⁸The servants and guards were standing around a fire of coals that they had made because it was cold. While they warmed themselves, Peter was standing with them, warming himself too.

¹⁹The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

²⁰Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in a synagogue or at the temple, where all the Jews gather. I said nothing in secret. ²¹Why are you questioning me? Ask those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said."

²²When he said this, one of the guards standing there hit Jesus in the face. "Is that how you answer the high priest?" he demanded.

²³"If I said something wrong," Jesus answered, "testify about what was wrong. But if I was right, why did you hit me?"

²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵Simon Peter continued to stand there warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not one of his disciples too, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "I am not!"

²⁶One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?"

²⁷Peter denied it again, and just then a rooster crowed.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The second candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away my sin.

The congregation sings:

526 What Wondrous Love Is This st. 2

(no musical intro)

When I was 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.

SCRIPTURE John 18:28–40

²⁸Early in the morning, the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium. They did not enter the Praetorium themselves, so that they would not become ceremonially unclean. (They wanted to be able to eat the Passover meal.) ²⁹So Pilate went out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?"

³⁰They answered him, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

³¹Pilate told them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law."

The Jews said, "It's not legal for us to put anyone to death." ³²This happened so that the statement Jesus had spoken indicating what kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.

³³Pilate went back into the Praetorium and summoned Jesus. He asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

³⁴Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

³⁵Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?"

³⁶Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here."

³⁷"You are a king then?" Pilate asked.

Jesus answered, "I am, as you say, a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

³⁸"What is truth?" Pilate said to him.

continued...

After he said this, he went out again to the Jews and told them, "I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. So do you want me to release the King of the Jews for you?"

⁴⁰Then they shouted back, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" (Now Barabbas was a rebel.)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The third candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away my sin.

The congregation sings:

526 What Wondrous Love Is This st. 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.

SCRIPTURE John 19:1–16

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²The soldiers also twisted together a crown of thorns and placed it on his head. Then they threw a purple robe around him. ³They kept coming to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they kept hitting him in the face.

⁴Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

⁵So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"

⁶When the chief priests and guards saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

Pilate told them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no basis for a charge against him."

⁷The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

⁸When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. ⁹He went back inside the palace again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?"

But Jesus gave him no answer.

¹⁰So Pilate asked him, "Are you not talking to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to release you or to crucify you?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over me at all if it had not been given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

¹²From then on Pilate tried to release Jesus. But the Jews shouted, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar! Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar!"

¹³When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge's seat at a place called the Stone Pavement, or Gabbatha in Aramaic. ¹⁴It was about the sixth hour on the Preparation Day for the Passover. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your king!"

¹⁵They shouted, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!"

Pilate said to them, "Should I crucify your king?"

"We have no king but Caesar!" the chief priests answered.

¹⁶So then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus away.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The fourth candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away my sin.

(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.

SERMONETTE 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.

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 fifth candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away my sin.

The congregation sings:

426 Were You There st. 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?

SCRIPTURE John 19:31–37

³¹Since it was the Preparation Day, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses over the Sabbath (because that Sabbath was a particularly important day). They asked Pilate to have the men's legs broken and the bodies taken away. ³²So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who was crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other man.

³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. Immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵The one who saw it has testified, and his

continued...

testimony is true. He knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. ³⁶Indeed, these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, "Not one of his bones will be broken." ³⁷Again another Scripture says, "They will look at the one they pierced."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The sixth candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away my sin.

The congregation sings:

426 Were You There st. 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?

SCRIPTURE John 19:38–42

³⁸After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him remove Jesus' body. When Pilate gave him permission, he came and took Jesus' body away. ³⁹Nicodemus, who earlier had come to Jesus at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-two pounds.

⁴⁰They took Jesus' body and bound it with linen strips along with the spices, in accord with Jewish burial customs.

⁴¹There was a garden at the place where Jesus was crucified. And in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²So they laid Jesus there, because it was the Jewish Preparation Day, and the tomb was near.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

The seventh candle is extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away my sin.

The congregation sings:

426 Were You There st. 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?

Stand

CONFESSION OF SINS

Psalm 6

Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger.

Do not discipline me in your wrath.

Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am fading away.

Heal me, Lord, for my bones are trembling, and my soul is terrified.

But you, O Lord—how long? Turn, O Lord, and deliver my soul.

Save me because of your mercy.

For in death no one remembers you.

In the grave who praises you?

I am worn out from my groaning.

I flood my bed all night long.

With my tears I drench my couch.

My eyes are blurred by sorrow.

They are worn out because of all my foes.

Turn away from me, all you evildoers, because the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.

The Lord has heard my cry for mercy.

The Lord accepts my prayer.

ABSOLUTION

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.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

forever and ever. Amen.

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

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

HYMN

523 How Deep the Father's Love for Us



Text: Stuart Townend, b. 1963 Tune: Stuart Townend, b. 1963

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DIALOGUE OF THE CROSS

We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection, for by your cross, joy has come into the world.

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us—so that your ways may be known on earth your salvation among all nations.

May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Brief silence

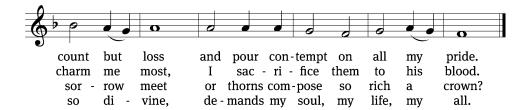
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

CLOSING HYMN

407 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross





Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, abr., alt. Tune: Lowell Mason, 1792–1872 Text and tune: Public domain

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, March 30, 10:00 am Easter Egg Hunt @ St. Paul's School

Sunday, March 31, 6:30 & 9:00 am – Easter Worship 7:15 am – Easter Breakfast

