

"Even today,
God is still here..."



Good Friday
April 15, 2022



Ascension Lutheran Church
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Welcome to Worship...

Welcome to all God's guests, including those who call themselves "members" of this church named Ascension Lutheran Church more than 50 years ago.

A special welcome to guests who are here for the first time or who call yourselves "visitors" among the people of this community. It is at God's invitation, through worship, the Holy Spirit calls each of us to come to a place of **community, communion** and **commitment**. Each of us brings a different lens to worship, and yet, in a worshipping community, these differences become celebrations of diversity.

Children are always welcome in worship services;
however please know
a nursery is provided for children under 4 years of age.

Please silence your cell phones at this time.

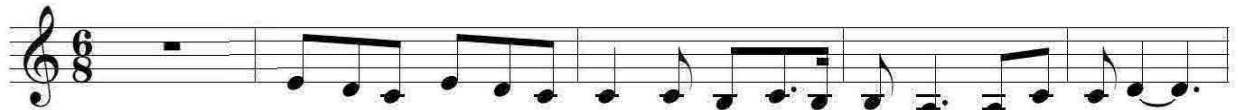
Introduction to this Day

Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John's passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ's death offers life to all. We gather in solemn devotion, but always with the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life. We depart silently, and we anticipate the culmination of the Three Days in the Easter Vigil.

Welcome

Some days are just lousy and that doesn't even begin to cover it. What if even our lousiest days could be experienced as a holy observance of the reality that this IS life? Perhaps the "good news" in the midst of devastation is that God is buried with us in our deepest pain, wrapping us, holding us until we can once again move from, birth into renewed life.

Please stand as you are able.



(All)

What in our lives do we dream a-bout for to-mor-row, void of sor-row?



Time spent re-grett-ing de-ci-sions of our yes-ter-days, mi-stakes we made?



Some-times we get what we get, life dis-ap-oints us and yet, _____



God is still here and some-how, this faith is good__ e-nough.

Calling on God

P Let us pray:
Holy One, Trusted Guide of our ancestors,

All at times we feel forsaken.
You were with us in our mother's womb.
You desire for us the safety of loving arms,
and yet life has thrown us again and again
into the loss of connection.

Gardens once filled with beauty and joy grow silent with grief.
Be with us this night as we mourn what cannot be. Amen.

“Even today, God is here and somehow, that is good enough.”

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

♪ ♪ When I survey the wondrous cross ♪ ♪
on which the prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss
and pour contempt on all my pride.

∞ Tenebrae

A Reading of Darkness or Shadows—John 18:12–19:42

The 1st Shadow

Last night in our Maundy Thursday service, we gathered with Jesus in the Upper Room. There is only one other place in the Gospels where the Greek word used to describe the Upper Room was also repeated—the place, the room where Jesus was born.

Two places where the dark birthed something new... the dark womb and the dark tomb.

Tonight we continue the story that began last night in a tradition of “tenebrae” or “darkness,” descending with Jesus into the depths of our own stories of grief, disappointment, and betrayal.

The 2nd Shadow

So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Judean authorities seized Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas; for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the religious authorities that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

The 3rd Shadow

Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple.

As this disciple was known to the high priest, he entered the court of the high priest along with Jesus, while Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in.

The woman who guarded the gate said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not." Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves; Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The 4th Shadow

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jewish people come together; I have said nothing secretly. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

The 5th Shadow

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Are not you also one of his disciples?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed.

The 6th Shadow

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered him, "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The religious authorities said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die.

The 7th Shadow

Pilate entered the headquarters again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the religious authorities; but my kingship is not from the world." Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

♪ ♪ Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast ♪ ♪
save in the death of Christ, my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

The 8th Shadow

After Pilate had said this, he went to the religious authorities again, and told them, "I find no crime in him. But you have a custom that I should release one

man for you at the Passover; will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?" They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

The 9th Shadow

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited 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 crime 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 crime in him." The religious authorities answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

The 10th Shadow

Upon this Pilate sought to release him, but the religious authorities cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gab'-ba-tha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the religious authorities, "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." They handed him over to them to be crucified.

The 11th Shadow

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

♪ ♪ See, from his head, his hands, his feet, ♪ ♪
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

The 12th Shadow

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven 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,

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

The 13th Shadow

So the soldiers did this. 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 near, 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.

The 14th Shadow

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture),

“I thirst.”

A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth.

When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said,

“It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

♪ ♪ Were the whole realm of nature mine, ♪ ♪
that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Epilogue

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the religious authorities 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 tells the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced.”

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the religious authorities, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. 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 where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Wrapped in Cloths of Care

And so we find ourselves in another place of burial.

I invite you to write a word or phrase of something in your life that you mourn on your piece of cloth that you've been given and then wrap that around your wrist to wear out into the night. Perhaps even until Easter morning. In this way we draw in another bookend in this story... the swaddling clothes that wrapped Jesus at his birth and the linen burial cloths in the story of his death.

Indeed, in the silence of the shadows of the tomb, the depths of our grief, remember that in the midst of devastation, God is buried with us in our deepest pain, wrapping us, holding us as we move from birth, once again, into renewed life.

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.

Text: George Bennard, 1873-1958
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*You are invited to stay and pray for as long as you wish,
then leave in silence*

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A Blessing for When You Mourn What Could Have Been

Blessed are you, friend, sitting among the shards of what could have been.

*It is broken now, that dream you loved,
and it has spilled out all over the ground.*

*Blessed are you, dear one,
letting your eyes look around and remember
all the hope your dream once contained.
All the love.
All the beauty.*

*Blessed are you, telling your tears they can flow.
Telling your anger it can speak.*

*Blessed are you when mourning is the holy work of the moment,
for it speaks of what is real.*

Blessed are you, letting this loss speak all its terrible truth to your soul.

*Blessed are we who mourn,
saying let us remain in grief's cold winter for as long as it takes,
that mourning might be to our hearts the gentlest springtime.
Let the thaw come slowly,
so we can bear the pain of it and find comfort at each release. Amen.*