

Jesus was a bloody mess. And there was no one there to stop the bleeding. No one to protest the cruel and inhumane punishment. No one seeking a stay to the execution. Jesus had some people there, but none of them were in a position to stop the bleeding. The church was there but they weren't calling for mercy; they were calling for Jesus' blood to be spilled. The Law was there, but they weren't interested in stopping the bleeding; some were cold to the bleeding; some were hot to work the bleeding. And God was there, until he wasn't there; but he didn't look to stop the bleeding either. In fact, what did we hear from Isaiah? **"It was the LORD's will to cause him to suffer."**

And so Jesus was a bloody mess. The Gospel writers don't go into much detail. Psalm 22 goes more into the gore. Some preachers, some writers, some movies and artists go into the bloody, gory, awful details, but not the Gospel writers. They keep it simple - Jesus was beaten and scourged, he was nailed to a cross, crucified. Then when the time was right, Jesus gave up his spirit. And the soldiers to make sure he was dead, they pieced his side, and blood and water flowed out. Jesus was a bloody mess.

Why? If the Gospel writers weren't going to go more into the gore, the details of how Jesus died, we might expect them to go more into the details of why Jesus died. But they don't. Instead John and the others do what Jesus did; they point back to what was written in the Old Testament. As Jesus dies, John shows the connection between Jesus and the Passover Lamb (**"Not one of his bones will be broken."**). You might remember, John had made the Jesus-Lamb connection earlier; back in chapter 1, John the Gospel writer records John the Baptizer: **"Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."** How? Not as lawyer getting us off, not as legal reformer changing the law to get us off, not as an activist or advocate changing the judge's heart to get us off, but as substitute Jesus took our place as guilty, and as sacrifice Jesus paid the price of our sin. Listen to Isaiah: **"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,**

so he did not open his mouth.” Why? We heard it before: **“It was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, [to make] his life a guilt offering.”** As John the Baptist said; **“to take away the sin of the world.”**

Did it work? Does it work? Does it work better than our blaming and excusing? Does it work better than our lying and denying? Sometimes we might wonder: “If Jesus died to pay for my sin, then why inside me do I still feel so guilty? If Jesus died to pay for my sin, then why all around me is God working so much trouble against me? Why is God so busy making me pay? Did Jesus miss a step? Did Jesus drop the ball? Did Jesus fall short? Why do I feel, why does my life look like I still have to pay?”

Why do I feel? That’s a great question, isn’t it? Why do I still feel hungry after I’ve eaten a full meal? Why do I feel cold when I’m in church and it’s 72 degrees? Why do I feel hot when I’m outside and it’s only 60 degrees? My feelings don’t determine truth. Sometimes my feelings are running behind the truth. Sometimes my feelings are running wild apart from the truth. Sometimes my feelings tell me I need to pay more attention to the truth. And what is the truth? Jesus tell us: **“It is finished.”**

“Then why does God have so much trouble working against me?” It could be that God is treating me as guilty and godless because I am living as guilty and godless. It could be that I need a taste of God’s judgment to keep me from joining the world in its sin. It could be that I need a taste of some trouble to keep me thinking I’m good on my own. It could be that God is giving me a taste of trouble so I can help others in their trouble. It could be ... we could on and on. But why is God working this or that trouble against me? It’s not because Jesus hasn’t done what we need.... You have his word - **“It is finished.”**

In our lesson, John is the last of the Gospel writers to take us to Good Friday. John knows what’s been told before. He knows what’s been questioned before. And what does John show us? Jesus got it right, Jesus got it done. Again and again, John shows, Jesus knew the plan, Jesus worked the plan, and Jesus fulfilled the plan - it is finished! And how do we know? That, my friends, is what Easter is about!



Good Friday

St. John Lutheran

April 7, 2023

Good Friday

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WE WELCOME OUR GUESTS and pray that all who are with us today are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns and by an encouraging and warm welcome. Our worship service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ: forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven. The notes below may be helpful for your worship and time with us today. If you have questions, please ask! We are blessed to have you with us!

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church, celebrating the Lord's Supper only with those who are united with us in faith and teaching. In this sacrament we give public confession of our doctrinal unity and fellowship; therefore, we invite visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us in the sacrament. We ask our fellow Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice and refrain from the Lord's Supper at this time. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us for worship. Children's worship bulletins and "church bags" (with paper, colors, and Bible story books) are available from an usher. Baby noises can be beautiful to our Savior who said, "Let the little children come to me." If children are crying loudly, our nursery and Gathering Area (back of the church) are audio-equipped and available for you and your young children. After the children regain their composure, come back so we can all worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

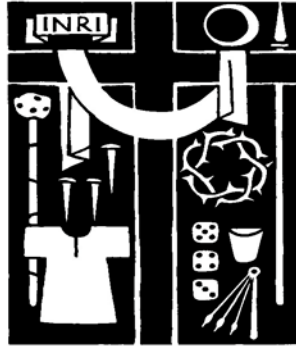
Large Print Service Folders are available from an usher.

Hearing Assistance for those with hearing aids is provided through our *Hearing Loop*. More information is available from an usher.

A *wheelchair lift* is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.

Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.



Our service this evening is a Tenebrae service, a service of shadows and darkness, reminding us of the darkness of our sin and guilt, the darkness of the world's hate and anger against God, and, yes, the darkness of God's curse on our sin, charged against Jesus.

In a Tenebrae service, candles are extinguished and lights are dimmed to impress on us the utter darkness and loneliness, the horrible curse that Jesus faced on the cross. As you hear of Jesus' burial and the service closes, expect to hear the *strepitus*. (In various Tenebrae traditions, the sharp, loud noise of the *strepitus* stands for the earth shaking and rocks breaking at Jesus' death, the stone rolled in front of Jesus' tomb, or the rending of Christ's tomb on Easter morning.) As the seventh candle is removed we are reminded of Jesus' death; as it returns we are reminded that he lives with the Father. As the service draws to a close, see the sign of hope - in the darkness, a light still burns - Easter is coming!

After the service, the congregation may remain for prayer and meditation before leaving quietly. If you wish to speak to the pastor, please go to his office (door near the piano).

ORGAN MEDITATION

"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"
Setting by Robert Nelson

"Prelude in E Minor"
By Franz Xaver Anton Murschhauser

"Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted"
By Kevin Hildebrand

"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"
By Kevin Hildebrand

FLUTE, VIOLIN, AND PIANO MEDITATION

"Ah, Holy Jesus"
Arranged by Larry Shackley

OPENING HYMN

"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"
Hymn 420 vs. 1-3

Please stand

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

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, in humble awe, in reverent silence, and in solemn trembling, your people have gathered around your cross to remember your death.

O Christ, friend of sinners, have mercy on us; O Christ, Savior and Redeemer, have mercy on us; O Christ, only hope of a lost world, have mercy on us.

At your cross let us see all the ugliness, horror, and misery that sin, death, and Satan brought into the world and that you willingly took on yourself. Open our eyes to see that we deserved the death and torments of hell that you suffered for us.

But open our eyes also to see that by your death you destroyed death, by your sacrifice you reconciled us with your Father, and by the blood you shed you purchased us to belong to you forever.

Help us believe that we are worth that much to you. Fill us with joy and peace in believing that we are truly free from condemnation and forgiven by your Father. Help us dedicate our lives in thankful love to you, who gave yourself for us.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Hear us, O Lamb of God, who bore all sin for us. Amen.

Please be seated

HYMN

"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"
Hymn 420 vs. 4-6

LESSON OF PROMISE

Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Pew Bible, p. 731

The first candle is extinguished.

RESPONSE

"A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth"
Hymn 422

LESSON OF ANGUISH AND HOPE

Psalm Prayer - Psalm 22

Father, when your Son hung on the cross, he cried out to you in agony and grief. You gave him the strength to endure so that death might be destroyed and life restored. Have mercy on us all our days and preserve us in true faith unto life everlasting; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM 22

Refrain



Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Psalm tone



My God, my God, why have you for`saken me?*

Why are you so far from `saving me?

I am a worm and `not a man,*

scorned by men and despised by the `people.

All who see me `mock me;*

they hurl insults, shaking `their heads

"He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD `rescue him.*

Let him deliver him, since he de`lights in him." *Refrain*

Refrain

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Psalm tone

*

My strength is dried up, and my tongue sticks
to the roof `of my mouth;*

you lay me in the `dust of death.

A band of evil men has en`circled me,*
they have pierced my hands `and my feet.

They divide my garments `among them*
and cast lots for my `clothing.

But you, O LORD, be not `far off;*

O my Strength, come quickly to `help me.

Glory be to the Father and `to the Son*
and to the Holy `Spirit,
as it was in the be`ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. `Amen.

Refrain

The second candle is extinguished.

Please stand

LESSON OF FULFILLMENT

John 19:17-30
Pew Bible, p. 1073

Please sit

The third candle is extinguished.

CHOIR ANTHEM

“The Old Rugged Cross”

*On a hill far away, stood an old rugged Cross
The emblem of suff'ring and shame
And I love that old Cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain*

Refrain

*So I'll cherish the old rugged Cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged Cross
And exchange it some day for a crown*

*Oh, that old rugged Cross so despised by the world
Has a wondrous attraction for me
For the dear Lamb of God, left his Glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary*

Refrain

*In the old rugged Cross, stain'd with blood so divine
A wondrous beauty I see
For the dear Lamb of God, left his Glory above
To pardon and sanctify me*

Refrain

*To the old rugged Cross, I will ever be true
Its shame and reproach gladly bear
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away
Where his glory forever I'll share*

Refrain

SERMON

**John 19:28-30
Pew Bible, p. 1073**

It is Finished

HYMN

“Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted”
Hymn 430

The fourth candle is extinguished.

BIDDING PRAYER

The *bidding prayer* is an ancient form of prayer in which a minister bids or invites the congregation to pray.

M: Let us pray for the whole Church, that our gracious Father would defend her from the devil and keep her faithful to her Lord.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you have revealed your saving name to the world through Jesus Christ our Lord. Protect us from the assaults of the evil one, and help us remain faithful to your Word so that in every adversity we may stand firm in our faith and give ourselves fully to our Savior’s work, through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

M: Let us pray for those who serve in the public ministry and for all people of God.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you rule over all things for the good of your people. Preserve us from divisive spirits and false teachers. Give your servants the grace to proclaim Christ joyfully in word and deed so that all who hear them may come to know their Savior better and be strengthened for their lives of service, through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

M: Let us pray for those who are being instructed in the Word, that they remain firm in the simple faith of Baptism.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you make us your own dear children by the washing of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit. Give strength to all who are buried with Christ in Baptism, that each day they may die to sin and rise again to live new and holy lives, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for our earthly government, our rulers, and all who are in authority.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you have established earthly government to keep a measure of order in this dying world and to protect us from the disorder of sin. Give to all rulers the wisdom to govern well and to all citizens the desire to obey them, so that we may live peaceful lives in all godliness and holiness, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray that our gracious Father would protect us and our communities from the many earthly calamities that threaten us.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, on all sides we are surrounded by danger from wars and famine, from disease and pestilence, with the devil begrudging us every minute of our lives. Protect us from all these miseries so that your name may still be glorified in them and so that we may safely pass through them to your heavenly kingdom, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for those who are outside the Church, that they may come to know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, your Son was lifted up on the cross so that he might draw all people to himself. Through the proclamation of your Word, mercifully gather from the nations a people that are your very own, that we may join together around your throne in glory to praise and thank you forever, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for our enemies and for all those who hate us.

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, no one can harm us without grieving you, whose name we bear. We ask that you would change the hearts of those who work against us and who hate us without reason. Give them repentance and faith so that they may be glad with us and find joy in your love, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Let us pray for all who suffer under cross and trial:

Silent prayer

M: Almighty and everlasting God, you sent your Son into the world to bear our griefs and to carry our sorrows. Help those who are suffering for your name's sake and who are struggling against temptation, that they may not be overwhelmed with sadness but find relief in your grace, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

M: Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask in the words he himself has taught us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

A moment of silence.



RESPONSE

"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"
Hymn 429 (st. 5)

Sung by the congregation

5 What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank you,
dear - est Friend, for this, your dy - ing sor - row,
your pit - y with - out end? O make me yours for -
ev - er, and keep me strong and true; Lord, let me
nev - er, nev - er out - live my love for you.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

LESSON

John 19:31-42
Pew Bible, p. 1074

The sixth candle is extinguished.

The seventh candle is removed.

A TIME OF SILENCE FOR MEDITATION
THE STREPITUS

The seventh candle is returned.

CLOSING HYMN
Sung by the choir

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”
Hymn 429 (st. 7)

Lord, be my consolation, my shield when I must die;
Remind me of your passion when my last hour draws nigh.
My eyes will then behold you, upon your cross will dwell;
My heart will then enfold you – who dies in faith dies well!

*The congregation may remain for prayer and meditation before leaving silently.
If you wish to speak to the pastor, please go to his office (door near the piano).*

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OFFERING (Please fill out friendship pads on pews)

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan
this code with your mobile device.*



Service Participants

Preacher and Presiding Minister
Organist
Choir Director
Choir
Musicians

Pastor Kevin Raddatz
Mrs. Monica Wintrone
Dr. Tim Samelson
St. John Senior Choir
Mr. Greg Haak, *flute*
Mrs. Monica Wintrone, *violin*

Acknowledgements

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We welcome you to come and worship with us again.

Easter Sunday Services at 9:00 & 11:00am

*We also invite you to join us for Easter Food, Fun, & Fellowship,
Sunday at 10:00am.*