

Guests and Visitors – Brief Statement Regarding Communion

“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

We welcome you to worship today as we celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion. As we prepare to receive Holy Communion, we confess that communion was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and that when consecrated, the bread and wine are truly his body and blood!¹ We also believe that every Christian is called to examine themselves before coming to the table, trusting in God’s forgiveness as an answer to our sin, while truly recognizing the body and blood of Jesus, given for us. We further believe that Jesus has made the altar a place of *unity* – a place we are called to be in full agreement and reconciliation with one another.²

From scripture,³ the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), and Zion Lutheran Church, as a part of that Synod, understands unity not only as a matter of relational peace with each other, but public confessional unity as well. Your faith is a public witness, in addition to a personal conviction.⁴ To come to the altar for Holy Communion is to make a public witness that you agree with everything this church body believes, teaches, and confesses. If you are not currently a member of a church within the LCMS, that would be difficult to say truthfully, and though we make no judgment of your genuine faith in Jesus, the call to confessional unity still stands.

Our call from Jesus is to steward God’s gifts faithfully, and to protect the church’s confessional integrity, as well as yours.⁵ Out of love and respect for you, and in obedience to the will of God, please speak with Pastor before coming up to receive communion. If you are not receiving communion today, you are welcome to come forward for a blessing, or to remain in your pew as we sing God’s praises.

Please come and speak with Pastor David after service for any questions you may have – even if you disagree with this approach – for this, too, is a good and Spirit-filled place for conversation! May you be blessed in our time together today as we gather around the Word of God in faith, hope, and love. It is good to be together in the Lord.

¹ Matthew 26:26-28

² Matthew 5:21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:17-18

³ 1 Corinthians 1:10

⁴ Matthew 5:14-16

⁵ 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

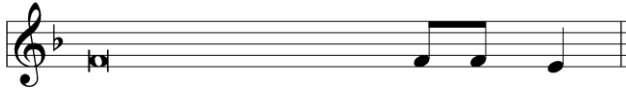
MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 17, 2025

INTRODUCTION The Passover was a time of gathering in God's promises, remembering his saving work, and looking ahead to his salvation even yet to come. It was a time of prayer song together, as well as a meal. Tonight, we sit down with Jesus for the Last Supper, remembering what has come before, and anticipating what is yet to come.

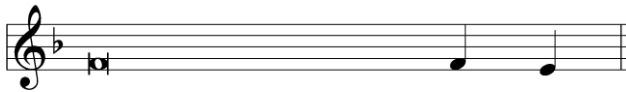
VERSICLES

P Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,



C the light no darkness can o - ver - come.

P Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,



C and the day is almost o - ver.

P Let Your light scatter the darkness



C and il - lu - mine Your Church.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIGHT

P Blessèd are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P In peace let us pray to the Lord:



C Lord, have mer - cy.

The prayers then continue:

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



C A - men.

THE PASSOVER *Exodus 12:1-14*

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.”

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: Lord God, on the night of the Passover, You saved your people, the Israelites, from death by the blood of a spotless lamb.

C: **Save us and help us also, we humbly implore You, O Lord.**

P: Lord, if You had only set the people of Israel free from Egypt that night, it would have been enough. But You stayed with them, kept them from harm, and freed them to be Your people, promising to always be their God.

C **But Your people still turned from You. They failed to trust Your promises, and to follow Your ways. They did not think You were enough.**

P: But You kept your promise to be their God, always. You did not abandon them in Egypt, or in the wilderness, or give them up to be destroyed. You have not abandoned us.

C: **In the fullness of time, You sent Your Son, the spotless Lamb, to save us all from death by His blood.**

P: Gracious Jesus, our Lord and our God, who takes away the sins of the world,

C: **You bore our sins in Your own body on the tree so that we, being dead to sin, might live for righteousness. Guide us as Your chosen people to abide in Your mercy, seek Your will,**

and live in repentance, always. In this life, lead us safely in the wilderness, and guard our hearts, until we are at rest in Your Kingdom – where, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, You live and rule, God forever. Have mercy on us, Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Father of mercies and God of all consolation,

C I confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being. Amen.

P God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

C Amen.

P: Do you believe that the forgiveness I speak is not my forgiveness but God's?

C Yes

P: Let it be done for you as you believe.

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

HYMN 611 Chief of Sinners Though I Be



1 Chief of sinners though I be, Je - sus shed His
5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford By Your Spir - it
blood for me, Died that I might live on high,
and Your Word! When my way - ward heart would stray,
Lives that I might nev - er die. As the branch is
Keep me in the nar - row way; Grace in time of
to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.
need sup - ply While I live and when I die.

THE PASSOVER WITH THE DISCIPLES Matthew 26:17–29

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to

him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

APOSTLES’ CREED




**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.**

HYMN 440 Jesus, I Will Ponder Now



1 Je - sus, I will pon - der now On Your ho - ly pas - sion;
6 Gra - cious - ly my faith re - new; Help me bear my cross - es,
With Your Spir - it me en - dow For such med - i - ta - tion.
Learn - ing hum - ble - ness from You, Peace mid pain and loss - es.
Grant that I in love and faith May the im - age cher - ish
May I give You love for love! Hear me, O my Sav - ior,
Of Your suf - f'ring, pain, and death That I may not per - ish.
That I may in heav'n a - bove Sing Your praise for - ev - er.

Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PAX DOMINI

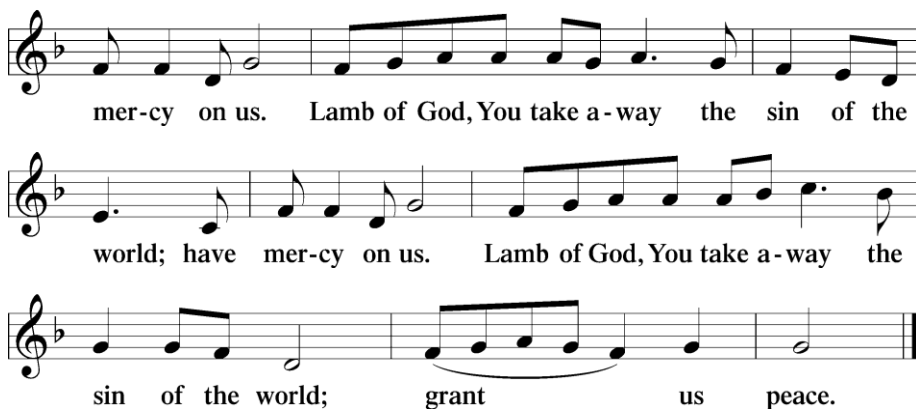
P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

AGNUS DEI



C Lamb of God, You take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

HYMN 621 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



1 Let all mor-tal flesh keep si-lence And with fear and
2 King of kings yet born of Mar-y, As of old on
3 Rank on rank the host of heav-en Spreads its van-guard
4 At His feet the six-winged ser-aph, Cher-u-bim with
trem-bling stand; Pon-der noth-ing earth-ly mind-ed,
earth He stood, Lord of lords in hu-man ves-ture,
on the way, As the Light of Light, de-scend-ing
sleep-less eye, Veil their fac-es to the pres-ence
For with bless-ing in His hand Christ our God to earth de-
In the bod-y and the blood, He will give to all the
From the realms of end-less day, Comes the pow'rs of hell to
As with cease-less voice they cry: "Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-
scend-ing Comes our hom-age to de-mand.
faith-ful His own self for heav'n-ly food.
van-quish As the dark-ness clears a-way.
lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia, Lord Most High!"

HYMN 434 Lamb of God, Pure and Holy



1 Lamb of God, pure and ho - ly, Who on the cross didst suf - fer,
2 Lamb of God, pure and ho - ly, Who on the cross didst suf - fer,
3 Lamb of God, pure and ho - ly, Who on the cross didst suf - fer,



Ev - er pa - tient and low - ly, Thy - self to scorn didst of - fer.
Ev - er pa - tient and low - ly, Thy - self to scorn didst of - fer.
Ev - er pa - tient and low - ly, Thy - self to scorn didst of - fer.



All sins Thou bor - est for us, Else had de - spair reigned o'er us:
All sins Thou bor - est for us, Else had de - spair reigned o'er us:
All sins Thou bor - est for us, Else had de - spair reigned o'er us:



Have mer - cy on us, O Je - sus! O Je - sus!
Have mer - cy on us, O Je - sus! O Je - sus!
Thy peace be with us, O Je - sus! O Je - sus!

Text: tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941 Text and tune: Nicolaus Decius, c. 1485–after 1546
Text and tune: Public domain

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.

C Amen.

MEDITATION ON JESUS IN THE GARDEN

P As they finished the final Passover and fulfilled God's promise of a New Covenant in Christ's body and blood, Jesus and his Disciples went out to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, and to await his betrayal. Tonight, nourished by the same Body and Blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, we now wait with Jesus in the Garden, praying with him as we prepare for what is yet to come. In a moment we will observe the stripping of the altar, a symbol of Jesus stripping away his glory to come and live with us and die for us.

C Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

READING Matthew 26:30-36

³⁰And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ³²But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”

³³Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” ³⁴Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

³⁵Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

LORD’S PRAYER

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.

HYMN 436 Go to Dark Gethsemane

I Go to dark Geth - sem - a - ne, All who feel the
tempt - er's pow'r; Your Re - deem - er's con - flict see,
Watch with Him one bit - ter hour; Turn not from His
griefs a - way; Learn from Je - sus Christ to pray.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854

Tune: Richard Redhead, 1820–1901

Text and tune: Public domain.

STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR reading of Psalm 22 (Read responsively as indicated. Congregation sings LSB 780 “O Lord Hear My Prayer” between sections)

L 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.

C 3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4 In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

L 6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

C: 8 “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”



Text: Taizé Community Tune: Jacques Berthier, 1923-94

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L 9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

10 On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.

C: 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.

12 Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

L: 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 strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

Refrain

L **16** For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet]—

17 I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;

18 they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

C **19** But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dog!

21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!

You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!

22 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

L **23** You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

C **24** For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.

Refrain

C **25** From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.

26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the LORD!
May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.

28 For kingship belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.

**29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.**

Refrain

**☐ 30 Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.**

All leave in silence.

Serving in Worship
Pastor Nieman
Altar Guild: Cynthia Crutchfield
Elder: Colin Fuller, Sr., Jon Sletten