

GOOD FRIDAY



Church of the Master Church of the Covenant  
April 3, 2026 7:00pm

*Good Friday is the most solemn day in the Christian year— a day when we remember the suffering and death of Jesus. The word “good” is tied to older and deeper meanings of holiness, sacredness, and reverence. It is a day of deep reflection. On this day we draw near to the mystery of the cross: a place of sorrow and death, and also a place of love poured out.*

*The Stations of the Cross are presented here with their scriptural counterparts. As we read through the events of the crucifixion, we are invited to pause. Through the word, image, silence, and music, we reflect not only on what happened to Jesus, but also how his story shapes our own. This is not just a path of pain and shadow— it is the path of love, courage, truth, and light.*

*A Litany of Lament replaces the Solemn Reproaches, an ancient Good Friday text that, despite its power, has been used to blame Jewish people for the death of Jesus— language that has fueled centuries of persecution and violence. The litany preserves the spirit of lament and confession while rooting accountability where it belongs: in our own failures as the church and the human family.*

*During portions of the service marked with an asterisk (\*) you are invited to stand as you are comfortable. Congregational responses are in **bold** type. A basket for offerings is placed at the rear of the sanctuary.*



## **Prelude**

### **\*Procession of the Cross**

*Please rise and turn toward the rear of the sanctuary.*

Last night he gathered with his friends at a table. He washed their feet and broke the bread. He prayed for them in the garden while they slept. And then the torches came. They took Jesus, and he went out carrying his own cross, to the place of the skull, Golgotha.

**There they crucified him.**

This is a day for mourning—  
and also for awe, wonder, love, and gratitude.

**All you who bow in reverence, praise him.**

**All you daughters of faith, glorify him.**

**All you sons of faith, stand in awe before him.**

We follow Christ.

**Who says take up your cross.**

Behold the cross of our everlasting hope, on which God's love was brought to life.

**We follow Christ.**

Who bids us come and offer our lives.

**We follow Christ, who summons us to new life.**

**\*Opening/Gathering Hymn**

**ELW 338**

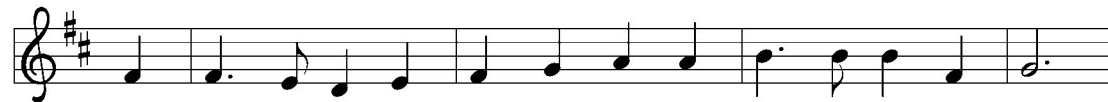
**Beneath the Cross of Jesus**



1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;  
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see  
3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;



the shad - ow of a might-y rock with - in a wea - ry land,  
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.  
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;



a home with-in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,  
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:  
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,



from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.  
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.  
my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

## Stations of the Cross

First station: Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin  
Luke 22: 66-71

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before the Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

Merciful God, **we confess that we do not always stand on the side of truth. We have been quick to judge, and slow to listen. We have let fear shape our decisions, and silence our compassion. Forgive us for the times we stayed silent when we should have spoken up, for the ways we've contributed to injustice, either by our action or inaction. Give us courage to follow Jesus, even when the cost is high.**

*(A time for silent confession)*

Even in the face of betrayal and rebellion, even in the face of death and denial, even in the face of fear and despair, God's grace knows no bounds. We are forgiven, we are called back into relationship, we are set back on the path that leads to the Realm of God.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Second station: Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate**  
**Mark 15: 1-5, 15**

The Sanhedrin bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

Pilate saw the truth and still handed it over to die. He listened to the crowd, not his conscience. He washed his hands, thinking that would wash away his part in it. But silence in the face of injustice is never neutral. This was the hour when convenience became more valuable than truth. When we are tempted to step back instead of speak up, give us courage to stand on the side of love, even when it's costly.

**Third station: Jesus is Scourged at the Pillar  
and Crowned with Thorns**  
**John 19: 1-3**

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.

# Hymn of Response

ELW 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

## Fourth station: Jesus Bears the Cross

John 19: 6, 15-17

When the chief priests and the guards saw Jesus they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

The beam was heavy and your strength already failing. Each step was agony, but you walked forward anyway. You carried not only wood, but the weight of all that breaks the world. The road was long and the crowd indifferent. Still, you bore what love required.



Fifth station: Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian  
to Carry the Cross  
Mark 15: 21

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

*Let us pray.*

We give you thanks, O God, for those who have stepped into our road unbidden, who carried what we could not carry, who walked beside us when we had nothing left, whose presence was itself a mercy. **For every Simon who has shown up in our lives, we are grateful.**

We confess that we have not always been that presence for others. We have seen the weight and looked away. We have been close enough to help and chosen comfort instead. We have let strangers carry what we could have shared. **Forgive us, merciful God.**

And so we ask — open our eyes to the ones on the road ahead of us, the ones staggering under what they cannot name, the ones who need someone to step out of the crowd. Make us willing. Make us brave enough to be compelled. **Make us Simon for someone today. Amen.**

**Sixth station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**  
**Luke 23: 27-31**

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time, people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?"

The crowd mostly watched in silence, but the women wept openly. They were not ashamed of their sorrow. Even as you suffered, you turned to them—not with pity, but with compassion. You saw their pain and spoke truth to it, warning of the suffering yet to come. Even in your agony, your heart made room for others. When grief threatens to harden us, keep us tender. Let our sorrow be honest, and let our love remain visible.



## Seventh station: Jesus is Crucified

Luke 23: 33-34

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

### A Litany of Lament

I came to you as one of you, born into the vulnerability of flesh, into cold and darkness and need. I came as a child, wrapped in cloth, laid in a feeding trough, born to people who had no room. I asked only that you receive me.

**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

I walked among you for years, touching the ones no one would touch — the leper, the bleeding woman, the man born blind. I sat at the table with the wrong people and crossed every boundary you had drawn around the holy. I showed you what God looks like with skin on. You called it blasphemy.

**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

I gathered you at a table on the night everything fell apart. I broke bread with you, poured out wine, and said: do this, remember me. I washed your feet with my own hands. Before the night was over one of you had sold me, and the rest of you had run.

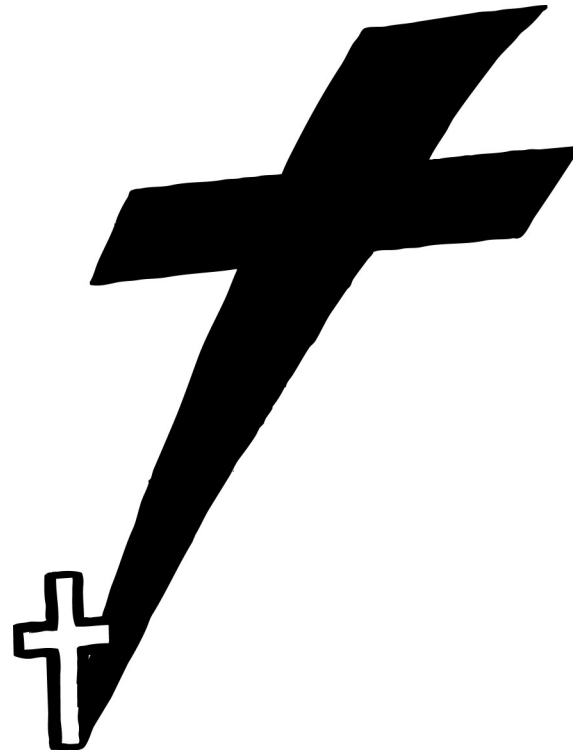
**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

I prayed in the garden while the night closed in, while the sweat fell from me like drops of blood, while the weight of what was coming pressed down on me until I could barely breathe. I asked you to stay awake with me one hour. I came back and found you sleeping.

**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

I was handed over by one who had walked with me, who had seen everything, who knew exactly who I was. I was denied three times by the one I called my rock. I was abandoned by all who had promised they would never leave. The soldiers came and I stepped forward to meet them so that you could go free. I went to the cross alone.

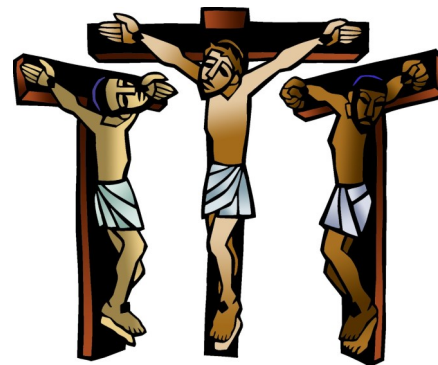
**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**



**Eighth station: Jesus Promises his Kingdom  
to the Repentant Thief**  
Luke 23: 39-43

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, the repentant thief, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

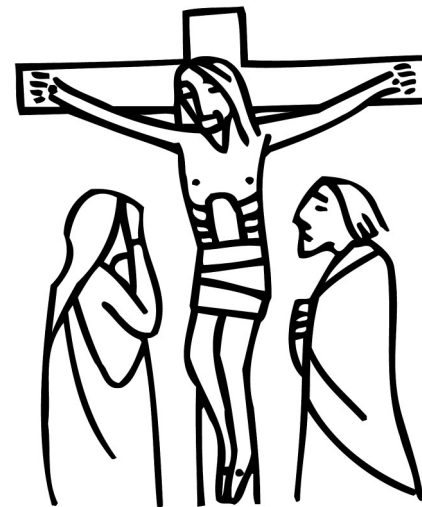
One mocked. One hoped. And in your final hours, you answered with grace. You opened paradise not to the perfect, but to the one who asked. Even in death, you welcomed the broken and gave the gift of belonging. There was no test, no condition—only a promise. When we feel unworthy or too far gone, remind us that your mercy is never out of reach.



**Ninth station: Jesus Speaks to his Mother  
and the Beloved Disciple  
John 19: 25-27**

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother Mary, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the Beloved Disciple, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

You looked down from the cross and saw her—the one who raised you, now breaking. Beside her stood the disciple you loved, equally undone. In the middle of your own suffering, you gave them to each other. A new family, born not of blood, but of love in the face of loss. Even dying, you were still making things whole. Teach us to care for one another when everything feels like it's falling apart.



## Tenth station: Jesus dies on the cross

Luke 23: 44-46

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this, he breathed his last.

### A Litany of Lament

I died and you built empires in my name. You carried my cross as a banner into battle, painted it on shields and armor and ships, sailed to distant shores and called your conquest holy. You forced my name into the mouths of people who had never heard it, and called that love. The ones who would not convert you enslaved or erased. You did this in my name— I who died refusing to call down violence on those who killed me.

**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

I died outside the city walls, in the place of the skull, among criminals and outcasts, far from the respectable center of things. I have always been found at the edges — the margins, the borders, the places where the unwanted gather. I spent my life among the ones the world throws away, and I told you that what you do to the least of these you do to me. You have built your churches in the comfortable places and called the edges someone else's problem. You have confused your preference for order with my will for the world.

**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

I breathed my last and the curtain of the temple tore from top to bottom. Every wall between the human and the holy came down in that moment. No more gatekeepers, no more barriers, no more insiders and outsiders before God. And yet you have spent two thousand years rebuilding those walls — deciding who is worthy and who is not, who gets to come to the table and who must stand outside and watch.

**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

I gave you everything. I held nothing back. I loved you on the night you betrayed me. I loved you when you ran. I loved you from the cross while you watched or while you hid. I loved you to the very end and beyond the end. This is all I have ever asked of you in return — that you love one another as I have loved you. Just that. Only that. Still that.

**Lord have mercy. We have not loved as you have loved us.**

## Hymn of Response

ELW 605

### Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive



- 1 "For - give our sins as we for - give," you taught us, Lord, to pray;
- 2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart
- 3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew:
- 4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease;



but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.  
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?  
how tri - fling oth - ers' debts to us; how great our debt to you!  
then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.



**Eleventh station: Jesus' Side is Pierced**  
**John 19:31-37**

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. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 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. These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

Jesus, even in death you poured yourself out. You held nothing back. When we are tempted to protect ourselves, to guard what little we have left, to close ourselves off from the pain of this world, remind us of this moment. May we learn to remain open even when it costs us everything.

## Twelfth station: Jesus is Taken Down John 19:38-40

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

Joseph and Nicodemus came in secret while Jesus lived. Now they step forward and touch the body no one else would. In a tender and extravagant act they wrap Jesus in a hundred pounds of spices. When we encounter those who come late to courage and faith, help us receive them with grace. And when we have waited, remind us that it is never too late to show up and offer what we have.



**Thirteenth station: Jesus is Buried**  
**Matthew 27:59-61**

So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Jesus, they laid you in the tomb like a seed in winter, wrapped and hidden away in the dark. When we face death in our own lives, and endings that we cannot fix or rush or explain, give us courage to show up, to plant what we need to plant, and then to roll the stone and trust the darkness to God.



**Fourteenth station: The Sealed Tomb**  
**Matthew 27:62-66**

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise, his disciples may go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

*The congregation responds:*

**The guards are posted and the women are still there. When we sit across from our own sealed tombs— our grief and loss and unanswered prayers— let us stay anyway. Let us not be moved from this vigil while we wait for what Sunday holds.**

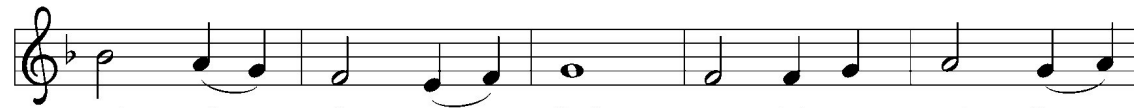
**\*Closing Hymn**

**ELW 803**

**When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the  
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the  
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and  
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a



prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I  
death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that  
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and  
pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss and pour con - tempt on all my pride.  
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.  
sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?  
so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

*After the hymn, you are encouraged to remain for quiet prayer or depart in silence.*

## ***Readers***

Mark Gabor  
Heidi Semijalac  
Gwen Susanek  
Betty Schuette  
Arlene Lasher  
Rick Anderson  
Marie Zahn  
Dale Mihocik  
Jen Lasher-Dobush  
Gayle Adamek  
Ann Droste  
Jill Moliff  
Barb Gaglione

## **Easter Services**

**9:00 Worship- Church of the Covenant  
19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights**

**10:00 Continental Brunch— Church of the Master  
11:00 Worship— Church of the Master  
860 Northfield Road, Bedford**

