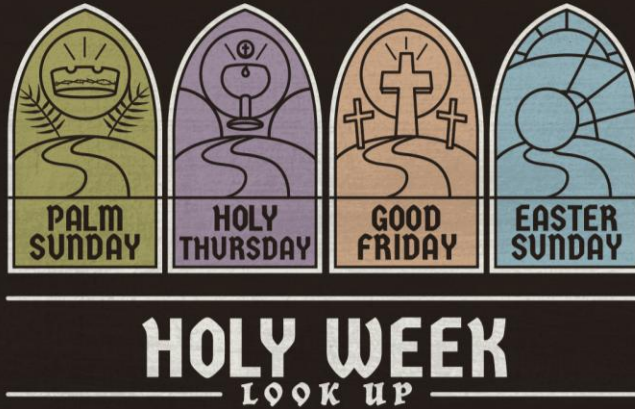




St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

April 2, 2026 – Holy Thursday A



To Get a Glimpse of Heaven

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship. In our service we gather before our almighty God to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful Word, and through the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Restrooms and a drinking fountain are located on the right in the hallway outside the sanctuary. We have **personal hearing devices**. If you need one, please let an usher know before the service. If you are a parent with young children, we want you to know that we love having children worship with us since worship includes them, too. At the same time, we know that children sometimes like to make their presence known in spite of the best efforts to keep them quiet. For your convenience and in consideration of those seated near you, we have a **Family Room** located through the door in the back of the Fellowship Hall. The facility includes a TV, a window, and speakers so that you can still follow along with the worship service. **Busy bags** are also available near the central sanctuary doors.

Prayer before worship: Lord, as we spend this time in reflection and repentance, make us aware of our sins, and lead us to a complete dependence on your grace and mercy in Christ. Help us change our sinful lives so that we may be effective witnesses to the power of your work for us. Amen.

Personal Preparation for Holy Communion

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: He says I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: ***"Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."***

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.

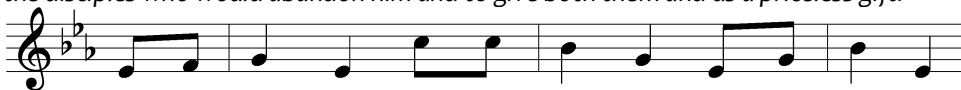
Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

Holy Thursday Confessional Rite

When You Woke That Thursday Morning

CW 416 sts. 1-3

Contemplate the mind of Christ through the events of Holy Thursday. He used his final earthly hours to prepare the disciples who would abandon him and to give both them and us a priceless gift.



1 When you woke that Thurs - day morn - ing, Sav - ior, teach - er,
2 Nev - er so a - lone and lone - ly, long - ing with tor -
3 What was there that you could give them that would nev - er



faith - ful friend, thoughts of self and safe - ty scorn - ing, know - ing
ment - ed heart to be with your dear ones on - ly for a
be out - spent, what great gift that would out - live them, what last



how the day would end; Lamb of God, fore - told for
qui - et hour a - part: sin - less Lamb and fall - en
will and tes - ta - ment? "Show me and the world you



a - ges, now at last the hour had come when but One could
crea - ture, one last pas - chal meal to eat, one last les - son
love me, know me as the Lamb of God: do this in re -



pay sin's wa - ges: you as - sumed their dread - ful sum.
as their teach - er, wash - ing your dis - ci - ples' feet.
mem - brance of me, eat this bod - y, drink this blood."

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919-2008

Tune: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Tune: © 1987 GIA Publications, Inc. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 715833

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The music of the opening hymn will continue to be played softly in the background.

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Confession

P: Brothers and sisters in Christ, in this Lenten season we have heard again how our Lord walked the path of suffering which led him to the cross for our salvation. We have also heard our Lord's call to intensify our struggle against sin, death, and the devil—all that keeps us from loving God and one another. This is the struggle to which we were committed at Baptism; God's forgiveness and the power of his Spirit to amend our lives continue with us because of his love for us in Jesus our Savior.

Within the family of the Church, God never wearies of giving peace and new life. In the absolution, we receive forgiveness as from God himself. We should not doubt this absolution but firmly believe that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven, for it comes to us in the name and by the command of our Lord.

We who receive God's love in Jesus Christ are called to love one another, to be servants to each other, as Jesus became our servant.

In Holy Communion, first instituted on this night, the members of Christ's body participate most intimately in his love. Remembering our Lord's Last Supper with his disciples, we eat the bread and drink the cup of this meal. Together we receive the Lord's gift of his body and blood for forgiveness and participate in that new covenant that makes us one with him and one another. The Lord's Supper is the promise of the great banquet we will share with all the faithful when our Lord returns, the joyous culmination of our reconciliation with God and each other.

As we begin the solemn celebration of our Lord's passion, let us confess our sins to him, receive his absolution, and be reconciled to God and each other in Christian love.

C: Holy God, gracious Father, I am sinful by nature and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I deserve your punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death. Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Absolution

P: Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven us, has reconciled us to God, and has promised us the power to forgive and love one another. Relying on his promise, therefore, be reconciled with one another.

C: Brothers and sisters, may the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, in our words, and in our actions.

Lord, Have Mercy

P: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

When You Woke That Thursday Morning

CW 416 sts. 4-5

This gift unites our confession and previews the joys of the marriage feast of the Lamb in heaven.

4 One in faith, in love u - nit - ed, all one bod - y,
5 One day all the Church will cap - ture that bright vi - sion

you the head, when we meet, by you in - vit - ed, you are
glo - ri - ous, and your saints will know the rap - ture that your

with us, as you said. One with you and one an -
heart de - sired for us, when the longed - for peace and

oth - er in a u - ni - ty sub - lime, see in us your
un - ion of the great - est and the least meet in joy - ous,

sis - ter, broth - er, one in ev - 'ry place and time.
blest com - mun - ion in your nev - er - end - ing feast.

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919-2008

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The Word

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, you give us your true body and blood as a remembrance of your suffering and death on a cross. Grant us so firmly to believe your words and promise that we may always partake of this sacrament to our eternal good; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

First Reading

Exodus 24:1–11

Forgiven by the shedding of blood, the elders of Israel looked up and were given a glimpse of heaven.

The Covenant Is Ratified

¹Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, along with Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship me from a distance. ²Only Moses is allowed to come near the LORD, but the others are not to come near, and the people are not to go up with him.”

³Moses came and reported to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances. Then all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do.” ⁴Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD.

He got up early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He set up twelve memorial stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵He sent young Israelite men, who offered whole burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings of cattle to the LORD. ⁶Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and he splashed half of the blood on the altar. ⁷He took the Book of the Covenant and read it out loud to the people and they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do. We will obey.”

⁸Moses took the blood and splashed it on the people. He said, “Look, here is the blood of the covenant, which the LORD made with you by means of all these words.”

⁹Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up. ¹⁰They saw the God of Israel. Under his feet they saw what looked like a pavement of sapphire as clear as the sky. ¹¹The LORD did not lay his hand on the dignitaries of the people of Israel. They gazed at God, and they ate and drank.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day – Psalm 116

P: I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;

C: he heard my cry for mercy.

P: Because he turned his ear to me,

C: I will call on him as long as I live.

P: For you, LORD, have delivered me from death,

C: my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling,

P: that I may walk before the LORD

C: in the land of the living.

P: What shall I return to the LORD

C: for all his goodness to me?

P: I will lift up the cup of salvation

C: and call on the name of the LORD.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 11:23–28

St. Paul shows how each time we receive the sacrament, we look up in faith to see Jesus on the cross.

²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵In the same way, after the meal, he also took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the Lord's body and blood. ²⁸Instead, let a person examine himself and after doing so, let him eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

John 13:1

P: It is written: Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Gospel

John 13:1–15,34

Jesus opens the eyes of his disciples to look up and see a life of service before them.

¹Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved those who were his own in the world, he loved them to the end.

²By the time the supper took place, the Devil had already put the idea into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

³Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God. ⁴He got up from the supper and laid aside his outer garment. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who asked him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus answered him, "You do not understand what I am doing now, but later you will understand."

⁸Peter told him, "You will never, ever, wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹"Lord, not just my feet," Simon Peter replied, "but also my hands and my head!"

¹⁰Jesus told him, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet, but his body is completely clean. And you are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹Indeed, he knew who was going to betray him. That is why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹²After Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer garment, he reclined at the table again. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me Teacher and Lord. You are right, because I am. ¹⁴Now if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵Yes, I have given you an example so that you also would do just as I have done for you.

³⁴"A new commandment I give you: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you are to love one another.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior

CW 659 sts. 1-5

At the Lord's Table, Jesus serves as both meal and host, bringing comfort to weak and weary sinners.



1 Je - sus Christ, our bless - ed Sav - ior, turned a - way God's
2 As his pledge of love un - dy - ing, he, this pre - cious
3 Je - sus here him - self is shar - ing; take heed how you
4 Use - less would be Je - sus' pas - sion if sal - va - tion
5 Christ says, "Come, all you that la - bor, and re - ceive my



wrath for - ev - er; by his bit - ter grief and woe
food sup - ply - ing, gives his bod - y with the bread
are pre - par - ing, for if you do not be - lieve,
you could fash - ion. Do not come if you sup - pose
grace and fa - vor; those who feel no pain or ill



he saved us from the e - vil foe.
and with the wine the blood he shed.
judg - ment in - stead you shall re - ceive.
you need not him who died and rose.
need no phy - si - cian's help or skill."

Text: John Hus, c. 1369-1415; German version, Martin Luther, 1483-1546, abr.; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941
Tune: Geistliche Lieder auff's new gebessert, Wittenberg, 1533, ed. Joseph Klug, alt. Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Exodus 24:1-11

We Don't Eat Alone.

Thoughts to ponder following the sermon:

- 1) As you pray for God to be your meal guest, take at least 60 seconds to ponder what that means before you pray.
- 2) Pray for and thank God for his presence every day in addition to your meal prayers.
- 3) Who in your life needs the encouragement of knowing God's presence?

Nicene Creed

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Offering

To our honored guests: We're happy that you're with us to hear about God's love for you today! Our offering is not a debt we owe God but a way that we return to God a portion of what he generously gave to us. Our motivation, then, is not obligation but love for God. Our offerings are how St. Paul's funds our Gospel mission work. As our honored guests, please do not feel obligated to contribute.

*If you would like to support our Gospel ministry with an offering, you have options! Place your offering in **the offering plate** in our gathering space as you leave worship today, **mail an offering** to our church anytime, or go to **stpauls.edu** or **scan this QR** code to give an offering online.*



Prayer of the Church

Holy Thursday

P: Eternal Savior, we are gathered in the quiet of this holy evening as you gathered with your disciples long ago. We are here to grasp how wide and long and high and deep your love is and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.

C: How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that he should give his only Son to make a wretch his treasure.

P: It was love for sinners that made you go willingly to the cross. Swords could have been drawn to protect you and angels summoned to deliver you; yet you did not allow it, because you were determined to make your life a guilt offering—the guiltless for the guilty. May we depend on nothing other than your willing love for the removal of our guilt and the forgiveness of our sins.

C: How great the pain of searing loss. The Father turns his face away as wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory.

P: It was self-giving love that made you take the role of a servant and stoop to wash your disciples' feet in the upper room. You set an example by which you would shatter pride and create humble servants out of all who follow you. By your love shatter our pride and make us always more willing to serve than to be served.

C: Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.

P: It was love for your Father in heaven that prompted you to enter the garden and approach his throne in prayer. There you sought grace and mercy in your time of need. There he strengthened you to do the work for which you were destined. Teach us to go to our heavenly Father in every need, as you did. Bless us with the grace and mercy to live out our lives in obedience and faith.

C: It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished, his dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished.

P: It was love for your disciples in every age that caused you to institute Holy Communion. In the mystery and wonder of this sacrament, you give us your own body and blood. Through this heavenly feast, assure us of forgiveness, life, and salvation, and unite us with the Church above.

C: I will not boast in anything: no gifts, no power, no wisdom. But I will boast in Jesus Christ: his death and resurrection.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

P: Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

P: Lord, may your body and your blood be for our souls the highest good.

C: Why should I gain from his reward? I cannot give an answer. But this I know with all my heart: his wounds have paid my ransom. Amen.

The Sacrament

Preface

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

P: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en-ly hosts:
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san - na, ho -
san - na, ho-san-na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he,
bless-ed is he, bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho-san - na, ho-san - na, ho-san-na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P: Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.

By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.

By his innocent death, he overcame hell.

By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

C: 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.

Words of Institution

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my ✠ body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my ✠ blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - - - men.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "O Christ, Lamb of God". It consists of five staves of music in a single system, all in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first line of music corresponds to the first line of lyrics, and so on. The final line of music ends with a double bar line. There are some long horizontal lines under the lyrics "A - - - men." which appear to be artifacts from the scanning process.

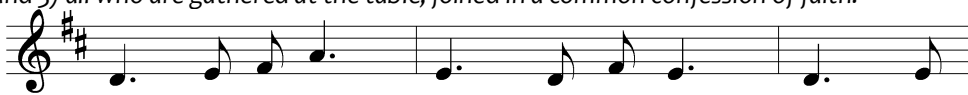
Distribution

To our guests: Scripture teaches us that those who commune together are expressing a unity in faith and in all of Scripture's teachings. This is called close communion. If you are not a member of St. Paul's, the Wisconsin Synod, or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, you will want to learn what we teach and have the opportunity to express that unity at your confirmation before you commune with us. If you are interested in taking a class to learn more about our teachings, or if you have any questions, please speak with our pastors.

In This Holy, Blest Communion

CW 669

The sacrament of communion joins: 1) bread and wine to Christ's body and blood, 2) sinners to our perfect Savior, and 3) all who are gathered at the table, joined in a common confession of faith.



1 In this ho - ly, blest com - mun - ion plain and
2 In this ho - ly, blest com - mun - ion Christ and
3 In this ho - ly, blest com - mun - ion saints are



pre - cious gifts com - bine: bread is tru - ly
sin - ners join as one— they, the Fa - ther's
gath - ered side by side, joined to - geth - er,



Je - sus' bod - y, blood of Je - sus joins with wine.
ran - somed chil - dren, he, the Fa - ther's right - ful Son.
broth - ers, sis - ters, in one bod - y u - ni - fied,



What a bless - ing Christ is giv - ing; what a
Here the loft - y feeds the low - ly, each his
faith in Je - sus, hope of heav - en, love for



lov - ing, gra - cious host, in his sup - per
high - ly cher - ished guest; here the guilt - y
oth - ers all in - creased by the full - ness



well pro - vid - ing what his peo - ple need the most!
taste for - give - ness, here the wea - ry find their rest.
of the ban - quet, by the rich - ness of the feast.

Holy Thursday: Stripping of the Altar

P: During the stripping of the altar, we reflect on how the disciples abandoned Jesus in Gethsemane and we prepare to gather at his cross and tomb tomorrow. First the communion ware is removed. These elements from the Passover meal that Christ used to institute the sacrament have now fulfilled their purpose. As they are removed from the altar, we recall the disciples leaving for Gethsemane, where they removed themselves from Christ's side. "I should not be your sheep, dear Savior; I stray in sin's accursed terrain. And yet you pardon my behavior; my faithful Shepherd you remain. Lord, may your body and your blood be for my soul the highest good" (CW 670, st.3). A reading, from Matthew 26:

Reading

Matthew 26:47–56

⁴⁷While Jesus was still speaking, suddenly Judas (one of the Twelve) arrived. With him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign: "The one I kiss is the man. Arrest him." ⁴⁹Immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Friend, why are you here?"

Then they advanced, took hold of Jesus, and arrested him. ⁵¹Suddenly, one of the men with Jesus reached out his hand, drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, because all who take the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you not realize that I could call on my Father, and at once he would provide me with more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?"

⁵⁵At that same time Jesus said to the crowd, "Have you come out to arrest me with swords and clubs as if I were a robber? Day after day I was sitting in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

P: Let us pray: Heavenly Father, your Son was betrayed by Judas, abandoned by his disciples, and arrested by his enemies to fulfill your plan for our salvation. Forgive us when we abandon you by our sin and strengthen us through your Word and through the sacrament of your Son's body and blood that we may always cling in faith to your gospel promises in every adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: The bookstand and candles are removed next, reminding us of the death of Jesus who is both the Word and the Light of the world. The Friday that follows will be dark, for this is the cost of our sins; this is the debt we owed. Sin is serious and a life is demanded so that our lives would be spared. Jesus predicted and promised this death and the many sacrifices of the past presented that stark price of blood again and again. Finally, as the cloths of the paraments are removed, we remember the cloths that wrapped our Savior's body as he was placed in a tomb. A quiet dignity is here, but our Lord was alone in that tomb. "In life no house, no home my Lord on earth might have; in death no friendly tomb but what a stranger gave. What may I say? Heaven was his home, but mine the tomb wherein he lay" (CW 399, st.6). A reading, Psalm 88:

Reading

Psalm 88

P: O LORD, the God who saves me, by day I cry out. At night I cry before you.

C: May my prayer come before you. Turn your ear to my cry.

P: Indeed, my soul has had its fill of troubles, and my life has arrived at the grave. I am treated like those who go down to the pit. I am like someone without strength. I am turned loose with the dead. I am like the slain who lie in the grave, like the ones you do not remember anymore, like those who are cut off from your hand.

C: You have put me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the depths.

P: Your wrath presses against me. You have battered me with all your breakers...You have distanced my acquaintances from me. You have made me repulsive to them. I am shut in and cannot get out. My eyesight grows dim from affliction.

C: I call to you, O LORD, every day. I spread out my hands to you.

P: Is it for the dead that you do a miracle? Do the spirits of the dead rise up and praise you? Is your mercy declared in the tomb, your faithfulness in decay? Is your wonderful work known in the darkness? Is your righteousness known in the land of forgetfulness?

C: But I cry to you, O LORD, and in the morning my prayer comes before you.

P: Why, O LORD, do you reject my soul? Why do you hide your face from me? I have been afflicted and I have been close to death since my youth. I have endured your terrors. I am in despair. Your rage has swept over me. Your terrors have destroyed me. All day long they surround me like water. They have battered me completely. You have distanced my loved one and friend from me. My only friend is darkness.

At the conclusion of the stripping of the altar, the pastors exit the chancel. There is no postlude music, as the service continues with the Good Friday Tenebrae service. The congregation may remain for personal prayer and meditation before dispersing in silence.

Presiding Minister: Tim Rosenow

Preacher: James Saatkamp

Accompanist: Cindy Lendt

A/V: Bill Hoeltke



April 3 | Good Friday Tenebrae Service of Seven Words, 6 PM

April 5 | Easter Sunday Festival Service 9:30 AM

Easter Egg Hunt (outside) and Easter Breakfast (gym) following the service

Acknowledgments

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Who We Are

(Our Mission)

*St. Paul's Lutheran Church is a family. Like any family, we have our strengths and we have our weaknesses. We experience successes and we experience struggles. These are the things which unite us. For we know that we aren't perfect, but our Heavenly Father is; and he has loved us with a perfect love, sending his Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and to give us eternal life in heaven. With that same love, he comes to us through his Word, the Bible, to equip us and encourage us as we live in a world which can leave us feeling discouraged and hopeless at times. So, as a family, we **gather** together around God's Word in church and in Bible classes. We have a school where children can **grow** in their relationship with our Heavenly Father and where we can **go** to share the love of Jesus with them. We want as many people as possible to know the joy and hope which we have as members of God's family.*

If you would like to learn more about our church family or the ministries we offer through our church, school, and preschool, please speak with our pastor, principal, preschool director, faculty, or one of our members.

Thank you for being a part of our church family today!



St. Paul's Lutheran *Church and School Precious Lambs Preschool*

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Sunday worship: 9:30 AM
Sunday School & Bible Class: 10 minutes
after



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Hannah Foley *1st grade teacher*

Cindy Lendt *2nd grade teacher*

Lindsey Klingenschmitt *3rd and 4th grade teacher*

Noah Uhlenbrauck *5th and 6th grade teacher*

Justin Siegler *7th and 8th grade teacher*

Dorothy Draeger *Administrative assistant*