



St. John's Lutheran Church
March 28, 2024 at 6:30pm

The Triduum

Holy Thursday marks a unique place in the church calendar. Just as Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, so Holy Thursday marks the end of Lenten preparation and the beginning of the three holy days of Christendom, called the Triduum (Latin for “three days,” referring to Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). In a way, from tonight all the way until Easter is meant to be one uninterrupted experience of worship and hope. Tonight’s service is the first in a series of these three special days. Just as Jesus’ suffering and death cannot be properly understood apart from his resurrection, his resurrection cannot be properly understood apart from his suffering and death.

Holy Thursday

A little about tonight’s service: First, to underscore the end of the Lenten time of preparation, and to recall Jesus’ discourse with his disciples at the beginning of the first Holy Thursday, the Gospel reading is placed at the beginning of the service.

Holy Thursday is also known as Maundy Thursday (*maundy* from the Latin *mandatum* meaning *command*). This command is found in John 13:34. The change from *maundy* to *holy* allows our focus to expand on to other words and actions of Jesus that Thursday evening, including the institution of Holy Communion.

Holy Communion is celebrated in tonight’s service. Receiving Christ’s body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins is always appropriate in worship, and especially the night on which Jesus instituted the Sacrament.

The post-communion portion of the service takes us from the upper room in Jerusalem where the disciples celebrated the Passover to the Garden of Gethsemane in preparation for Good Friday. The altar, which is one of the most prominent symbols of Christ in the church, is solemnly stripped of its vestments in memory of the abandonment of Jesus in Gethsemane. Psalm 88 is spoken as the altar furnishings are removed.

The service ends abruptly. The congregation hears no closing blessing...yet. Rather, the three holy days of the Triduum flow into one another as the congregation disperses in silence to reassemble for worship on Good Friday. The benediction is waiting for us on Easter Sunday when we celebrate Jesus’ victory over death. God bless your time spent with him and us this evening.



Holy Thursday

Welcome to St. John's

Our Opening Hymn: When you Awoke That Thursday Morning

Jesus loved sinners until his end so that God's love for his church would have no end.

Please follow the instructions for singing and STAND For the last verse.



All - 1 When you woke that Thurs - day morn - ing, Sav - ior, teach - er,
Women - 2 Nev - er so a - lone and lone - ly, long - ing with tor -
Choir - 3 What was there that you could give them that would nev - er
Men - 4 One in faith, in love u - nit - ed, all one bod - y,
All - 5 One day all the Church will cap - ture that bright vi - sion



faith - ful friend, thoughts of self and safe - ty scorn - ing, know - ing
ment - ed heart to be with your dear ones on - ly for a
be out - spent, what great gift that would out - live them, what last
you the head, when we meet, by you in - vit - ed, you are
glo - ri - ous, and your saints will know the rap - ture that your



how the day would end; Lamb of God, fore - told for
qui - et hour a - part: sin - less Lamb and fall - en
will and tes - ta - ment? "Show me and the world you
with us, as you said. One with you and one an -
heart de - sired for us, when the longed - for peace and



a - ges, now at last the hour had come when but One could
crea - ture, one last pas - chal meal to eat, one last les - son
love me, know me as the Lamb of God: do this in re -
oth - er in a u - ni - ty sub - lime, see in us your
un - ion of the great - est and the least meet in joy - ous,



pay sin's wa - ges: you as - sumed their dread - ful sum.
as their teach - er, wash - ing your dis - ci - ples' feet.
mem - brance of me, eat this bod - y, drink this blood."
sis - ter, broth - er, one in ev - 'ry place and time.
blest com - mun - ion in your nev - er - end - ing feast.

The Holy Thursday Gospel – Mark 14:12-26

¹²On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

¹³So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

¹⁶The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

¹⁹They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"

²⁰"It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. ²¹The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

²³Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵"Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

²⁶When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Our Lenten Confession

This Lenten season we have heard again how our Lord walked the path of suffering which led to the cross for our salvation, and we have heard our Lord's call to intensify our struggle against sin, the fear of death, and the devil's lies -- all that keeps us from loving God and one another. This is the struggle to which we were committed at Baptism. God's forgiveness and the power of his Spirit to amend our lives continue with us because of his love for us in Jesus our Savior.

Within the family of the Church, God never wearies of giving peace and new life. In the absolution, we receive forgiveness as from God himself. This absolution we should not doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven, for it comes to us in the name and by the command of our Lord.

We who receive God's love in Jesus Christ are called to love one another, to be servants to each other, as Jesus became our servant.

In Holy Communion, first instituted on this night, the members of Christ's body participate most intimately in his love. Remembering our Lord's Last Supper with his disciples, we eat the bread and drink the cup of this meal. Together we receive the Lord's gift of his body and blood for forgiveness and participate in that new covenant that makes us one with him and one another. The Lord's Supper is the promise of the great banquet we will share with all the faithful when our Lord returns, the joyous culmination of our reconciliation with God and each other.

As we begin the solemn celebration of our Lord's passion, let us confess our sins to him, receive his absolution, and be reconciled to God and each other in Christian love.

**Holy God, gracious Father,
I am sinful by nature
and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.
I have not loved you with my whole heart;
I have not loved others as I should.
I deserve your punishment both now and forever.
But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins
with his innocent suffering and death.
Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Silence for meditation and reflection

Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ who suffered and died for us.

**Cleanse me from my sins.
Release me from my guilt.
Grant me your Holy Spirit to amend my sinful life.**

God's Absolution

The almighty God has been merciful to us and has sent his Son to die for all. For his sake, God forgives our sins and calls us from darkness to his marvelous light. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven us and reconciled us to God and has promised us the power to forgive and love each other. Relying on his promise, therefore, be reconciled with one another.

Brothers and sisters, may the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, in our words, and in our actions.

The Account of the Passover – Exodus 12:1-27(selected verses)

The LORD showed the lengths to which his love will move him when he spared the lives of the Israelites through the blood of an innocent lamb. In the Passover, the LORD gave a foreshadowing of the FULL extent of his love when he himself would lay down his life for the world.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt... “The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats... Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come... Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down... When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’”

Our Song of Trust: Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

CW 663 vs 1,4

1 Soul, a - dorn your - self with glad - ness; leave be -
4 Now I kneel be - fore you low - ly, filled with

hind all gloom and sad - ness. Come in - to the day-light's
joy most deep and ho - ly, as with trem-bling awe and

splen - dor; there with joy your prais - es ren - der
won - der on your might - y work I pon - der,

un - to him whose grace un-bound - ed has this won - drous
by such mys - ter - y sur-round - ed, depths that no one

sup - er found - ed. He, though reign - ing high and
ev - er sound - ed. None may dare to pierce un -

ho - ly, deigns to dwell with you most low - ly.
bid - den se - crets that with you are hid - den.

Devotion – Luke 22:19-20

¹⁹And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

²⁰In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

After the devotion, please stand for prayer.

Prayer of the Church

Lord God, heavenly Father, author of the everlasting covenant and giver of the cup of salvation,
We gather in your courts to offer you our sacrifice of thanksgiving.

For fulfilling your promise to establish a new covenant through the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ,
We give you humble and hearty thanks.

As our Lord Jesus Christ gave thanks to you when he broke the bread, as he gave thanks to you when he took the cup,
We also give you thanks.

Precious Savior, both Priest and offering, awe and wonder fill our hearts as we partake of your body, broken for us, and your blood, shed for us.
We praise you, bless you, and adore you, Lord Jesus Christ.

In our poverty of righteousness, we have nothing to offer. Without your tremendous sacrifice, we would still be in our sins,
But through your sacrament of the New Testament, we are assured that our iniquities are forgiven and our sins are no longer remembered.

O Holy Spirit, dwell within us as we remember our Lord’s death in this sacrament. Enter our hearts to strengthen our faith and fill us with gratitude for your great mercy.
Move us to encourage one another to love and to do good works.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

As our Lord served his disciples by washing their feet, so may we also humbly serve one another.
Help us live our lives as sacrifices of thanksgiving to him who first loved us.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Our Offerings of Thanks

Offertory by Choir ~ Now the Acceptable Time

"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich"
(2 Corinthians 8:9)

We Prepare our hearts for The Sacrament

What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.

What shall I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or allowed indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?

When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.

How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.

What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.

How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.

In This Blest

CW 669 vs 1,4

The choir will introduce the first verse, the congregation is invited to join on vs. 2-3

1 In this ho - ly, blest com - mun - ion plain and
2 In this ho - ly, blest com - mun - ion Christ and
3 In this ho - ly, blest com - mun - ion saints are

pre - cious gifts com - bine: bread is tru - ly
sin - ners join as one— they, the Fa - ther's
gath - ered side by side, joined to - geth - er,

Je - sus' bod - y, blood of Je - sus joins with wine.
ran - somed chil - dren, he, the Fa - ther's right - ful Son.
broth - ers, sis - ters, in one bod - y u - ni - fied,

What a bless - ing Christ is giv - ing; what a
Here the loft - y feeds the low - ly, each his
faith in Je - sus, hope of heav - en, love for

lov - ing, gra - cious host, in his sup - per
high - ly cher - ished guest; here the guilt - y
oth - ers all in - creased by the full - ness

well pro - vid - ing what his peo - ple need the most!
taste for - give - ness, here the wea - ry find their rest.
of the ban - quet, by the rich - ness of the feast.

Our Prayer of Thanks

Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us. By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will. By his innocent death, he overcame hell. By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

Amen.

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

God's Word speaks of the spiritual blessings of this Sacrament (Matthew 26:28) and warns against the spiritual dangers of being unprepared for this holy meal (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Because we deeply care about you and don't want to see anyone's faith harmed, we ask that if you have not studied with us or spoken with our pastors first, that you refrain from joining in the Sacrament today. We are not judging your love for Jesus but rather displaying loving caution for all involved. Please feel free to ask one of our Pastors if you have any questions. We are eager to listen and share over an open Bible.

Distribution Song: Take and Eat

The choir will sing the verses, the congregation is invited to join on the refrains



- 1 I am the Word that spoke and light was made; I am the seed that died to be reborn;
I am the bread that comes from heav'n above; I am the vine that fills your cup with joy. (Refrain)
- 2 I am the way that leads the exile home; I am the truth that sets the captive free;
I am the life that raises up the dead; I am your peace, true peace my gift to you. (Refrain)
- 3 I am the Lamb that takes away your sin; I am the gate that guards you night and day;
you are my flock: you know the shepherd's voice; you are my own: your ransom is my blood. (Refrain)
- 4 I am the cornerstone that God has laid; a chosen stone and precious in his eyes;
you are God's dwelling-place, on me you rest; like living stones, a temple for God's praise. (Refrain)
- 5 I am the light that came into the world; I am the light that darkness cannot hide;
I am the Morning Star that never sets; lift up your face, in you my light will shine. (Refrain)
- 6 I am the first and last, the Living One; I am the Lord who died that you might live;
I am the bridegroom, this my wedding song; you are my bride, come to the marriage feast. (Refrain)

STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

The altar is a symbol of Christ's presence among us. As the altar is stripped, Christ's sufferings are pictured for us, as explained step by step below. Psalm 88 is spoken to help us understand Jesus' complete abandonment by his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. He goes to the cross completely alone.

***The lights are dimmed to darkness.** The darkness reminds us of dark Gethsemane and of the darkness of Good Friday.*

***The adornments around the altar and Communion vessels are removed.** The altar is left all alone. This reminds us that Christ was left all alone in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

***The candles are extinguished and removed.** This reminds us that Christ's life was snuffed out for us on the cross.*

***The paraments are removed, and the altar is alone,** reminding us of all that Christ endured for us in that dark night of Maundy Thursday and on the darker day that followed.*

We leave the sanctuary in quiet contemplation of Christ's great love for us.

Psalm 88

O God, day and night I cry to you.

My soul is troubled;

my life draws near the grave.

The lowest depth, darkest pits

are my surroundings.

Woes overwhelm me

in wave after wave!

My eyes are dim with grief;

I spread my hands before you.

Are your wonders only shown

unto the dead?

Is your faithfulness declared

in destruction?

Is your love, Lord,

declared but in the grave?

O God, in the morn I pray to you.

My soul is troubled;

my life draws to its end.

All my friends, all my loved ones

gone before me.

Utter darkness is now

my only friend.

Why do you turn away

your face from me, my Lord God?

Must I bear alone

this endless misery?

Hear my prayer,

hear my cry of desperation.

Take this burden—

Lord only you can save.

After the stripping of the altar, the congregation is asked to leave in silence.

Silent Prayer –

Dear Lord, thank you for providing rest for my soul and strength for my faith in your wonderful Word and Sacrament tonight. When the devil tempts me to think that my sins are too great, or your love is not strong enough for me to be forgiven – then lead me back to your unshakeable words of promise, “poured out for the forgiveness of my sins!” Jesus, there are many things in this world that are uncertain, but your love for me and a place in your heaven are not among them. In true repentance and genuine thanks – may I live my life not to serve me, but to serve you, Amen!

Friday,

Good Friday Worship

1:30 pm – Good Friday Worship

6:30 pm – Good Friday Worship into Darkness (Tenebrae)

Sunday,

Easter Sunday Worship –

7:00 am – Easter Dawn Worship

10:00 am – Easter Festival Worship (Easter Breakfast between services)

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St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – WELS

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