



Good Friday: The Veneration of the Cross

March 29, 2024

7:00 pm

St. Paul Lutheran Church

106 Maple St.

Reading, OH 45215

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The name for this day, “Good Friday,” reminds us that the church gathers not to mourn Jesus’ death, but to mourn where evil still causes suffering today and to celebrate the goodness of our Lord’s victory over death so that we find strength and hope in the tree of life. Through the ancient Bidding Prayer, we pray for all the world for whom Christ died. The strepitus is the loud sound heard at the end of the liturgy, signifying the closure of Jesus’ tomb. We depart in silence without a benediction because tonight’s liturgy does not conclude until Easter begins tomorrow night.

You may stay as long as you like for prayer and meditation.

May our time together be a source of inspiration to you and praise to the Living God. Newcomers and visitors, you are especially welcome. We welcome children to worship.

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Organ Prelude

Variations on O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Johann Pachelbel

Gathering

The ministers enter in silence. Please stand as you are able.

Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

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

C: **Amen.**

Opening Hymn #111 (green hymnal)

“Lamb of God, Pure and Sinless”

Please be seated.

The Passion of Our Lord

John 18:1-27

A reading from the gospel according to John.

¹ Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴ Then Jesus, know-

ing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?”⁵ They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.⁶ When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they stepped back and fell to the ground.⁷ Again he asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”⁸ Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.”⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, “I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.”¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus.¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

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

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

ter also was standing with them and warming himself.

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

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

Hymn #123 (green hymnal)

“Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended” vv. 1-2, 4

John 18:28-19:16a

²⁸ Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against

this man?”³⁰ They answered, “If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.”³¹ Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.” The Jews replied, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death.”³² (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

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

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

^{19:1} Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.² And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe.³ They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face.⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them,

“Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.”⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”⁶ When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.”⁷ The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

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

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

Hymn #109 (green hymnal)

“Go to Dark Gethsemane” vv. 1-3

John 19:16b-30

So they took Jesus; ¹⁷ and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

²⁰ Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹ Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’ ”

²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.” ²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. ²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

“They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

²⁵ And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Je-

sus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.”²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

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

Hymn #92 (green hymnal)

“Were You There” vv. 1-3

Bidding Prayer

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

The congregation kneels as they are able.

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

A: Let us pray for Elizabeth and Suzanne our Bishops, for Emily our Pastor, for Kris, our Music Director, Kate, our Organist, Jane, our Administrative Assistant, Denny, our Custodian, our Church Council, and for all the people of God.

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

A: Let us pray for those preparing for baptism.

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

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

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

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

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

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

Silent prayer.

A: Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of the love made known to us in your Son, that at the name of Jesus, every knee may bow. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

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

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

A: Let us pray for God's creation.

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

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

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

A: Let us pray for those in need.

Silent prayer.

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

C: Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

Special Music: “The Power of the Cross”

Stuart Townend

Veneration of the Cross

P: Behold the life-giving cross, on which was hung the Savior of the whole world.

C: Oh come, let us worship Him.

Solemn Reproaches (Improperia)

P: O my people, O my church, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me.

I led you out of slavery into freedom, and delivered you through the waters of rebirth, but...



P: ...you have pre-pared a cross for your Sa - vior...



C: Ho - ly God, ho - ly and might - y, ho - ly and



im - mor - tal, have mer - cy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me.

Forty years I led you through the desert, feeding you with manna on the way; I saved you from the time of trial and gave you my body, the bread of heaven, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.



C: Ho - ly God, ho - ly and might - y, ho - ly and



im - mor - tal, have mer - cy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me.

I led you on your way in a pillar of cloud and fire, but you led me to the Judgment Hall of Pilate; I guided you by the light of the Holy Spirit, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me.

I planted you as my fairest vineyard, but you brought forth bitter fruit; I made you branches of the vine and never left your side, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me.

I poured out saving water from the rock, but you gave me vinegar to drink; I poured out my life and gave you the New Covenant in my blood, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me.

I gave you a royal scepter, but you gave me a crown of thorns; I gave you the kingdom and crowned you with eternal life, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you? Answer me.

I struck down your enemies, but you struck my head with a reed; I gave you my peace, but you draw the sword in my name, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you? Answer me.

I opened the waters to lead you to the promised land, but you opened my side with a spear; I washed your feet as a sign of my love, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you? Answer me.

I lifted you up to the heights, but you lifted me high on a cross; I

raised you from death and prepared for you the tree of life, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me.

I grafted you into my people Israel, but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me.

I came to you in the least of your brothers and sisters, but I was hungry and you gave me no food, thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

C: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Silence for meditation.

Litany

P: We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection;

C: For by your cross joy has come into the world.

P: May God be merciful and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.
Let your way be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.

P: We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection;

C: For by your cross joy has come into the world.

P: Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

P: We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection;

C: For by your cross joy has come into the world.

P: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Stripping of the Altar

Psalm 22 is chanted as the altar is stripped.

Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Mary the Mother of our Lord, Mary Magdalene, John, and Joseph of Arimathea lay Jesus in the tomb.

Kneel/Sit

The Lord's Prayer is whispered by all.

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;

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.

The strepitus is heard, signifying the closure of Jesus' tomb.

All depart in silence.

Worship Leaders

The Rev. Emily Beckering, Pastor

Kris Keith, Music Director

Kate Wollenburg, Organist

Chet Laine, Assisting Minister

Nancy Erbeck, Reader

Mary, Mother of our Lord: Sarah Papin

Mary Magdalene: Katie Sturgill

John: Nick Huitger

Joseph of Arimathea: Nate Huitger

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Upcoming Events

Friday, March 29

7 pm Good Friday Service

Sunday, March 31: Easter Day

9 am Easter Continental Breakfast

10:30 am Worship Service

After worship: Easter Egg Hunt

Wednesday, April 3

2:30 pm Bible study

Thursday, April 4

6 pm Confirmation Class

Sunday, April 7: 2 Easter

9 am Sunday School & Adult Bible Study/Discussion

10 am Worship Service

After worship: Evangelism Committee

4 pm Conference Youth Game Night

Wednesday, April 10

2:30 pm Bible study