

Christ Lutheran Church, TAALC
Germantown, Md.
April 3, 2026
A Service of Tenebrae for Good Friday

Tenebrae is a Latin word meaning 'darkness' or 'shadows'. A service of Tenebrae is a service of meditation and reflection, Scripture interspersed with song lyrics, for our reflection on what Christ has done for us.

The service this evening will all be spoken, even the verses listed for the hymns. Read them with expression and think about the meaning of the words. Please stand where indicated ***

*** **Pastor:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Response: Blessed be the name of the Lord our God. Who redeems us from sin and death. For us and for our salvation, Christ became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

Pastor: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

What Wondrous Love Is This (vs 1-2)
(Spoken by the Congregation)

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

Pastor: **The Shadow of Betrayal**

Matthew 26: 20-25

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 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.' Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

Ah, Holy Jesus (vs. 1-2)
(Spoken by the congregation)

Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended
that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected,
O most afflicted.

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee;
I crucified thee.

First candle extinguished

You may be seated

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Vicar:

The Shadow of the Agony of Spirit and Arrest

Matthew 26: 36-50

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.'

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.

Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.' While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' 49At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Go To Dark Gethsemene (vs. 1-2) (Spoken by the Congregation)

Go to dark Gethsemene, all who feel the temper'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.

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.

Second candle extinguished

Pastor:

The Shadow of Denial

Matthew 26: 69-75

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, 'You also were with Jesus the Galilean.' But he denied it before all of them, saying, 'I do not know what you are talking about.' When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, 'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.' Again he denied it with an oath, 'I do not know the man.' After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.' Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, 'I do not know the man!' At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: 'Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.

O Love How Deep (vs. 4-5) (Spoken by the Congregation)

For us he prayed; for us he taught;
for us his daily works he wrought,
by words and signs and actions thus
still seeking not himself, but us.

For us by wickedness betrayed,
for us, in crown of thorns arrayed,
he bore the shameful cross and death;
for us gave his dying breath.

Third candle extinguished

Vicar:

The Shadow of Accusation

Matthew 27: 11-14, 20-29

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You say so.' 12But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. — Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!' So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

O Sacred Head Now Wounded (vs. 1-2)

(Spoken by the Congregation)

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.

How pale thou art with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn;
how does thy face now languish, which once was bright as morn!
Thy grief and bitter passion were all for sinners' gain; mine,
mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain.

Fourth candle extinguished

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Pastor:

The Shadow of Crucifixion and Humiliation

Matthew 27: 31-43

After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son."'

Deep Were The Wounds (vs.1-2)
(Spoken by the congregation)

Deep were His wounds, and red,
On cruel Calvary, As on the Cross He bled
In bitter agony; But he, whom sin has wounded sore,
Find healing in the wounds He bore.

He suffered shame and scorn, And wretched, dire disgrace;
Forsaken and forlorn, He hung there in our place.
But such as would from sin be free
Look to His Cross for victory.

Fifth candle extinguished

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Vicar: The Shadow of Death

Matthew 27: 45-54

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. 49But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and 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 were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

Were You There (vs. 1-3)
(Spoken by the Congregation)

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Sixth candle extinguished

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Pastor:

The Shadow of Burial

***** Matthew 27: 57-60 57**

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. 58He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

Were You There (vs. 4-5)

(This verse is sung by the congregation)

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Paschal Candle extinguished

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May Jesus Christ who for our sakes became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, keep you and strengthen you Always. Amen.

Please exit the church quietly.

Note: I know you will have preparations for Easter Day with family, but also take time to meditate on all that these day mean for your life, now and forever.

Plan to share with us for the glorious celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord either at the 6:30am Sunrise service or the Holy Eucharist Celebration at 10:30am Sunday morning.

May our Good Lord bless you richly.