

Good Friday "Tenebrae" Service

April 3, 2026

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

215 N. Warren St.

Orwigsburg, PA

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PRELUDE

INSTRUCTION

Tonight, we recall the passion, death, and burial of our Lord. The order of our worship is based on a medieval prayer service called "Tenebrae" - a Latin word meaning "darkness" or "shadows." Our worship is not a liturgical "funeral" for Jesus marked by gloom, but a solemn service of reflection, intercession, and adoration as the Son of God offers up his life as the true Lamb of God.

The seven lighted candles which you see will be extinguished one by one. This "dimming" which symbolizes the ebbing of Jesus' life and the darkness of the world's sin which surrounded the cross on that first Good Friday.

At the end of this service, you will hear a loud noise called the "*strepitus*." It is intended to evoke the sound of the sealing of Christ's tomb. After this the service is ended, please leave the church in silence.

INVOCATION

We gather in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, you bore our sins in your own body and laid down your life to save the world from the powers of sin and death. Draw us to the foot of your cross, that dying to sin we may find new and everlasting life in you, both now and in the world to come; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

ANTHEM

"Three Men Hang on Crosses of Shame"
Chancel Choir

L. Larson

A SERVICE OF SHADOWS

THE FIRST CANDLE - BETRAYAL

PSALM 41:5-7

⁵My enemies are saying wicked things about me:

“When will he die, and his name perish?”

⁶Even if they come to see me, they speak empty words;

their heart collects false rumors; they go outside and spread them.

⁷All my enemies whisper together about me

and devise evil against me.

⁸“A deadly thing,” they say, “has fastened on him;

he has taken to his bed and will never get up again.”

⁹Even my best friend, whom I trusted, who broke bread with me,

has lifted up his heel and turned against me.

JOHN 13:21b-27

^{21b}Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, ‘Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.’ ²²The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. ²³One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; ²⁴Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ ²⁶Jesus answered, ‘It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.’ So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘Do quickly what you are going to do.’

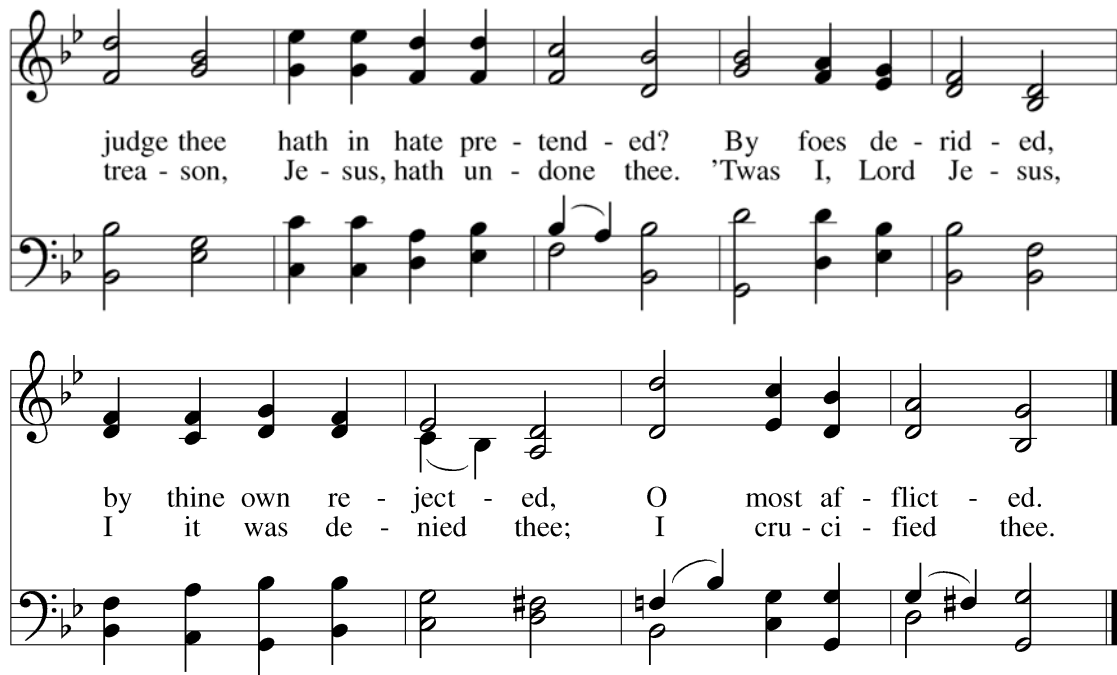
REFLECTION

HYMN

“Ah, Holy Jesus” vs. 1 & 2

1 Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how hast thou of - fend - ed that man to
2 Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on thee? A - las, my

Continued



judge thee hath in hate pre - tend - ed? By foes de - rid - ed,
 trea - son, Je - sus, hath un - done thee. 'Twas I, Lord Je - sus,
 by thine own re - ject - ed, O most af - flict - ed.
 I it was de - nied thee; I cru - ci - fied thee.

[The first candle is extinguished.]

THE SECOND CANDLE – THE SUFFERING SERVANT

ISAIAH 53:4-7

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.

MARK 14:32-41

³²They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” ³⁵And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” ³⁷He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ³⁹And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.

Continued

⁴⁰And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

REFLECTION

HYMN

“Christ the Life of All the Living” - Verses 1 & 2

1 Christ, the life of all the liv - ing, Christ, the death of death, our foe,
2 You have suf - fered great af - flic - tion and have borne it pa - tient - ly,

Christ, your - self for me once giv - ing to the dark - est depths of woe:
e - ven death by cru - ci - fix - ion, ful - ly to a - tone for me;

through your suf - f'ring, death, and mer - it life e - ter - nal I in - her - it.
for you chose to be tor - ment - ed that my doom should be pre - vent - ed.

Thou - sand, thou - sand thanks are due, dear - est Je - sus, un - to you.
Thou - sand, thou - sand thanks are due, dear - est Je - sus, un - to you.

[The second candle is extinguished.]

THE THIRD CANDLE – THE WEIGHT OF SIN

ISAIAH 59:1-3, 12

¹See, the LORD's hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. ²Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. ³For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness. ¹²For our transgressions before you are many, and our sins testify against us. Our transgressions indeed are with us, and we know our iniquities.

ROMANS 5:6-10

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.

REFLECTION

HYMN

“Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed” Verses 1, 2, & 3

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed". It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The first system contains the first three verses, and the second system contains the concluding lines of the hymn.

1 A - las! And did my Sav - ior bleed, and did my sov - 'reign die?
2 Was it for sins that I had done he groaned up - on the tree?
3 Well might the sun in dark - ness hide and shut its glo - ries in

Would he de - vote that sa - cred head for sin - ners such as I?
A - maz - ing pit - y, grace un - known, and love be - yond de - gree!
when God, the might - y mak - er, died for his own crea - tures' sin.

[The third candle is extinguished.]

THE FOURTH CANDLE – THE MESSIAH IS MOCKED

ISAIAH 50:6-7a

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. ⁷The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint.

MARK 15:16-20

¹⁶Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²⁰After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

REFLECTION

HYMN

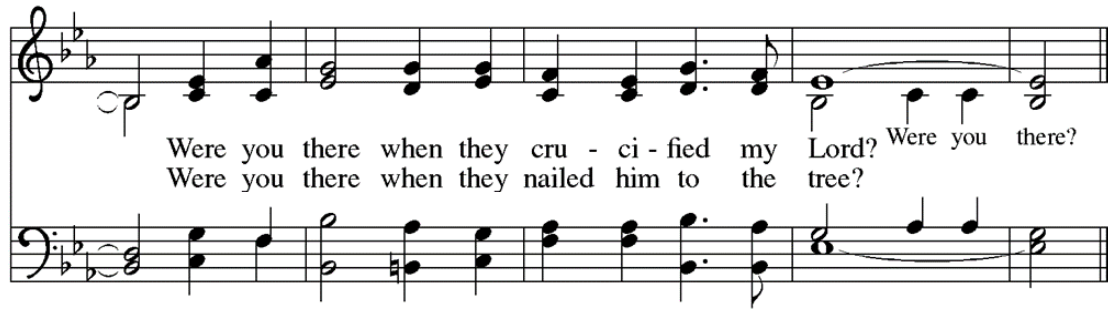
“Were You There (Verses 1 & 2)”

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?

Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? Were you there?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

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

Continued



[The fourth candle is extinguished.]

THE FIFTH CANDLE – THE CRUCIFIED ONE

PSALM 22:1-2, 7-8

¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me
and are so far from my cry, and from the words of my distress?

²O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer;
by night as well, but I find no rest.

⁷All who see me laugh me to scorn;
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

⁸“He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, if he delights in him.”

LUKE 23:33-38

³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!’ ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’

REFLECTION

HYMN

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Verses 1 & 2

1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see

the shad - ow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.

a home with - in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:

from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.

[The fifth candle is extinguished.]

THE SIXTH CANDLE – DEATH NEARS

LAMENTATIONS 3:1-6

¹I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; ²he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; ³surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long. ⁴He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones; ⁵he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; ⁶he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago.

JOHN 19:29-30

²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

REFLECTION

HYMN

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” Verses 1, 2, & 3

1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and

prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and

count but loss and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?

[The sixth candle is extinguished.]

THE SEVENTH CANDLE AND FINAL CANDLE – THE TOMB

PSALM 88:2-7

²Let my prayer enter into your presence;
incline your ear to my lamentation.

³For I am full of trouble;
my life is at the brink of the grave.

⁴I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I have become like one who has no strength;

⁵lost among the dead,
like the slain who lie in the grave,

⁶whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.

⁷You have laid me in the depths of the pit,
in dark places, and in the abyss.

MATTHEW 27:57-66

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶²The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

REFLECTION

HYMN

Were You There?

Verse 5

5 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there?

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 laid him in the tomb? Were you there?

[The seventh and final candle is extinguished.]

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Read in Unison)

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.

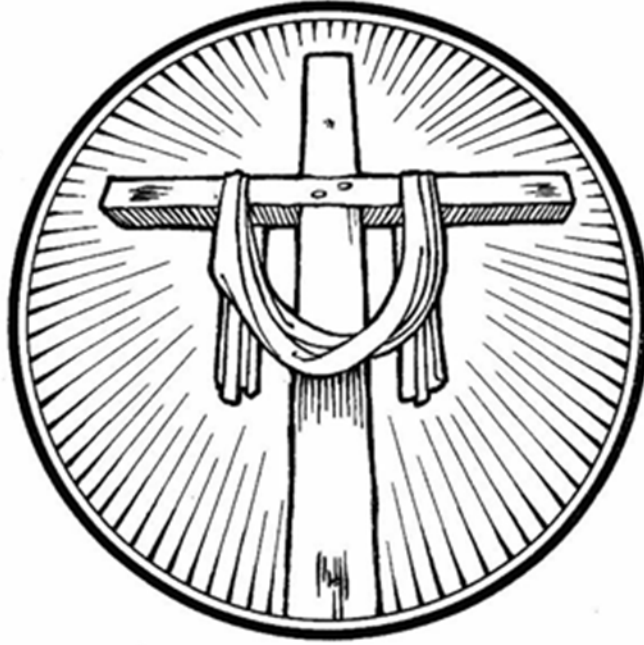
FINAL ACCLAMATION

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

because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SILENCE

THE TOMB IS SEALED.



[Please leave the church in silence.]