

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH



Title: Icon of the Crucifixion. Author: Andreas Pavias. Date: 15th century.

WE GATHER IN SOLEMN SILENCE.

We rise in body and spirit as we are able.

OPENING VESICLES

This evening, as shadows lengthen,

We come to be present with Jesus.

With the glory of Palm Sunday behind us and the victory of Easter not yet come,

We will sit together in this space with our breaking, our broken hearts.

In this world that is at once beautiful and holy and tragic,

We seek to be present with all who suffer.

In the dark valleys of life, when sorrow threatens to overwhelm,

We long for a safe and sacred space to sit with our grief and our questions.

Jesus Christ, holy friend, we know that you are here with us.

Let us be here with you. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

We pray: Merciful God, **your Son was lifted up on the cross to draw all people to himself. Grant that we who have been born out of his wounded side may at all times find mercy in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Be seated.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

A reading from Isaiah, beginning in the 52nd chapter.

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his

mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:16-25

A reading from Hebrews, the 10th chapter.

[Paul writes] “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds,” he also adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING

John 18:1-19:42 (MSG)¹

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. John, beginning in the 18th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus, having prayed this prayer, left with his disciples and crossed over the brook Kidron at a place where there was a garden. He and his disciples entered it.

Judas, his betrayer, knew the place because Jesus and his disciples went there often. So Judas led the way to the garden, and the Roman soldiers and police sent by the high priests and

¹ MSG = Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), Jn 18:1-19:42.

Pharisees followed. They arrived there with lanterns and torches and swords. Jesus, knowing by now everything that was coming down on him, went out and met them. He said, “Who are you after?”

They answered, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

He said, “That’s me.” The soldiers recoiled, totally taken aback. Judas, his betrayer, stood out like a sore thumb.

Jesus asked again, “Who are you after?”

They answered, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

“I told you,” said Jesus, “that’s me. I’m the one. So if it’s me you’re after, let these others go.” (This validated the words in his prayer, “I didn’t lose one of those you gave.”)

Just then Simon Peter, who was carrying a sword, pulled it from its sheath and struck the Chief Priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. Malchus was the servant’s name.

Jesus ordered Peter, “Put back your sword. Do you think for a minute I’m not going to drink this cup the Father gave me?”

First candle may be extinguished.

*O sacred head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.*

**‘O Sacred Head, Now Wounded’
ELW 351**

Then the Roman soldiers under their commander, joined by the Jewish police, seized Jesus and tied him up. They took him first to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the Chief Priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it was to their advantage that one man die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. That other disciple was known to the Chief Priest, and so he went in with Jesus to the Chief Priest’s courtyard. Peter had to stay outside. Then the other disciple went out, spoke to the doorkeeper, and got Peter in.

The young woman who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, “Aren’t you one of this man’s disciples?”

He said, “No, I’m not.”

The servants and police had made a fire because of the cold and were huddled there warming themselves. Peter stood with them, trying to get warm.

Annas interrogated Jesus regarding his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered, “I’ve spoken openly in public. I’ve taught regularly in meeting places and the Temple, where the Jews all come together. Everything has been out in the open. I’ve said nothing in secret. So why are you treating me like a conspirator? Question those who have been listening to me. They know well what I have said. My teachings have all been aboveboard.”

When he said this, one of the policemen standing there slapped Jesus across the face, saying, “How dare you speak to the Chief Priest like that!”

Jesus replied, “If I’ve said something wrong, prove it. But if I’ve spoken the plain truth, why this slapping around?”

Then Annas sent him, still tied up, to the Chief Priest Caiaphas.

Meanwhile, Simon Peter was back at the fire, still trying to get warm. The others there said to him, “Aren’t you one of his disciples?”

He denied it, “Not me.”

One of the Chief Priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?”

Again, Peter denied it. Just then a rooster crowed.

*How pale thou art with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn;
how does thy face now languish,
which once was bright as morn!
Thy grief and bitter passion
were all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but thine the deadly pain.*

Second candle may be extinguished.

They led Jesus then from Caiaphas to the Roman governor’s palace. It was early morning. They themselves didn’t enter the palace because they didn’t want to be disqualified from eating the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and spoke. “What charge do you bring against this man?”

They said, “If he hadn’t been doing something evil, do you think we’d be here bothering you?”

Pilate said, “You take him. Judge him by your law.”

The Jews said, “We’re not allowed to kill anyone.” (This would confirm Jesus’ word indicating the way he would die.)

Pilate went back into the palace and called for Jesus. He said, “Are you the ‘King of the Jews?’”

Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you this about me?”

Pilate said, “Do I look like a Jew? Your people and your high priests turned you over to me. What did you do?”

“My kingdom,” said Jesus, “doesn’t consist of what you see around you. If it did, my followers would fight so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But I’m not that kind of king, not the world’s kind of king.”

Then Pilate said, “So, are you a king or not?”

Jesus answered, “You tell me. Because I am King, I was born and entered the world so that I could witness to the truth. Everyone who cares for truth, who has any feeling for the truth, recognizes my voice.”

Pilate said, “What is truth?”

Then he went back out to the Jews and told them, “I find nothing wrong in this man. It’s your custom that I pardon one prisoner at Passover. Do you want me to pardon the ‘King of the Jews?’”

They shouted back, “Not this one, but Barabbas!” Barabbas was a Jewish freedom fighter.

*What language shall I borrow
to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to thee.*

Third candle may be extinguished.

So Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on his head, threw a purple robe over him, and approached him with, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they greeted him with slaps in the face.

Pilate went back out again and said to them, “I present him to you, but I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime.” Just then Jesus came out wearing the thorn crown and purple robe.

Pilate announced, “Here he is: the Man.”

When the high priests and police saw him, they shouted in a frenzy, “Crucify! Crucify!”

Pilate told them, “You take him. You crucify him. I find nothing wrong with him.”

The Jews answered, “We have a law, and by that law he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

*Lord, be my consolation;
shield me when I must die;
remind me of thy passion
when my last hour draws nigh.
These eyes, new faith receiving,
from thee shall never move;
for all who die believing
die safely in thy love.*

Fourth candle may be extinguished.

When Pilate heard this, he became even more scared. He went back into the palace and said to Jesus, “Where did you come from?”

Jesus gave no answer.

Pilate said, “You won’t talk? Don’t you know that I have the authority to pardon you, and the authority to—crucify you?”

Jesus said, “You haven’t a shred of authority over me except what has been given you from heaven. That’s why the one who betrayed me to you has committed a far greater fault.”

At this, Pilate tried his best to pardon him, but the Jews shouted him down: “If you pardon this man, you’re no friend of Caesar’s. Anyone setting himself up as ‘king’ defies Caesar.”

When Pilate heard those words, he led Jesus outside. He sat down at the judgment seat in the area designated Stone Court (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was the preparation day for Passover. The hour was noon. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your king."

They shouted back, "Kill him! Kill him! Crucify him!"

Pilate said, "I am to crucify your king?"

The high priests answered, "We have no king except Caesar."

Pilate caved in to their demand. He turned him over to be crucified.

Fifth candle may be extinguished.

*When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross'

ELW 803

At the mention of "the place called Skull Hill", we rise in body and spirit as we are able.

They took Jesus away. Carrying his cross, Jesus went out to the place called Skull Hill (the name in Hebrew is Golgotha), where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, Jesus in the middle. Pilate wrote a sign and had it placed on the cross. It read:

JESUS THE NAZARENE
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Many of the Jews read the sign because the place where Jesus was crucified was right next to the city. It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The Jewish high priests objected. "Don't write," they said to Pilate, " 'The King of the Jews.' Make it, 'This man said, 'I am the King of the Jews.' ' "

Pilate said, "What I've written, I've written."

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.*

Sixth candle may be extinguished.

When they crucified him, the Roman soldiers took his clothes and divided them up four ways, to each soldier a fourth. But his robe was seamless, a single piece of weaving, so they said to each other, "Let's not tear it up. Let's throw dice to see who gets it." This confirmed the Scripture that said, "They divided up my clothes among them and threw dice for my coat." (The soldiers validated the Scriptures!)

While the soldiers were looking after themselves, Jesus' mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her. He said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother.

Jesus, seeing that everything had been completed so that the Scripture record might also be complete, then said, "I'm thirsty."

A jug of sour wine was standing by. Someone put a sponge soaked with the wine on a javelin and lifted it to his mouth. After he took the wine, Jesus said, "It's done ... complete." Bowing his head, he offered up his spirit.

***See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?***

Seventh candle may be extinguished.

We observe a time of silence.

Then the Jews, since it was the day of Sabbath preparation, and so the bodies wouldn't stay on the crosses over the Sabbath (it was a high holy day that year), petitioned Pilate that their legs be broken to speed death, and the bodies taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man crucified with Jesus, and then the other. When they got to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. One of the soldiers stabbed him in the side with his spear. Blood and water gushed out.

The eyewitness to these things has presented an accurate report. He saw it himself and is telling the truth so that you, also, will believe.

These things that happened confirmed the Scripture, "Not a bone in his body was broken," and the other Scripture that reads, "They will stare at the one they pierced."

After all this, Joseph of Arimathea (he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he was intimidated by the Jews) petitioned Pilate to take the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission. So Joseph came and took the body.

Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus at night, came now in broad daylight carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. They took Jesus' body and, following the Jewish burial custom, wrapped it in linen with the spices. There was a garden near the place he was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been placed. So, because it was Sabbath preparation for the Jews and the tomb was convenient, they placed Jesus in it.

***Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.***

Eighth candle may be extinguished.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

We rise in body and spirit as we are able.

BIDDING PRAYER

We pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy church throughout the world. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for Elizabeth and Timothy our bishops, for David and Spence our pastors, for the members of our Congregation Council, our teachers, our musicians, and all servants of the church, and for all the people of God. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for those preparing for baptism. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for our sisters and brothers who share our faith in Jesus Christ. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. *Silent prayer.*

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. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We pray for those who do not believe in God. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for God's creation. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for those who serve in public office. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

We pray for those in need. *Silent prayer.*

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. **Amen.**

Finally, we pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask: **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.**

We stand as we are able and face the Great Cross at the front of the Sanctuary.

VENERATION OF THE CROSS

The following dialogue is chanted three times, the assembly echoing the leader.

Behold, the life-giving cross, on which was hung the Savior of the whole | world.
Oh, come, let us worship | him.

*We sit and reflect upon our time in worship this night.
The Pastors prostrate themselves before the cross
as an act of the Church's supreme humility before the crucified Christ.*

THE SOLEMN REPROACHES

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 you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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

By your holy cross you have redeemed the | world.

We depart in silence.

Worship at Zion continues with Easter Sunrise Service this coming Sunday at 7:00 a.m., followed by our community breakfast at 8:00 a.m., after which we continue at 9:30 a.m. as we celebrate The Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord during which we will share Holy Communion.

PARTICIPANTS

If anyone is interested in reading scriptures, please contact the Church Office.

Senior Pastor.....Reverend David T. Drysdale II
Associate Pastor.....Reverend Spence Robertson
Assisting Minister.....Marc Ladnier