



PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Houghton, Michigan
Friday April 3, 2026

Good Friday: Service of Seven Words

Tonight's Service

On Good Friday, the Christian Church remembers the crucifixion of our Lord. Although our remembrance is solemn, it is not a message of gloom, but a time of adoration of Jesus, the Lamb of God, as he offers up his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. Good Friday is part of the larger celebration of salvation begun yesterday, Holy Thursday, and culminates on Easter Sunday.

Tonight's service is based on the seven "words" that Jesus spoke while he hung on the cross. A seven-fold candelabrum in the front of the church symbolizes Jesus' seven last words. One candle is extinguished after each word, followed by time for silent meditation, a short, responsive Scripture reading, a prayer, and a hymn stanza. The extinguishing of the candles symbolizes Jesus' life as it was snuffed out from him while he suffered and died for us.

Near the end of the service, a separate, final candle is removed from the chancel and the lights of the church are completely dimmed, leaving the church in darkness for silent prayer. The final candle, still burning, is then returned to its place before the congregation silently departs, leaving a symbolic glimmer of gospel hope amidst the gloom of Good Friday.

The mood of the service is very solemn, encouraging worshipers to reflect deeply upon their own lives in view of the crucifixion of our Lord. The lack of a final, closing blessing in the service anticipates that there is more to come: Jesus' coming resurrection will complete his work as our Savior. The congregation disperses silently into the night, remembering the Light which lingers and casts hope through the gloom of Good Friday.

Order of Worship

Stand at the pastor's direction.

Reading

Isaiah 52:13—53:12

^{52:13}See, my servant will act wisely;

he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

¹⁴Just as there were many who were appalled at him—

his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being
and his form marred beyond human likeness—

¹⁵so he will sprinkle many nations,

and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

For what they were not told, they will see,

and what they have not heard, they will understand.

^{53:1}Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

²He grew up before him like a tender shoot,

and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,

nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³He was despised and rejected by mankind,

a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces

he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

⁴Surely he took up our pain

and bore our suffering,

yet we considered him punished by God,

stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions,

he was crushed for our iniquities;

the punishment that brought us peace was on him,

and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

⁹He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

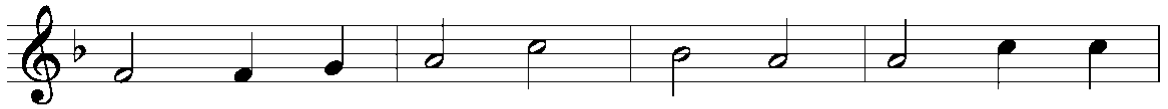
¹¹After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Be seated

Hymn

Upon the Cross Extended



1 Up - on the cross ex - tend - ed, see, world, your
2 Who is it, Lord, that bruised you? Who has so
3 I caused your grief and sigh - ing by e - vils
4 Your soul in griefs un - bound - ed, your head with
5 Your cross I place be - fore me, its sav - ing



Lord sus - pend - ed; your Sav - ior yields his breath.
sore a - bused you and caused you all your woe?
mul - ti - ply - ing as count - less as the sands.
thorns sur - round - ed, you died to ran - som me.
pow'r re - store me, sus - tain me in the test.



The Prince of life from heav - en him - self has free - ly
We all must make con - fes - sion of sin and dire trans -
I caused the woes un - num - bered with which your soul is
The cross for me en - dur - ing, the crown for me se -
It will, when life is end - ing, be guid - ing and at -



giv - en to shame and blows and bit - ter death.
gres - sion, while you no ways of e - vil know.
cum - bered, your sor - rows raised by wick - ed hands.
cur - ing, you healed my wounds and set me free.
tend - ing my way to your e - ter - nal rest.

Seven Words from the Cross

A brief devotional address precedes each of the seven words.

First Word

Luke 23:32–34

³²Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The first candle is extinguished.

Silence for meditation.

Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me;
They pierce my hands and my feet.

They divide my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing.

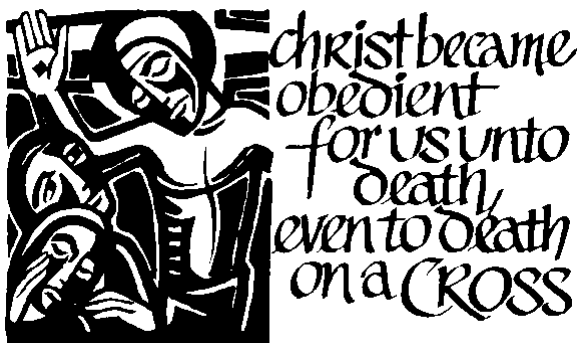
He bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Gracious Savior, you did not strike back with revenge against your enemies as they ridiculed and crucified you but prayed for their forgiveness. In your compassion, pardon us for our secret sins and sins we do not discern, and enlighten us to know and do your will.

Amen.

After a brief introduction, the congregation sings:

1 Their nails were fresh - ly driv - en, their ha - tred
clear - ly shown, when, "Let them be for - giv - en,"
was heard at heav - en's throne. Your en - e - mies, O
Je - sus, you loved be - yond de - gree, a love so
pure and pre - cious it e - ven par - doned me.



Second Word

Luke 23:35-43

³⁵The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

³⁶The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

³⁸There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.

³⁹One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

⁴³Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

The second candle is extinguished.

Silence for meditation.

All who see me mock me;
They hurl insults, shaking their heads.

“He trusts in the Lord,” they say, “let the Lord rescue him.
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”

Remember me, Lord, when you show favor to your people.
Come to my aid when you save them.

Mighty Redeemer, remember us as we walk through the darkest valleys of life and realize that our time on earth is ending. Stay close to us when we feel the pain and loneliness of dying and take away our fears with your certain promise of paradise.

Amen.

The congregation sings:

**On you, my King, depending,
I'm rid of all my sins!
My final day here ending,
my first in heav'n begins.
As you have truly spoken,
in paradise I'll be,
with you in bliss unbroken—
you will remember me.**

Third Word

John 19:25–27

²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," ²⁷and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The third candle is extinguished.

Silence for meditation.

This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel,
and to be a sign that will be spoken against,

so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.
And a sword will pierce your own soul too.

Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?
**Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven
is my brother and sister and mother.**

Precious Jesus, you consider us friends and care about the needs of our
bodies and souls. Keep us in your care as we walk the road of life and
provide the blessings we need to gain safety, contentment, and joy in your
service.
Amen.

The congregation sings:

**A Savior like no other,
all self-concern denied,
you served your grieving mother
while you were crucified.
My sin had made me filthy,
but you, the perfect child,
were designated guilty,
and I am reconciled.**

Fourth Word

Matthew 27:45, 46

⁴⁵From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.
⁴⁶About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli,
lemasabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you
forsaken me?”).

The fourth candle is extinguished.

Silence for meditation.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

My God, I cry out by day but you do not answer,

by night, but I find no rest.

“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “I will make the sun go down at noon

and darken the earth in broad daylight.”

Lord Jesus, you endured the horrific penalty of our sins as your Father turned his face from you on the cross. Compel us to see in your sacrifice the dreadful nature of sin and call us to acknowledge the amazing depth of your love. Overcome our shame, dear Savior, and give us grateful faith.

Amen.

The congregation sings:

**Condemned, cut off, forsaken,
outside the Father’s care,
by terror overtaken,
no ear would hear your prayer.
On you God’s wrath was vented,
on you his fury fell,
when, on the cross tormented,
you took my place in hell.**

Fifth Word

John 19:28, 29

²⁸After this, when he knew that all things necessary for the Scripture to be fulfilled had now been accomplished, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

Silence for meditation.

My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.

I am worn out calling for help;
my throat is parched.

They put gall in my food
and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

Dear Jesus, as our brother on earth you endured the agony of pain that besieged your body when your sacrifice was complete. Knowing our experiences, hover over us with your care and compassion when our bodies and hearts are hurting. Provide us with strength that we may confess you with confidence and power.

Amen.

The congregation sings:

**My Lord, in death's dark valley,
both soul and body drained,
one drink would help you rally
what little strength remained
to raise your voice in vict'ry,
to sound your foe's defeat—
the highest point in hist'ry—
my rescue was complete.**

Sixth Word

John 19:30

³⁰When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The sixth candle is extinguished.

Silence for meditation.

On that day a fountain will be opened
to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

Because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.
**I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more.**

Gracious Redeemer, you paid the full price for our redemption and have released us forever from the hold of Satan, the power of sin, and the fear of death. Protect us from the devil's claim that we need to do more and from the accusation of our consciences that we have not done enough. Lead us to place our entire confidence in you and to live our lives secure in your grace.

Amen.

The congregation sings:

**Though sin's most lethal wages
to me, O Christ, were due,
the guilt of all the ages
came crashing down on you.
Most surely, "It is finished"—
my debt is fully paid;
my joy is undiminished;
my heart is unafraid.**

Seventh Word

Luke 23:44-46

⁴⁴It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

The seventh candle is extinguished.

Silence for meditation.

Into your hands I commit my spirit;
deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.

He has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Loving Savior, at the moment of your death you gave yourself into the loving hands of your Father. As we close our eyes in death, lead us to commit our bodies and souls to him who has summoned us by name and made us his own because of you and your love. Then, we pray, let us depart in peace.

Amen.

The congregation sings:

**My death will be triumphant
no matter how I die;
Lord Jesus, in that instant
escort my soul on high
into my Father's keeping,
all-blameless and all-blest,
like waking up from sleeping,
his hands my place of rest.**

Stand

Reading

John 19:31–42

³¹Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³²The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

³⁸Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Be seated

Hymn

Rest, O Christ, from All Your Labor



1 Rest, O Christ, from all your la - bor; sleep with -
 2 Peace at last from all your an - guish, wounds in
 3 Help us keep this sol - emn Sab - bath as we
 4 As, through part - ing Red Sea wa - ters, Is - rael



in your bor - rowed tomb. Foes have cru - ci - fied and
 hands and feet and side. En - e - mies no long - er
 wait for Eas - ter dawn. Earth's dark night of sin is
 marched to lib - er - ty, so we pass thro' bap - tism's



bound you fast with - in death's nar - row room.
 mock you, scourged, a - ban - doned, cru - ci - fied.
 pass - ing; death's long reign will soon be gone.
 wa - ter, washed by grace, from sin set free.



Pi - late's guards stand watch - ing, wait - ing where they
 Faith - ful wom - en gath - er spic - es, weep for
 Christ, in whom the new cre - a - tion ris - es
 Je - sus, ris - en, liv - ing, reign - ing now and



rolled the seal - ing stone. All un - seen an - oth - er
 you whom sin has slain. Though they mourn, the God who
 bright - er than the sun: may we, as we watch for
 through e - ter - ni - ty: grant that, through your life un -



watch - es: God will not for - sake his own.
 guards you will not let your death be vain.
 morn - ing, trust the vic - t'ry you have won.
 dy - ing, we may live vic - to - rious - ly.

Stand

Lord's Prayer

Hear us, merciful Father, as we pray in your Son's name:

**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.**

Be seated

The last candle is removed from the chancel.

The church lights are completely darkened.

Prayer

God Most Holy, look with mercy on this, your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, be given over into the hands of the wicked, and suffer death upon the cross. Keep us always faithful to him, our only Savior, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Silence for meditation follows.

The final candle, still lit, is returned to burn in the chancel.

After a moment, a few lights in the sanctuary are turned on to allow worshipers to exit safely.

Worshipers may remain for prayer and meditation before dispersing quietly.



Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord

Sunday, April 5
10:15 am

Easter breakfast – 9:00 am



Acknowledgments

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