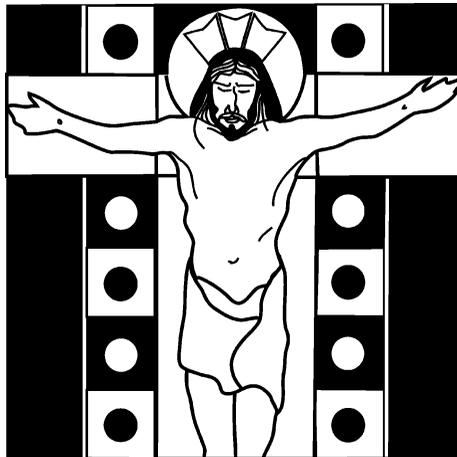




485 Turnbull Bay Road, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168
www.trinitylutheransb.org (386) 428-4307
The Rev. Robert Vogl Brian Larson, Cantor
11am: Assist Min: Grace Kellermeier Lector: Fay Faller
7pm: Assist Min: Dave Faller Lector: Cheryl Tucker
April 3, 2026 at 11am & 7pm

Please enter in silence for prayer and meditation.

Good Friday *Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In the 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 on Easter.*



Gathering Hymn 351

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded



1 O sa - cred head, now wound - ed, with grief and shame weighed down,
2 How pale thou art with an - guish, with sore a - buse and scorn;
3 What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank thee, dear - est friend,
4 Lord, be my con - so - la - tion; shield me when I must die;



now scorn - ful - ly sur - round - ed with thorns, thine on - ly crown;
how does thy face now lan - guish, which once was bright as morn!
for this thy dy - ing sor - row, thy pit - y with - out end?
re - mind me of thy pas - sion when my last hour draws nigh.



O sa - cred head, what glo - ry, what bliss till now was thine!
Thy grief and bit - ter pas - sion were all for sin - ners' gain;
Oh, make me thine for - ev - er, and should I faint - ing be,
These eyes, new faith re - ceiv - ing, from thee shall nev - er move;



Yet, though de - spised and gor - y, I joy to call thee mine.
mine, mine was the trans - gres - sion, but thine the dead - ly pain.
Lord, let me nev - er, nev - er out - live my love to thee.
for all who die be - liev - ing die safe - ly in thy love.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676, based on Arnulf of Louvain, d. 1250; tr. composite

Music: HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN, German melody, c. 1500; adapt. Hans Leo Hassler, 1564–1612

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Almighty God, look with loving mercy on your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given over to the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and forever. **Amen.**

Sit

First Reading: Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

A reading from Isaiah. See, my servant shall prosper, shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high. ¹⁴Just as there were many who were astonished at him--so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals--¹⁵so he shall startle many nations; rulers shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. ¹Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For the servant grew up before the Lord like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should behold, nothing in appearance that we should desire. ³He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. ⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases, yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a ewe that is silent before the shearers, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with affliction. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. ¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with

the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out himself to death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 22:1-2, 14-21

A reading from Psalm 22.

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me,
from the words of my groaning?
- ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night but find no rest.
- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;
- ¹⁵ my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.
- ¹⁶ For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me; they bound my hands and feet.
- ¹⁷ I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
- ¹⁸ they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
- ¹⁹ But you, O Lord, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
- ²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
- ²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation sung by the choir Setting by Aaron David Miller

*Look to Jesus, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross,
disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God.*

Hebrews 12:2

Gospel: John 18:1 – 19:42

The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

(The usual acclamations before and after the Gospel, “Glory to you, O Lord” and “Praise to you, O Christ” are omitted as a sign of the solemnity of the day.)

¹ [Jesus] went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place because Jesus often met there with his disciples.³ So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?”⁵ They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.⁶ When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they stepped back and fell to the ground.⁷ Again he asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”⁸ Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these people go.”⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, “I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.”¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus.¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

¹² So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.¹³ First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest,¹⁶ but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in.¹⁷ The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”¹⁸ Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." ²² When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³ Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." ²⁶ One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

²⁸ Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰ They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." ³¹ Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." ³² (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." ³⁷ Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no case against him. ³⁹ But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ⁴⁰ They shouted in reply, “Not this man but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a rebel.

^{19:1} Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³ They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. ⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” ⁵ So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” ⁶ When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.” ⁷ The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

⁸ Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹ He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ Pilate therefore said to him, “Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you?” ¹¹ Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” ¹² From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar.”

¹³ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. ¹⁴ Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover, and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” ¹⁵ They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” ¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

**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?**

So they took Jesus, ¹⁷ and carrying the cross by himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this inscription because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹ Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” ²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.” ²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. ²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says, “They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.” ²⁵ And that is what the soldiers did.

**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?**

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. ³⁰ When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Hymn 616 sung twice

Jesus, Remember Me

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 upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 7/8 time signature. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The melody is written in the upper staff, and the bass line is in the lower staff. The lyrics are placed below the upper 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 placed below the upper staff.

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵ (He who saw this has testified so that you also may continue to believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) ³⁶ These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.” ³⁷ And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

**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?**

³⁸ After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and removed his body.

³⁹ Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

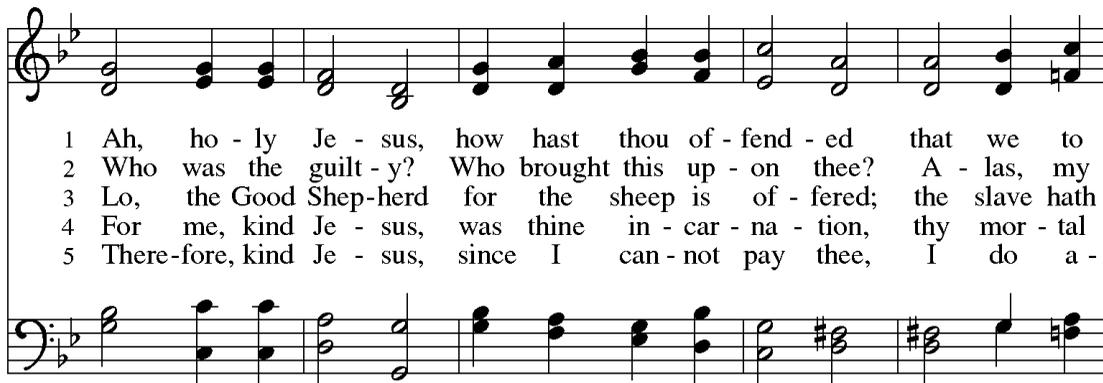
⁴¹ Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

**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?**

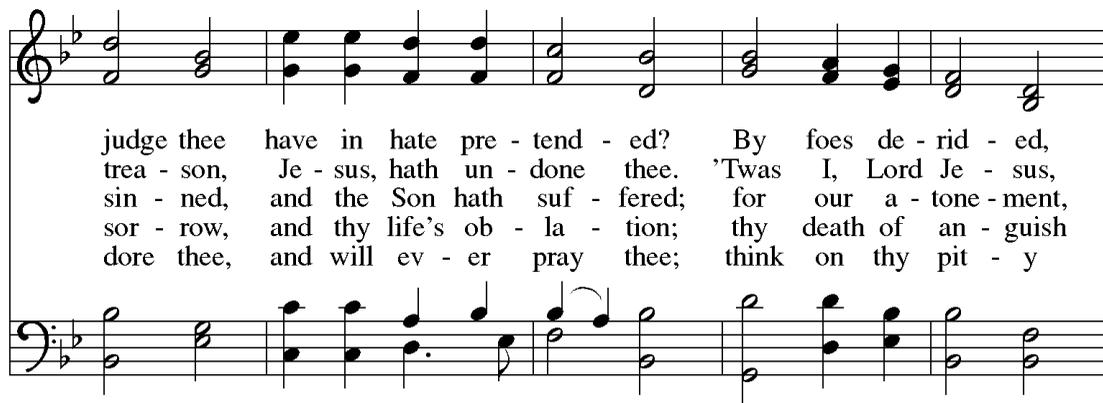
Silence for prayer and reflection.

Hymn of the Day 349

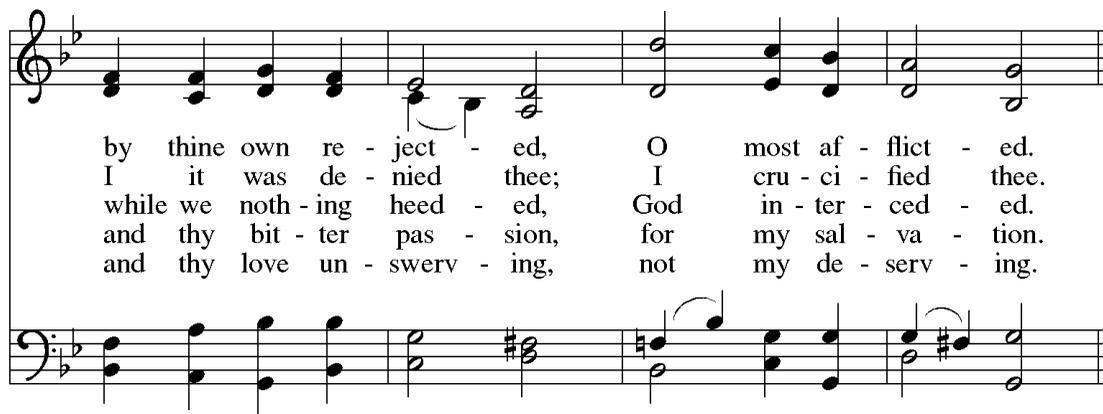
Ah, Holy Jesus



1 Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how hast thou of - fend - ed that we to
 2 Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on thee? A - las, my
 3 Lo, the Good Shep - herd for the sheep is of - fered; the slave hath
 4 For me, kind Je - sus, was thine in - car - na - tion, thy mor - tal
 5 There - fore, kind Je - sus, since I can - not pay thee, I do a -



judge thee have in hate pre - tend - ed? By foes de - rid - ed,
 trea - son, Je - sus, hath un - done thee. 'Twas I, Lord Je - sus,
 sin - ned, and the Son hath suf - fered; for our a - tone - ment,
 sor - row, and thy life's ob - la - tion; thy death of an - guish
 dore thee, and will ev - er pray thee; think on thy pit - y



by thine own re - ject - ed, O most af - flict - ed.
 I it was de - nied thee; I cru - ci - fied thee.
 while we noth - ing heed - ed, God in - ter - ced - ed.
 and thy bit - ter pas - sion, for my sal - va - tion.
 and thy love un - swerv - ing, not my de - serv - ing.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585-1647; tr. Robert Bridges, 1844-1930, alt.
 Music: HERZLIEBSTER JESU, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

Bidding Prayer

A: Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy church throughout the world.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ. By your Holy Spirit guide the church and gather it throughout the world. Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your name, and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for Yehiel and Pedro our Bishops, for Robert our Pastor, for Brian our Cantor, for Larry our Congregation Council president, and all servants of the church, and for all the people of God.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold our bishops, pastors, other ministers, and lay leaders. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the church, and help each of us in our various vocations to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for those preparing for baptism.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you continue to bless the church. Increase the faith and understanding of those preparing for baptism. Give them new birth as your children, and keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for our sisters and brothers who share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you give your church unity. Look with favor on all who follow Jesus your Son. Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith, and keep us united in the fellowship of love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and your teaching to Moses. Hear our prayers that the people you called and elected as your own may receive the fulfillment of the covenant's promises. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of the love made known to us in your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for those who do not believe in God.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you created humanity so that all may long to know you and find peace in you. Grant that all may recognize the signs of your love and grace in the world and in the lives of Christians, and gladly acknowledge you as the one true God. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for God's creation.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you are the creator of a magnificent universe. Hold all the worlds in the arms of your care and bring all things to fulfillment in you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for those who serve in public office.

Silent prayer.

P: Almighty and eternal God, you are the champion of the poor and oppressed. In your goodness, give wisdom to those in authority, so that all people may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Let us pray for those in need.

Silent prayer.

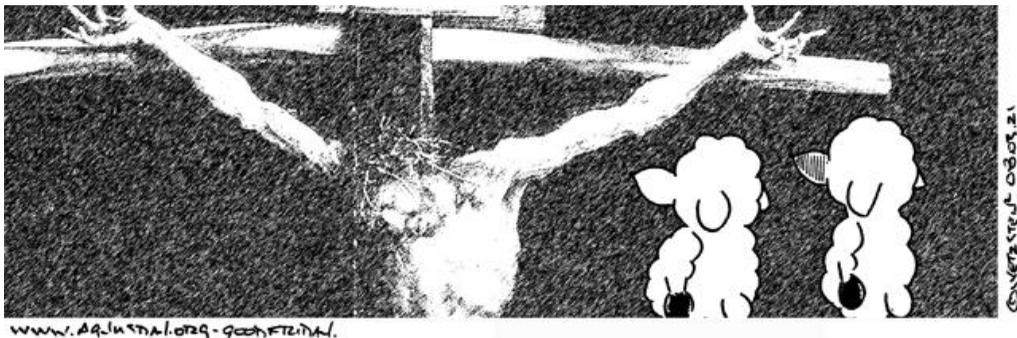
P: Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary and new courage to those who have lost heart. Heal the sick, comfort the dying, give safety to travelers, free those unjustly deprived of liberty, and deliver your world from falsehood, hunger, and disease. Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A: Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

All depart in silence.

The omission of benedictions at the end of the liturgies of both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday indicate their continuity with each other and with Easter.



Throughout Christian history, references to “the Jews” in scripture—particularly in John and Acts—have been used to perpetuate negative stereotypes and falsely assign blame for the death of Jesus. These references gloss over significant distinctions among religious leaders, such as Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees, and obscure the fact that Jesus and his disciples were themselves Jews. As Christians, we confess and lament the history of anti-Judaism associated with these texts. We renounce the evils of violence and discrimination against Jewish people. We strive for mutual understanding, respect, and partnership with Jewish neighbors and commit ourselves to the work of reconciliation among people of all faiths.

Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle (hymn 356)

*Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle; tell the triumph far and wide;
tell aloud the wondrous story of the cross, the Crucified;
tell how Christ, the world's redeemer, vanquished death the day he died.*

*God in mercy saw us fallen, sunk in shame and misery,
felled to death in Eden's garden, where in pride we claimed the tree;
then another tree was chosen, which the world from death would free.*

*Tell how, when at length the fullness of the appointed time was come,
Christ, the Word, was born of woman, left for us the heavenly home,
blazed the path of true obedience, shone as light amidst the gloom.*

*Thirty years among us dwelling, Jesus went from Nazareth,
destined, dedicated, willing, did his work, and met his death;
like a lamb he humbly yielded on the cross his dying breath.*

*Bend your boughs, O tree of glory, your relaxing sinews bend;
for a while the ancient rigor that your birth bestowed, suspend;
and the Lord of heavenly beauty gently on your arms extend.*

*Faithful cross, true sign of triumph, be for all the noblest tree;
none in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit your equal be;
symbol of the world's redemption, for your burden makes us free.*

*Unto God be praise and glory; to the Father and the Son,
to the eternal Spirit honor now and evermore be done;
praise and glory in the highest, while the timeless ages run.*

Text: Venantius Honorius Fortunatus, 530-609

The Victorious Victim

Who is in control on Good Friday? Pilate? Caiaphas? The chief priests? If one person seems to be least in control, it is Jesus. He is passed along from soldiers to Annas, to Caiaphas, and to Pilate, who finally hands him over to be crucified. He is subject to the whims of the crowd and the scourge of the Roman whip.

So many people have power in John's story of Jesus' crucifixion. But in this week of ironies and paradoxes, that power is largely an illusion. The chief priests get what they want, but they are captive to their own envy. Pilate is driven by fear. The soldiers are cogs in a brutal Roman military machine. This is often the case when power is used *over* or *against* others. While the oppressed are the victims, the oppressors themselves are caught in controlling, dehumanizing forces. It is no surprise that Pilate dismisses Jesus' words about truth; he lives in a web of falsehood.

In all these illusions, Jesus' own position is not what it first appears either. He may be mostly passive, but he is not a powerless victim. He is exactly where he chooses to be. Despite appearances, Jesus goes to his death as an act of might. On the cross, he wins the victory of love over all evil. Because he suffers, he appears weak. This seeming weakness, however, is the choice of love that swallows up sin and death in the power of mercy and life.

This is power *for* us. It is power for you, for your salvation. May we reflect deeply on the mystery of this paradox at the heart of the gospel: The cross is not Christ's defeat; it is his victory. Sin and death no longer rule. Jesus is Lord, and he rules with love and forgiveness. This is the gift he gives to the world.

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Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)