

This service of worship is taken from an early Christian service called Tenebrae. The name Tenebrae is the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows." Through this service we will experience only a small portion of Christ's pain and suffering the day of His crucifixion. One of the most conspicuous features of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles until all is darkness. As it gets darker and darker we can reflect on the great emotional and physical pain that was very real for Jesus that day. You may participate with us in gradually making your space darker if you wish during our worship.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Behold the cross,
on which hung the Savior of the world.
Come let us worship.

My people, what wrong have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!
Through baptism, I led you from slavery to freedom,
but you lead your Savior to the cross.

**Holy God, holy and merciful,
holy and just, have mercy upon us.**

My people, what wrong have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!
I led you through the wilderness.
I fed you with the bread of life,
the manna from heaven,
but you lead your Savior to the cross.

**Holy God, holy and merciful,
holy and just, have mercy upon us.**

My people, what wrong have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!
I planted you as my fairest vineyard,
I grafted you into the one true vine,
I gave you the water of salvation,
but you give me gall and vinegar to drink,
and leave me thirsting upon a cross.

**Holy God, holy and merciful,
holy and just, have mercy upon us.**

My people, what wrong have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!
I gave you a royal scepter,
but you give me a crown of thorns.
I raised you up to newness of life,
but you raise me high upon a cross.

**Holy God, holy and merciful,
holy and just, have mercy upon us.**

My people, what wrong have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!
What more could I have done for you?
I gave you my peace and my truth,
but you fight in my name,
and divide my Church,
and you lead your Savior to the cross.

**Holy God, holy and merciful,
holy and just, have mercy upon us.**

My people, what wrong have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!
I come in your brother and sister,
hungry, yet you give me no food,
thirsty, yet you give me no drink,
a stranger, and you do not welcome me,
naked, and you do not clothe me,
sick and in prison, and you do not visit me.
but you lead your Savior to the cross.

**Holy God, holy and merciful,
holy and just, have mercy upon us.**

L: Let us pray,

C: **Most gracious God, look with mercy upon your family gathered here for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed, given into sinful hands, and suffered death upon the cross. Strengthen our faith and forgive our betrayals as we enter the way of His passion; through Him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen**

OPENING HYMN #104 *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

In the cross of Christ I glory, tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me, hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me; lo, it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 53:1-12 ¹Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²For 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. ³He 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.

⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵But 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. ⁶All 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.

⁷He 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. ⁸By 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. ⁹They 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.

¹⁰Yet 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. ¹¹Out 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. ¹²Therefore 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.

SECOND LESSON: Hebrews 10:16-25 [After the Holy Spirit says,] ¹⁶“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,” ¹⁷he also adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” ¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let 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. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: (meaning of the 2nd Article of the Apostles' Creed from Luther's Small Catechism)

C: O Jesus Christ, true God, Son of the Father from eternity, and true man, born of the Virgin Mary – You are my Lord. At great cost, you have saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil, not with silver or gold, but with Your Holy and precious blood, and your innocent suffering and death. Thank you for doing all this that I may be Your own, live under You in Your kingdom, and serve You in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as You are risen from the dead and live and rule eternally. Amen.

“REFLECTIONS BY PEOPLE NEAR THE CROSS”

First Word from the Cross:

Luke 23:32-38: ³²Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus^[a] there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”^[b] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah^[c] of God, his chosen one!” ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸There was also an inscription over him,^[d] “This is the King of the Jews.”

“One of the Soldiers”

Prayer

HYMN #117 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (vs. 1-2)

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.

How art thou pale with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn;
how does that visage 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 Word from the Cross:

Luke 23:39-43: ³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding^[a] him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah?^[b] Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into^[c] your kingdom.” ⁴³He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

“The Repentant Criminal”

Prayer

HYMN #112 Jesus in Thy Dying Woes (vs. 4-6)

Jesus, pitying the sighs of the thief, who near thee dies,
promising him paradise: hear us, holy Jesus.

May we in our guilt and shame still thy love and mercy claim,
calling humbly on thy name: hear us, holy Jesus.

May our hearts to thee incline, looking from our cross to thine.
Cheer our souls with hope divine: hear us, holy Jesus.

Third Word from the Cross:

John 19:25b-27: ^{25b}Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

"Mary, the Mother of Jesus"

Prayer

HYMN #110 *At the Cross, Her Station Keeping* (vs. 1-2)

At the cross, her station keeping, stood the mournful
mother weeping, close to Jesus to the last.
Through her heart, his sorrow sharing, all his bitter
anguish bearing, now at length the sword had passed.

Oh, how sad and sore distressed was that mother
highly blessed of the sole begotten one!
Oh, the depth of her affliction as she saw the
crucifixion of her dying, glorious Son!

Fourth Word from the Cross:

Matthew 27:31-36 & 45-46 : ³¹After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. ³²As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots;^[a] ³⁶then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ⁴⁵From noon on, darkness came over the whole land^[a] until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

"Simon of Cyrene"

Prayer

HYMN #385 *What Wondrous Love is This* (vs. 1-2)

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

Fifth Word from the Cross:

John 19:28-29: ²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." ²⁹A 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.

"Mary of Magdala"

Prayer

HYMN #394 *Lost in the Night* (vs. 1-2)

Lost in the night do the people yet languish
longing for morning the darkness to vanquish,
plaintively heaving a sigh full of anguish.
Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?

Must we be vainly awaiting the morrow?
Shall those who have light no light let us borrow,
giving no heed to our burden of sorrow?
Will you help us soon? Will you help us soon?

Sixth Word from the Cross:

John 19:30-37: ³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. ³¹Since 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. ³²Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵(He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows^[a] that he tells the truth.) ³⁶These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." ³⁷And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

"Nicodemus"

Prayer

HYMN #92 *Were you There?* (vs. 1-2)

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Seventh Word from the Cross:

Luke 23:46-56: ⁴⁶Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."^[a] ⁴⁸And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. ⁴⁹But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. ⁵⁰Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, ⁵¹had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. ⁵²This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. ⁵⁴It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning.^[b] ⁵⁵The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

"Joseph of Arimathea"

Prayer

HYMN #92 Were you there? (vs 3)

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

As the final candle is extinguished, there is a loud noise, representing the sealing of the tomb.

SILENCE & DARKNESS