

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE OF DARKNESS

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church April 10, 2020

INVOCATION

M: We open this Good Friday Service of Darkness in the name of our gracious Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen

NARRATION:

M: This Good Friday Service of Darkness commemorates the suffering and death of our Savior Jesus Christ. It represents the darkness that fell over the earth as the Son of God was crucified. The candles symbolize Christ, who is our light and the light of the world. With each meditation the candles are progressively extinguished, portraying the fading light of the world as Christ is leaving it. Yet one last Vigil Candle remains to indicate that death only seems triumphant over Christ, and points to his coming resurrection. May we see, in this ancient symbolism the high cost of our sins, the awesome sacrifice our loving Savior offered to redeem us from sin, and the great victory he won for us on the cross. "Glory be to Jesus, who in bitter pains, poured for us the lifeblood, from His sacred veins." Let us now join together in the confession of our sins.

CONFESSION OF SINS & ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORGIVENESS

C: Dear Lord God, like a wayward sheep, we have gone astray.
We confess to you our many sins and offenses.



We have broken your commandments and failed to live up to your perfect standards.

We deserve nothing but your anger and eternal punishment.

On this most solemn day, we come before you sorry for our sins, but trusting in Jesus, Our perfect Savior, and rejoicing in the forgiveness he won for us on the Good Friday cross.

P: Yes, it was our sins that sent Jesus to that shameful cross. But it was his great love for us that kept him there. Jesus willingly gave his life for us on Calvary, not as a beaten enemy, but rather as a conquering hero. On that cross, he paid for every one of our sins. On that cross, he rescued us from the slavery of Satan and the punishment of death. On that cross he opened the door for us to eternal life in heaven. Therefore as Christ's ambassador, I joyfully announce to you that all of your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SERMON TEXT

Ephesians 2:12-19

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace

to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.

Celebrate the End of our Isolation!

SONG

OFFERING

We bring our offerings in gratitude for God's blessings and eager to meet the needs of God's people. You may offer them online, or mail or bring them into the church office.

GOOD FRIDAY PRAYER

NARRATION: Today we turn back to that first Good Friday to recall, in a brief hour, the emotions which those who lived it once must have felt. Recall in spirit how, as the sun began to climb that morning, they had fastened Jesus to the cross with great nails. At midday darkness covered the earth. At three o'clock he gave up his spirit. Then Joseph and Nicodemus begged his body from Pontius Pilate. Quickly they took it down from the cross, and carefully they laid it to rest in the unused tomb. A watch was established, the Roman seal set on the great stone. "It is finished." God's plan is fulfilled for the Son of Man laid down his life for his friends.

SCRIPTURE LESSON "Christ Arrested"

Matthew 26:47-50

While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss

is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

HYMN

NARRATION: "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" The tragic events of that night begin, in human terms, with Judas Iscariot. For thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, Jesus was delivered to his captors. Now Jesus is becoming the outcast one. Men have begun to turn on him. Yes, even one of his chosen disciples has now betrayed him into the hands of his enemies. Is there a greater tragedy in life than to have a loved one betray you? 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. He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people he was stricken. He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The First Candle Is Extinguished

SCRIPTURE LESSON "Before the Jewish Leaders"

Matt. 26:62-68

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to Him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Then they spit in His face and struck Him with their fists. Others slapped Him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

NARRATION: Then his own chosen people rejected him. Caiaphas, the high priest, rose and tearing his garments cried out, "This Man has blasphemed God!" Think of it. The leaders of his own people made this accusation against him. Can you feel the heartbreak of this? He, as God, had nourished, blessed, corrected and helped the Children of Israel against countless enemies. Into her keeping he had placed the sacred promises of the Savior. But now that the Messiah had come, the leaders of his own people cried out against him, "This man has blasphemed God!", and they make preparations to have him put to death. As John put it, "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."

The Second Candle Is Extinguished

HYMN

SCRIPTURE LESSON "Before Pilate"

Luke 23:6-11

On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate.

NARRATION: Herod had no sincere interest in Jesus or his teaching, but wished only to be entertained. But Jesus refused to play the fool. Therefore Herod mocked him, and sent him back to Pilate. Isaiah said, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

The Third Candle Is Extinguished

HYMN

SCRIPTURE LESSON “Christ Is Condemned”

Luke 23:20-24

Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" For the third time he spoke to them: "Why! What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him." But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand.

NARRATION: Pilate washed his hands of Jesus. He knew Jesus to be innocent, but he delivered him to be crucified. Now only the Way of Sorrow lies before him. The way of sorrow, the heavy burden, the wailing women, the taunting crowd, the bitter wine, the thorns, the nails...and the shameful cross!

HYMN

SCRIPTURE LESSON “Christ Is Crucified”

Luke 23:26-27,32-33, John 19:25-31

As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching and the rulers even sneered at him. "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

Then the soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the

Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly for we are getting what our deeds deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Fourth Candle Is Extinguished

HYMN

NARRATION: Only once has it happened in all of history. Only once has God forsaken a man in this way, and that man was Jesus, the Christ. Try, but you cannot imagine what it means to be forsaken by God. No human being on the face of this earth can make that claim, save Christ alone. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. That's why Jesus' cry from the cross is so agonizing. God forsook his own Son, causing him to suffer the punishment of hell in our place.

SCRIPTURE LESSON "On the Cross"

Matthew 27:45-50

From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was

there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The Fifth Candle Is Extinguished

SCRIPTURE READING "Jesus' Death" Luke 23:46; Matt.27:50-54

Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely He was the Son of God!"

HYMN

The Sixth Candle Is Extinguished

NARRATION: Then they took Jesus down from the cross. Gently and tenderly Joseph and Nicodemus took his body down and carried it to the unused tomb. Then, the Passover being at hand, they went to their homes to keep the ancient feast. Sadness and gloom and sorrow filled their being. He Whom they loved was dead.

SCRIPTURE LESSON "Jesus is Buried" Luke 23:50-53

Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to

Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

The Seventh Candle Remains Lit

NARRATION: Please note that one light still burns. They have not all gone out. Nor is the life of our Lord Jesus forever extinguished. Death and the grave shall not hold Jesus, for in three days He will raise up again the Temple which they sought to destroy. Sin, death, and Satan are not the victors! No It is Christ who triumphs. It is finished! The cup of suffering is now empty. Our debt of sin is paid in full. Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

SILENT PRAYER – We ask you to spend time in silent meditation, pondering Jesus' sacrifice and cherishing his gracious blessings.

NIV ®)