



St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Palm/Passion Sunday – March 29, 2026
420 Beaver St., PO Box 411
Mars, PA 16046-0411

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Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!
Know that you are welcome here just as you are.*

If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time worshipping at St. John, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

*Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**. All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.*

*During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

*At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Online gifts may be made using the QR code below:*



*You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. **Guest information cards** and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

*As Lutherans, we believe Christ is truly present in the elements of the Lord's Supper. At the time of **Holy Communion**, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.*

*If you need a **restroom**, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.*

*A **playroom** is available downstairs for children who need a break from the worship service. This room is by the elevator on the lower level. An adult must remain with the child. Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by the elevator.*

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

All are invited to gather outside the door in the back of the sanctuary, as able, for the Blessing of Palms and the reading of the Processional Gospel.

***BLESSING OF THE PALMS**

Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the Highest!

***PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Matthew 21:1-11**

*All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.*

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

⁵ “Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds were saying, **“This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”**

PRAYER

God of our salvation, mercifully assist us to joyfully enter the contemplation of the mighty acts by which you have given us life everlasting, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**


During the singing of the Processional Hymn, all follow the cross into the church, as we remember and celebrate our Lord's entry into Jerusalem.

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN *All Glory Laud and Honor* (ELW 344)**

Refrain



All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to you, re - deem - er, king,



to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.



- 1 You are the king of Is - rael and Da - vid's roy - al Son,
- 2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels are prais - ing you on high;
- 3 The mul - ti - tude of pil - grims with palms be - fore you went;
- 4 To you, be - fore your pas - sion, they sang their hymns of praise.
- 5 Their prais - es you ac - cept - ed; ac - cept the prayers we bring,



Refrain

now in the Lord's name com - ing, our King and Bless - ed One.
cre - a - tion and all mor - tals in cho - rus make re - ply.
our praise and prayer and an - thems be - fore you we pre - sent.
To you, now high ex - alt - ed, our mel - o - dy we raise.
great au - thor of all good - ness, O good and gra - cious King.

REFLECTION

PRAYERS

Let us pray, Jesus, we have heard you say, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me."

Lord, help us to take up our cross and follow you.

You entered Jerusalem and we cried

Hosanna, Hosanna. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

We cry out for you to save us as you promised, remembering those we hold in our hearts, especially Geneva, Cherry, Henry, Harry, Sally, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, those on our prayer list, and ourselves.

Lord, remember us when you come into your kingdom.

OFFERING

As the crowds offered their cloaks in thanks and praise for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, let us offer with joy what God has first given us, our selves, our time, and our possessions.

OFFERTORY HYMN *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* (ELW 338)

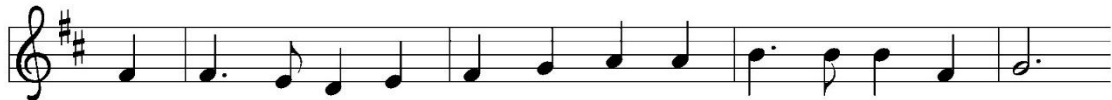
Please stand at the 3rd verse.



- 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
- 3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;



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.
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;



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:
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,



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.
my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

We give thanks for all that God has done, is doing, and will do.

May God use us and what we gather in feeding the world with God's love.

***SCRIPTURE READING Philippians 2:5-11**

Let us proclaim the word of the Lord:

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 26:14-27:66

*Please be seated for the gospel reading. All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.*

(Matthew 26:17-29)

One of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

¹⁷ On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” ¹⁸ He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’ ” ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰ When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve disciples, ²¹ and while they were eating he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” ²² And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “**Surely not I, Lord?**” ²³ He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” ²⁵ Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

REFLECTION

***APOSTLES’ CREED**

Gathered as one in the body of Christ in God’s abundant mercy, let us confess our faith:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again;

**he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***THE PREPARING OF THE MEAL**

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

Your love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up.

Even as your Son gathered with his friends for one more meal, as he prepared to give the full measure of his devotion and love to this broken world, just before his own friend betrayed him, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we who share in Christ's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Be with us and show us the way to the life you long for us.

Show us a life of expansive faith. Show us a life that is abundant in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. Breathe new life into us.

Amen. Come, Jesus.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:
**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

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

At this table there is abundance. You are invited to this meal of grace. Every one of us – with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions – we are invited to God’s table. Now come. Not because you must, but because you can. Come. You are invited. God’s love is for you!

Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God’s sacramental grace. In response to Jesus’ invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Those who do not receive the bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*

The image shows five staves of musical notation for the Communion Song 'Lamb of God'. The music is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are printed below the notes. The first staff begins with 'Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the' and ends with a fermata. The second staff continues with 'world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you' and ends with a fermata. The third staff continues with 'take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.' and ends with a fermata. The fourth staff begins with 'Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the' and ends with a fermata. The fifth staff concludes with 'world; grant us peace, grant us peace.' and ends with a double bar line.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN *Lord, Who the Night You Were Betrayed* (ELW 463)



1 Lord, who the night you were be - trayed did pray that all your
2 For all your church on earth, we in - ter - cede; Lord, make our
3 And hear our prayer for wan-d'ers from your fold; re - store them,
4 So, Lord, at length when sac - ra - ments shall cease, may we be



church might be for - ev - er one: help us at
sad di - vi - sions soon to cease; draw us all
too, Good Shep - herd of the sheep, back to the
one with all your church a - bove— one with your



ev - 'ry eu - cha - rist to say with will - ing heart and
clos - er, each to each, we plead, by draw - ing all to
faith your saints con - fessed of old, and to the church still
saints in one un - bro - ken peace, one with your saints in



soul, "Your will be done." Oh, may we all one bread, one
you, O Prince of peace; thus may we all one bread, one
pledged that faith to keep. Soon may we all one bread, one
one un - bound - ed love; more bless - ed still, in peace and



bod - y be, through this blest sac - ra - ment of u - ni - ty.
bod - y be, through this blest sac - ra - ment of u - ni - ty.
bod - y be, through this blest sac - ra - ment of u - ni - ty.
love to be one with the Trin - i - ty in u - ni - ty.

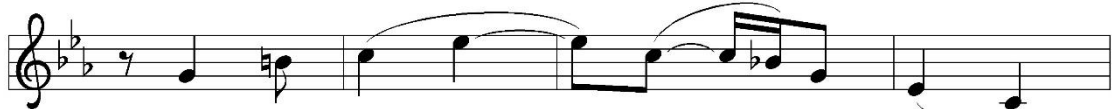
COMMUNION HYMN *Calvary* (ELW 354)



Refrain Cal - va - ry, Cal - va - ry,
 1 Ev - 'ry time I think a-bout Je - sus,
 2 Sin - ner, do you love . . . my Je - sus?
 3 Don't you hear him say, "It is fin - ished!"
 4 Je - sus fur - nished my sal - va - tion,



Cal - va - ry, Cal - va - ry,
 ev - 'ry time I think a-bout Je - sus,
 Sin - ner, do you love . . . my Je - sus?
 Don't you hear him say, "It is fin - ished!"
 Je - sus fur - nished my sal - va - tion,



Cal - va - ry, Cal - va - ry,
 ev - 'ry time I think a-bout Je - sus;
 Sin - ner, do you love . . . my Je - sus?
 Don't you hear him say, "It is fin - ished!"
 Je - sus fur - nished my sal - va - tion;



sure - ly he died on Cal - va - ry.
 sure - ly he died on Cal - va - ry. *Refrain*
 Sure - ly he died on Cal - va - ry. *Refrain*
 Sure - ly he died on Cal - va - ry. *Refrain*
 sure - ly he died on Cal - va - ry. *Refrain*

(Matthew 26:30-56)

Then, after singing songs of praise, they went to the Mount of Olives.

³¹ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Tonight you will all fall away because of me. This is because it is written, *I will hit the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will go off in all directions.* ³² But after I’m raised up, I’ll go before you to Galilee.”

³³ Peter replied, “If everyone else stumbles because of you, I’ll never stumble.”

³⁴ Jesus said to him, “I assure you that, before the rooster crows tonight, you will deny me three times.”

³⁵ Peter said, “Even if I must die alongside you, I won’t deny you.” All the disciples said the same thing.

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. He said to the disciples, “Stay here while I go and pray over there.” ³⁷ When he took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, he began to feel sad and anxious. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “I’m very sad. It’s as if I’m dying. Stay here and keep alert with me.” ³⁹ Then he went a short distance farther and fell on his face and prayed, “My Father, if it’s possible, take this cup of suffering away from me. However—not what I want but what you want.”

⁴⁰ He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “Couldn’t you stay alert one hour with me? ⁴¹ Stay alert and pray so that you won’t give in to temptation. The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴² A second time he went away and prayed, “My Father, if it’s not possible that this cup be taken away unless I drink it, then let it be what you want.”

⁴³ Again he came and found them sleeping. Their eyes were heavy with sleep. ⁴⁴ But he left them and again went and prayed the same words for the third time. ⁴⁵ Then he came to his disciples and said to them, “Will you sleep and rest all night? Look, the time has come for the Human One to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Get up. Let’s go. Look, here comes my betrayer.”

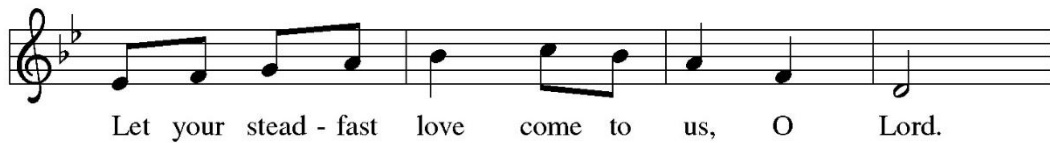
⁴⁷ While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came. With him was a large crowd carrying swords and clubs. They had been sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸ His betrayer had given them a sign: “Arrest the man I kiss.” ⁴⁹ Just then he came to Jesus and said, “Hello, Rabbi.” Then he kissed him.

⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came and grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

⁵¹ One of those with Jesus reached for his sword. Striking the high priest’s slave, he cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put the sword back into its place. All those who use the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I’m not able to ask my Father and he will send to me more than twelve battle groups of angels right away? ⁵⁴ But if I did that, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this must happen?” ⁵⁵ Then Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come with swords and clubs to arrest me, like a thief? Day after day, I sat in the temple teaching, but you didn’t arrest me. ⁵⁶ But all this has happened so that what the prophets said in the scriptures might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left Jesus and ran away.

REFLECTION

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



(Matthew 26:57-75)

Those who arrested Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest. The legal experts and the elders had gathered there. ⁵⁸ Peter followed him from a distance until he came to the high priest's courtyard. He entered that area and sat outside with the officers to see how it would turn out. ⁵⁹ The chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ They didn't find anything they could use from the many false witnesses who were willing to come forward. But finally they found two ⁶¹ who said, "This man said, 'I can destroy God's temple and rebuild it in three days.'"

⁶² Then the high priest stood and said to Jesus, "Aren't you going to respond to the testimony these people have brought against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus was silent.

The high priest said, "By the living God, I demand that you tell us whether you are the Christ, God's Son."

⁶⁴ "You said it," Jesus replied. "But I say to you that from now on you'll see *the Human One sitting on the right side of the Almighty and coming on the heavenly clouds.*"

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He's insulting God! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, you've heard his insult against God. ⁶⁶ What do you think?"

And they answered, "He deserves to die!" ⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and beat him. They hit him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy for us, Christ! Who hit you?"

⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant woman came and said to him, "You were also with Jesus the Galilean."

⁷⁰ But he denied it in front of all of them, saying, "I don't know what you are talking about."

⁷¹ When he went over to the gate, another woman saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus, the man from Nazareth."

⁷² With a solemn pledge, he denied it again, saying, "I don't know the man."

⁷³ A short time later those standing there came and said to Peter, "You must be one of them. The way you talk gives you away."

⁷⁴ Then he cursed and swore, "I don't know the man!" At that very moment the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Peter remembered Jesus' words, "Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times." And Peter went out and cried uncontrollably.

REFLECTION

CONFESSION

We come to confession not to wallow in our own guilt. There is life to be gained here. And so trusting in God's tireless mercy, let us confess our sins, all the times we have denied or betrayed our relationship with Christ, before God and before one another, opening ourselves to God's healing love:

Holy God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

We have sought worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you.

We have desired self-reliance instead of hungering for your word.

We have failed to recognize your coming reign and hindered the work of the Spirit.

We have drawn from the well of self-serving ambition and disdained the living water Christ offers.

We have disregarded voices from the margin and distrusted signs of your healing and hope in the world.

We have dwelt in tombs of self-pity and discontent and disregarded Christ's call to life. Have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

HYMN *Jesus Remember Me* (ELW 616)

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

(Matthew 27:1 – 27:25)

*All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.*

Early in the morning all the chief priests and the elders of the people reached the decision to have Jesus put to death. ² They bound him, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate the governor.

³ When Judas, who betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus was condemned to die, he felt deep regret. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, and ⁴ said, “I did wrong because I betrayed an innocent man.”

But they said, “What is that to us? That’s your problem.” ⁵ Judas threw the silver pieces into the temple and left. Then he went and hanged himself.

⁶ The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said, “According to the Law it’s not right to put this money in the treasury. Since it was used to pay for someone’s life, it’s unclean.” ⁷ So they decided to use it to buy the potter’s field where strangers could be buried. ⁸ That’s why that field is called “Field of Blood” to this very day. ⁹ This fulfilled the words of Jeremiah the prophet: *And I took the thirty pieces of silver, the price for the one whose price had been set by some of the Israelites,* ¹⁰ *and I gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.*

¹¹ Jesus was brought before the governor [named Pilate]. The governor said, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus replied, “That’s what you say.” ¹² But he didn’t answer when the chief priests and elders accused him.

¹³ Then Pilate said, “Don’t you hear the testimony they bring against you?” ¹⁴ But he didn’t answer, not even a single word. So the governor was greatly amazed.

¹⁵ It was customary during the festival for the governor to release to the crowd one prisoner, whomever they might choose. ¹⁶ At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷ When the crowd had come together, Pilate asked them, “Whom would you like me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?” ¹⁸ He knew that the leaders of the people had handed him over because of jealousy.

¹⁹ While he was serving as judge, his wife sent this message to him, “Leave that righteous man alone. I’ve suffered much today in a dream because of him.”

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and kill Jesus. ²¹ The governor said, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

“**Barabbas**,” they replied.

²² Pilate said, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

They all said, “**Crucify him!**”

²³ But he said, “Why? What wrong has he done?”

They shouted even louder, “**Crucify him!**”

²⁴ Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was starting. So he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I’m innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It’s your problem.”

²⁵ All the people replied, “**Let his blood be on us and on our children.**”

REFLECTION

FORGIVENESS

Friends, we have confessed our sins. We have acknowledged our own place in the crowds that in one breath cry for God's saving grace, and in the next shout "Crucify him." The blood is on our hands. But even in this moment, even in the middle of hurt, betrayal, and death, God sees you. God hears you. And God loves you. No matter how many times we mess up, no matter how lost we feel, God's grace is full to the brim. It finds us where we are, covers us in mercy and promises forgiveness. There is no waiting. Forgiveness comes to us today, in this moment. The same blood that is on our hands has been poured out for us in blessing upon blessing and brings us to new, abundant, everlasting life in Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, you are forgiven and freed now.
Thanks be to God.

HYMN *Jesus Remember Me* (ELW 616)

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 7/8 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves, identical in notation to the first system. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

(Matthew 27:26-44)

Then he released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus whipped, then handed him over to be crucified.

²⁷ The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's house, and they gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a red military coat on him. ²⁹ They twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand. Then they bowed down in front of him and mocked him, saying, "Hey! King of the Jews!" ³⁰ After they spit on him, they took the stick and struck his head again and again. ³¹ When they finished mocking him, they stripped him of the military coat and put his own clothes back on him. They led him away to crucify him.

³² As they were going out, they found Simon, a man from Cyrene. They forced him to carry his cross. ³³ When they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Skull Place, ³⁴ they gave Jesus wine mixed with vinegar to drink. But after tasting it, he didn't want to drink it. ³⁵ After they crucified him, they divided up his clothes among them by drawing lots. ³⁶ They sat there, guarding him. ³⁷ They placed above his head the charge against him. It read, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." ³⁸ They crucified with him two outlaws, one on his right side and one on his left.

³⁹ Those who were walking by insulted Jesus, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "So you were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, were you? Save yourself! If you are God's Son, come down from the cross."

⁴¹ In the same way, the chief priests, along with the legal experts and the elders, were making fun of him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others, but he can't save himself. He's the king of Israel, so let him come down from the cross now. Then we'll believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God, so let God deliver him now if he wants to. He said, 'I'm God's Son.'" ⁴⁴ The outlaws who were crucified with him insulted him in the same way.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

(Matthew 27:45-56)

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon the whole earth was dark. ⁴⁶ At about three Jesus cried out with a loud shout, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you left me?”

⁴⁷ After hearing him, some standing there said, “He’s calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸ One of them ran over, took a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a pole. He offered it to Jesus to drink.

⁴⁹ But the rest of them said, “Let’s see if Elijah will come and save him.”

⁵⁰ Again Jesus cried out with a loud voice and breathed his last.

⁵¹ Look, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split, ⁵² and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³ After Jesus’ resurrection they came out of their graves and went into the holy city where they appeared to many people. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and what had just happened, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly, this man was God’s Son!”

⁵⁵ Many women were watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to serve him. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

Silence for Reflection

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Via Dolorosa, Words and Music by Billy Sprague and Niles Borop. Arr. by Ken Barker

Down the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem that day, the soldiers tried to clear the narrow street; but the crowd pressed in to see the man condemned to die on Calvary. Down the Via Dolorosa, called, “The Way of Suffering,” like a lamb, came the Messiah, Christ the King, and He chose to walk that road out of His love for you and me, down the Via Dolorosa all the way to Calvary.

He was bleeding from a beating there were stripes upon His back, and He wore a crown of thorns upon His head; and He bore with every step the scorn of those who cried out for His death. Down the Via Dolorosa, called, “The Way of Suffering,” Like a lamb, came the Messiah, Christ the King, and He chose to walk that road out of His love for you and me, down the Via Dolorosa all the way to Calvary.

The blood that would cleanse the souls of all men made its way thru the heart of Jerusalem! Down the Via Dolorosa, called, “The Way of Suffering,” like a lamb, came the Messiah, Christ the King, and He chose to walk that road out of His love for you and me. Down the Via Dolorosa, all the way to Calvary.

(Matthew 27:57-61)

That evening a man named Joseph came. He was a rich man from Arimathea who had become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He came to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission to take it. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out of the rock. After he rolled a large stone at the door of the tomb, he went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting in front of the tomb.

***SENDING SONG *Were You There* (ELW 353)**



- 1 Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
- 2 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
- 3 Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
- 4 Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
- 5 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?



- Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?



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



- Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

(Matthew 27:62-66)

The next day, which was the day after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate. ⁶³ They said, "Sir, we remember that while that deceiver was still alive he said, 'After three days I will arise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore, order the grave to be sealed until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people, 'He's been raised from the dead.' This last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵ Pilate replied, "You have soldiers for guard duty. Go and make it as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ Then they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting the guard.

***SENDING PRAYER**

Let us pray: O God of mercy and might, in the mystery of the passion of your Son you offer your infinite life to the world. *(Silence for reflection)*

We cried out for you to save us as you promised
Lord remember us when you come into your kingdom.

You stood before Pilate, your life condemned, your word rejected, your innocence ignored:
Keep us from rejecting your word of truth and salvation.

Stripped and jeered, you endured humiliation without complaint.
Humble us in our work and daily lives.

Nailed to the cross, you took your place among the condemned.
Take your place beside us sinners, and remember us according to your mercy and love.

When your sacrifice was complete, you handed your life to the Father,
and he did not forsake you.
Keep us close to your cross, now and at the hour of our death.

Faithful friends and loving women took loving care of Jesus' lifeless body.
Anoint us with grace and wrap us in your arms of love.

In the tomb you were laid, but from the tomb you arose.
Gather us around the cross of Christ, and preserve us until the resurrection

***BLESSING**

May God our tender parent, God the crucified one, and God the reconciling Spirit fill you with courage, fill you with peace, and fill you to the brim with grace and blessing. **Amen.**

Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

**The Altar Flowers were supplied by Jeff and Deb Martin
in celebration of their daughter Brittany's birthday.**

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Keith C

Acolyte: Nathan K

Offering: Ava N and Ella N

Attendance last week: 67 +2 Zoom

Notes for the day's texts:

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

Today's Music

All Glory Laud and Honor. Text: Theodulph of Orleans, c. 760–821; tr. John Mason Neale, alt., Music: Melchior Teschner. Public Domain.

Beneath the Cross of Jesus. Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830–1869, Music: Frederick C. Maker, 1844–1927. Public Domain.

Lord, Who the Night You Were Betrayed. Text: William H. Turton, 1856–1938, alt., Music: Orlando Gibbons, 1583–1625 I. Public Domain.

Calvary. Text: African American spiritual, Music: African American spiritual. Public Domain.

Were You There. Text: African American spiritual, Music: African American spiritual. Public Domain / Augsburg Fortress.

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We continue our worship with the services of Holy Week:

(Learn more about each service at stjohnchurchmars.org/holyweek)

Maundy Thursday: April 2nd

Service of Absolution, Commitment to Ministry, and Preparation, 7:00 pm

Good Friday: April 3rd

Family Cross Walk, 3:00-5:00 pm

Tenebrae Service, 7:00-7:45 pm

Easter Vigil: April 4th

Service of Storytelling and Communion, 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday: April 5th

Sunrise Service in the Park, 6:30 am

Festal Worship with Holy Communion, 9:00 am