

# ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Aitkin, Minnesota

April 2, 2021

Good Friday

## ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the

grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

**Introit**

*Ps. 38:1–4, 18, 22; antiphon: Is. 53:5*

He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his stripes we are healed.

O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,  
nor discipline me in your wrath!

For your arrows have sunk into me,  
and your hand has come down on me.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation;

there is no health in my bones because of my sin.

For my iniquities have gone over my head;

like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

I confess my iniquity;

I am sorry for my sin.

Make haste to help me,

O Lord, my salvation!

He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his stripes we are healed.

**Collect of the Day**

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, graciously behold this Your family for

whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men to suffer death upon the cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading**

*Isaiah 52:13—53:12*

Behold, my servant shall act wisely;  
he shall be high and lifted up,  
and shall be exalted.

As many were astonished at you—  
his appearance was so marred, beyond human  
semblance,  
and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—  
so shall he sprinkle many nations;  
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;  
for that which has not been told them they see,  
and that which they have not heard they understand.

Who has believed what they heard from us?  
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?  
For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.  
Surely he has borne our griefs

and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his stripes we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned every one to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.  
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.  
By oppression and judgment he was taken away;  
and as for his generation, who considered  
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people?  
And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.  
Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for sin,  
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;  
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.  
Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be

satisfied;  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,  
make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
because he poured out his soul to death  
and was numbered with the transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## **Epistle**

*Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9*

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

## C **Thanks be to God.**

### **Holy Gospel**

*John 19:1-42*

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."

From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. Now

it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

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

So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his

mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."

After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night,

came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

### **Apostles' Creed**

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

**And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.**

**From thence 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.**

**Sermon Text – Luke 23:32-34**

**Theme – “Nailed- Pierced Hands”**

Were you there? It's the probing, bordering-on-accusing title question that is repeated again and again in the old African-American spiritual. In the first verse we are asked: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" In the second verse we are asked: "Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?" In the third verse the question is: "Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?" Before you answer those questions, I want to remind you of some of the people who were there.

There were some Roman soldiers there. They had to be. It was their job; a job they carried it out with brutal efficiency. As they drove those nails into Jesus' flesh and divided up His clothes, none of them realized that they were fulfilling prophecies that were hundreds of years old. One of the soldiers who was there, a centurion, did recognize that the man hanging on the middle cross was different as he confessed that Jesus was the Son of God (Matthew 27:54).

There were two other criminals there; they didn't have a choice either. They were being punished for their crimes. One of them even acknowledged that they were getting what they deserved. After he confessed his sins, he also confessed his faith in Jesus, asking Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus assured him that they would soon be reunited in paradise (Luke 23:41-43).

The Jewish leaders were there. They perhaps wanted to make sure that Pilate would follow through on his pledge to execute Jesus. They had waited a long time for this. They

were going to enjoy this. In their minds they had won a great victory, but instead of being gracious winners they got nasty. They taunted Jesus and challenged Jesus to come down from His cross, totally oblivious to the fact that at any moment He could descend and destroy them all.

Even if Pontius Pilate was not physically present at Golgotha, he made his presence known by having a sign posted above Jesus' cross. It read, "**JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS**" (John 19:19). When some wanted him to change what he wrote, the Roman governor suddenly grew a backbone and denied their request. But all was too little, too late.

It would be nice to be able to say that all the disciples were there to give support to their Lord in His dying hours. But they weren't. For the most part, they had deserted Jesus the night before in the garden. They had abandoned Him in His time of need, just as Jesus had predicted. Only one disciple, John, it seems, had come to Calvary.

There was another person there, one that Jesus dearly loved, Jesus' mother. She was there on Good Friday, and what Mary witnessed must have made her heart break. As a young girl she had received the amazing news from the angel Gabriel that God had chosen her to give birth to the promised Messiah. Not long after He was born, though, she was told that the time would come when a sword would pierce her soul (Luke 2:35). As she watched her son slowly dying before her eyes, Mary could fully understand what those words meant.

Working through a list like this helps us remember the people and places and events of Good Friday, but it doesn't

answer the original question: “Were *you* there?” The obvious answer is “No!” We weren’t there! You and I are separated from that day by thousands of miles and thousands of years, so unless we have access to a time machine it would be impossible for us to be there.

There is another way to look at that question, however. Maybe we weren’t there, but our sins were. They were all there; they were all laid on Jesus. He carried them all to the cross. We may not have held the hammer that drove the nails through His hands; we may not have been there taunting Jesus; but all of those things are a part of the punishment we deserve for our sin. Our sin is the reason Jesus suffered and died. You and I are no less guilty than the people who were directly responsible for Jesus’ death.

I have seen a billboard alongside the road that says something like: “Real Christians FORGIVE like Jesus.” It is important to forgive! Jesus often taught about forgiveness. He said that we should “turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39). He says that when it comes to forgiveness we should “forgive ... not 7 times, but 70 times 7” (Matthew 18:21-22). We can also think of the prayer Jesus prayed from the cross: **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”** (Luke 23:34). Thinking about the way Jesus forgave even those people who were there are being so mean to Him can be a great blessing.

Of course when we start thinking about all the times—way too many times—when we have not forgiven like Jesus, times when we have held on to grudges, we must come to this condemning conclusion: If “real Christians forgive like Jesus, “what does that make me? A phony

Christian?" If you claim to be a Christian, and if you are held to the standard of forgiving like Jesus, what does that make you? It makes you and me guilty. None of us can perfectly follow in Jesus' footsteps; none of us are deserving of God's love. We all are in desperate need of a miracle to be rescued from our sins.

The man who performed so many miracles during His ministry didn't look like a miracle worker on Good Friday. He looked weak and helpless. He was stripped of His clothing. He was stripped of His dignity. He was bloodied and beaten. He was unable to carry His cross. He was barely able to stand. Jesus had been defeated. It seemed as though the devil had won the day.

But any celebration in hell turned out to be short-lived. The evil ones had good reason to be afraid because the Messiah was about to perform His greatest miracle of all. To declare His final victory over the devil, to demonstrate His power over death, to announce to the world that reports of His demise had been greatly exaggerated and assure you that all your sins have been forgiven, Jesus holds out to you His nail-pierced hands.

It was a couple days after Good Friday. The disciples, the same people who were nowhere to be found on Calvary, gathered together behind locked doors. They were confused about what had just happened. They were fearful about the future. They became even more afraid when what they thought was a ghost appeared among them. This was no ghost! It was the Lord, and He brought them a message of peace. And then Jesus did something else, something

special, something personal, something that instantly allayed their fears. He showed them His hands.

Scars are not usually attractive, but for the disciples those nail marks were the most beautiful thing they had ever seen. And the beauty of those scars is not lost on us either. Those wounds remind us of the high cost of our redemption. Jesus took on our flesh. Jesus felt our pain. Jesus endured the righteous wrath of God in our place. Jesus prayed for our forgiveness on the cross, and he suffered and died on the cross to earn it.

The unconditional, sacrificial love of Jesus is what makes this day good. When your sins condemn you, He intercedes for you. When Satan seeks to devour you, Jesus will defend you. When you are feeling guilty, spiritually empty, totally unworthy of God's love, remember what Jesus has done to save you. Remember that He will never leave you or forsake you. Remember that He has ascended into heaven to prepare a place for you.

If all of this sounds too good to be true, if you are looking for proof that it is indeed true, all you need to do is look up. Look to the cross. Look to Jesus. Look at your living Savior's nail-pierced hands. And, while none of us was physically "there when God raised Him from the tomb" that resurrection happened! AMEN

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

## **Prayer of the Church**

O Lord Jesus, we will never know the full extent of Your suffering for us. Because You asked Your Father to forgive those who put You on the cross, we know that our sins have been forgiven. Because You promised the criminal who believed in You everlasting life, we have the assurance that, in spite of our sins, we too may have eternal life. As in the midst of Your suffering You had consideration for Your mother, we can be confident You will be with us to the end of the earthly life. Because You were forsaken by God the Father, we know that we shall never be forsaken. Because You thirsted, we know that we now have the water of everlasting life. Because of Your declaration that the work of redemption was finished, we no longer need to be doubtful about our salvation. Because You willingly yielded up Your spirit to death, we have life.

Let Your cross be our comfort and strength at all times of our lives. May we by faith overcome the terrors of death and joyfully commit our souls into Your hands, that, having suffered with You, we may also be glorified with You.

We pray this in Your name as we also pray the prayer You taught us to pray:

## **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.**

### **Benediction**

- P The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to  
you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you  
peace.
- C **Amen**

### **Acknowledgments**

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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