

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Oberlin, Ohio

April 7, 2023

As We Gather:

The Tenebrae Service is a Christian tradition dating back to the 4th Century. “*Tenebrae*” in Latin means “*darkness*.” The progressive extinguishing of candles is a reminder of the darkness that covered the earth at the crucifixion of Jesus. It also is designed to impress upon us the consequences of human sin and the greatness of our Savior’s sacrifice.

The Scripture Reading for this evening is the Passion Narrative from **Matthew’s Gospel**, divided into seven sections – seven being the biblical number of completion. The responses after each of these readings is taken from the Servant Song of **Isaiah 53**, prophetically pointing to Christ.

Tonight, we see, feel, and hear the darkness overcome the Light of the world on the cross, through which God works justification and new life.

Welcome:

Opening Hymn: “Go to Dark Gethsemane”

(LSB # 436, st. 1-3)

1. Go to dark Gethsemane,
All who feel the tempter’s pow’r;
Your Redeemer’s conflict see.
Watch with him one bitter hour;
Turn not from his griefs away;
Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.
2. Follow to the judgment hall,
View the Lord of life arraigned;
Oh, the wormwood and the gall!
Oh, the pangs his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;

Learn from him to bear the cross.

3. Calv’ry’s mournful mountain climb;
There, adoring at his feet,
Mark that miracle of time,
God’s own sacrifice complete.
“It is finished!” hear him cry;
Learn from Jesus Christ to die.

Brief Children’s Message:

Confession of Faith:

2nd Article of the Creed & Meaning

ALL: 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.

P: What does this mean?

C: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity,

P: and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary,

C: Is my Lord,

P: Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person,

C: Purchased and won me from all sins,

P: From death, and from the power of the devil;

C: Not with gold or silver,

P: But with His holy, precious blood

C: And with His innocent suffering and death,

P: That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom

C: And serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence,

P: And blessedness.

ALL: This is most certainly true.

Hymn: "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted"
(LSB # 451, st. 1-2)

1. Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
'Tis the true and faithful Word.
2. Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that Justice gave.

First Passion Reading: Matthew 26:30-46

- R: Therefore I will divide HIM a portion with the many, and
HE shall divide the spoil with the strong,
**C: Because HE poured out HIS soul to death and was
numbered with the transgressors;**
R: Yet HE bore the sin of many,
C: And makes intercession for the transgressors.

Hymn: "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted"
(LSB # 451, st. 3-4)

1. Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed,
See who bears the awful load;
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed,
Son of Man and Son of God.
2. Here we have a firm foundation,
Here the refuge of the lost;
Christ, the Rock of our salvation,
His the name of which we boast:
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built.

(THE FIRST CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED)

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Second Passion Reading: Matthew 26:47-56

- R: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—
every one—to his own way;
C: And the LORD has laid on HIM the iniquity of us all.

Hymn: “O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken”
(LSB # 439, st. 1-3)

1. O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession,
What dark transgression?
2. They crown Thy head with thorns, they smite, they
scourge Thee;
With cruel mockings to the cross they urge Thee;
They give Thee gall to drink, they still decry Thee;
They crucify Thee.

(THE SECOND CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED)

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Third Passion Reading: Matthew 26:57-75

- R: HE was despised and rejected by men,
C: A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
R: And as one from whom men hide their faces
C: HE was despised, and we esteemed HIM not.

Hymn: “O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken”
(LSB # 439, st. 3-5)

1. Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is my sins for which Thou, Lord, must languish;
Yea, all the wrath, the woe, Thou dost inherit,
This I do merit.
2. What punishment so strange is suffered yonder!
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander;
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him,
Who would not know Him.
3. The sinless Son of God must die in sadness;
The sinful child of man may live in gladness;
Man forfeited his life and is acquitted;
God is committed.

(THE THIRD CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED)

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Fourth Passion Reading: Matthew 27:1-14

- R: By oppression and judgment HE was taken away;
C: And as for HIS generation,
R: Who considered that HE was cut off out of the land of the
living,
C: Stricken for the transgression of my people?

Hymn: "Upon the Cross Extended"
(LSB # 453, st. 1-2)

1. Upon the cross extended
See, world, your Lord suspended,
Your Savior yields His breath.
The Prince of Life from heaven
Himself hath freely given
To shame and blows and bitter death.
2. Come, see these things and ponder,
Your soul will fill with wonder
As blood streams from each pore.
Through grief beyond all knowing
From His great heart came flowing
Sighs welling from its deepest core.

(THE FOURTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED)

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Fifth Passion Reading: Matthew 27:15-31

- R: HE was oppressed, and HE was afflicted, yet HE opened not HIS mouth;
- C: **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.**

Hymn: "O Perfect Life of Love"
(LSB # 452, st. 1-4)

1. O perfect life of love!
All, all, is finished now,
All that He left His throne above
To do for us below.
2. No work is left undone
Of all the Father willed;
His toil, His sorrows, one by one,
The Scriptures have fulfilled.
3. No pain that we can share
But He has felt its smart;
All forms of human grief and care
Have pierced that tender heart.
4. And on His thorn-crowned head
And on His sinless soul
Our sins in all their guilt were laid
That he might make us whole.

(THE FIFTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED)

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Sixth Passion Reading: Matthew 27:32-44

- R: Surely HE has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;
- C: **Yet we esteemed HIM stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**

Hymn: "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"
(LSB # 450, st. 1-2; © CPH, 1941)

1. O sacred head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns,
thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory,
what bliss, till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.
2. How pale thou art with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn;
How does thy face now languish,
that once was bright as morn!
Grim death, with cruel rigor,
hath robbed Thee of Thy life;
Thus Thou has lost Thy vigor,
Thy strength in this sad strife.

(THE SIXTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED)

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Seventh Passion Reading: Matthew 27:45-60

- P: But HE was pierced for our transgressions;
C: HE was crushed for our iniquities;
P: Upon HIM was the chastisement that brought us peace,
C: And with HIS wounds we are healed.

Hymn: "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"
(LSB # 450, st. 3, 5; © CPH, 1941)

1. What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered
Was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
And grant to me Thy grace.
2. What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
Oh, make me Thine forever,
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to thee.

(THE SEVENTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED)

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Meditation: "Darkness under the Microscope"

Prayer:

(Each petition of the prayers concludes with the response:)

- P: Lord, in your mercy,
C: hear our prayer.

Final Hymn: “Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed”

(LSB # 437, st. 1-4)

1. Alas! and did my Savior bleed,
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

2. Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

3. Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in
When God, the mighty Maker, died
For his own creatures' sin.

4. Thus might I hide my blushing face
While His dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt mine eyes to tears.

The *strepitus* – loud noise – represents the closing of the tomb after Christ’s burial in it. Only the **Christ candle**, under the altar, remains lit - to help signify that even during Christ’s burial in the tomb Death could not overcome the Lord of Life.

In the silence that ensues the congregation is invited to stay as long as they like and offer their own prayers of sorrow, contrition, trust, and thankfulness. Then, whenever people are ready, the congregation is asked to leave the church in **silence**.

Everyone is invited back for an **Easter Service** (10:30 am) on Sunday as we celebrate the culmination of Christ’s Passion and victory.

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* Special thanks to our organist, acolyte, and readers this evening.