

## Sermon followed by Service

March 28, 2024 - Maundy Holy Thursday 2024

Outside the walls of an upper room in Jerusalem, the enemies of Jesus are getting ready. For a long time they've wanted Jesus dead. Now, after Palm Sunday, with crowds cheering Jesus, with crowds wanting to see and hear more of Jesus, Jesus' enemies are scheming all the more urgently to get rid of him. But the crowds were always in their way. Until now. Now they have Judas on their payroll; now they have Judas offering a way. So somewhere out there, they lurk and conspire.

Soon it will all come to a head, not just their plot against Jesus, but God's plan for Jesus. The next 24 hours will be a whirlwind - the mob arresting Jesus in the Garden; Jesus put on trial before Annas and Caiphas, and Pilate and Herod; Jesus crucified on the cross.

But not yet. Not here. For a few hours in this second-floor room, it's just Jesus and his disciples. How he has longed for this moment! This time with his disciples is precious to him. Throughout his ministry, he's looked for time to be alone with them. Later tonight, when Jesus is praying in the Garden, he'll bring three of his disciples along and insist that they watch and pray with him - and he's disappointed when they don't. Outside this upper room, his enemies lie in wait, but inside it's Jesus with his disciples.

Now Jesus and his disciples aren't just hanging out. They've gathered to celebrate the Passover. Some 14-15 hundred years earlier, God had delivered his people out of slavery in Egypt. Egypt wasn't letting go easily; even after nine plagues, Egypt was still holding out against God. So God would break their spirit - he would strike down all the firstborn in the land. But he offered a way out. He commanded his people to celebrate a special meal: at twilight to slaughter for supper a young lamb without defect; to paint its blood on the doorframes of their houses; to roast it and eat it and wait for the Lord to do his thing. That night, when the LORD came to judge, when the LORD came to deliver, the LORD passed over the houses marked with the blood of the lamb. And the LORD delivered, just as he had promised.

Now it was time to remember that promise. God had put it on his people's calendar - every year they were to celebrate the Passover meal, not just to remember what God had done to deliver his people in the past, but to look ahead to what God would do to deliver his people in the future. The Passover lamb was God's picture of the perfect Lamb of God who would be sacrificed for the sins of the world - his blood would protect them from God's wrath, his life and death would set them free from their slavery to sin and death. Now it was time to remember that promise, and Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb of God, was eager to share it with his disciples. More than that, Jesus was eager to share himself with his disciples.

What Jesus does that night with the Passover isn't just a new twist on an old tradition. Jesus is giving us something new and better. For the first time, Jesus bequeaths to his people his real body and blood, his very self that he will give in death the next day. On this night, he gives a down payment on the new covenant, the new pact and promise God was enacting - **"I will be your God and you will be my people. ... I will forgive your sins and remember your transgressions no longer."**

What a wonderful promise for his disciples! Not just in words, but by giving himself he promises them - in all the trouble that was coming their way - **"I will be your God and you will be my people."** For all the ways they would crack under the pressure and fail their Lord and Savior - **"I will forgive your sins and remember your transgressions no longer."** What a wonderful promise for us! Not just in words, but by giving himself Jesus promises us - in all the trouble that comes our way - **"I will be your God and you will be my people."** For all the ways we crack and fail our Lord and Savior - **"I will forgive your sins and remember your transgressions no longer."** And just as Jesus was eager to share that promise with his disciples, Jesus is eager to share that promise with us.

And that eagerness goes both ways, doesn't it? Just as Jesus is eager to share his promise with us, we're eager to have Jesus share his promise with us, aren't we?

Right now, enemies - enemies of Christ and his Church - are out there, trouble is out there, looking to stop Jesus, looking to separate Jesus from his church, working to separate us from Jesus. The people of this world rise up

to put God and his people on trial. They stand in judgment over God's good gifts. They ridicule the words God has given us and they conspire to prevent God's words from influencing us or them, our culture or our children. They judge us to be out of touch and are happy to exclude us, or to include us in their sin. Moved my Satan, all around us evil forces lurk and conspire.

Which is why it's so good for us to be here, in this room, in God's house with God's people, with Jesus.

Not that we don't bring sin in here with us. Our church doors don't have some sort of spiritual power that keeps sin out. Where there are sinners, there is sin. On that first Maundy Holy Thursday, sin was in that upper room, not just in Judas, but in all the twelve. And today, we are no different. We bring our sin, our guilt, our doubts and fears.

Which is why we need to be here all the more! Jesus is eager to gather us together here, to assure us that his blood covers our sins and shields us from God's judgment. He reminds us - "**He will be our God**" - we have him exercising his rule and power and control over everything and everyone for us. He reminds us - "**we will be his people**" - he has us safe in his heart and safe in his hands.

He reminds us, not just with words, but with himself. He doesn't just speak to us across a table; he invites us to the table, his table. He invites: "Come with me away from the world. I'm here for you - my body for you, my blood for you. To give you peace - I'm here for you. To make your strong - I'm here for you. Better than the world - I'm here for you." He invites: "Come with me away from the world, just you and me."

Not just individually, but together. Here we enjoy communion together with Jesus and communion together with each other. As Jesus gathers us together, he gathers us to believe together as one. As Jesus gathers us together, he gathers us as brothers and sisters with the same needs and the same promise. Together we need and we receive the same peace and forgiveness. Together we need and we receive the same strength. Together we need and we receive the same hope and promise. For Jesus, it never gets old. He's eager to gather us; he's eager to be with us. And he's eager to see us eager to be with him, eager to be with each other.

If this life is like a courtroom where the world puts God and his people on trial, think of this Supper as a recess in the trial - a place free from accusations, a place free from hostile witnesses, a place free from judgments. A place of peace with God and peace with each other. Yes, a place a bit like heaven. Amen.

# Holy Thursday

St. John Lutheran  
Libertyville, Illinois  
March 28, 2024



# HOLY THURSDAY

March 28, 2024

**WE WELCOME OUR GUESTS** and pray that all who are with us today are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns and by an encouraging and warm welcome. Our worship service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ: forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven. The notes below may be helpful for your worship and time with us today. If you have questions, please ask! We are blessed to have you with us!

## **Our Communion Practice**

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church, celebrating the Lord's Supper only with those who are close and united with us in faith and teaching. In this sacrament we give public confession of our doctrinal unity and fellowship; therefore, we invite visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us in the sacrament. We ask our fellow Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice and refrain from the Lord's Supper at this time. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor.

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## **We Care about Your Children**

We love to have children with us for worship. Baby noises can be beautiful to our Savior who said, "Let the little children come to me." If children are crying loudly, our nursery and Gathering Area (back of the church) are audio-equipped and available for you and your young children. After the children regain their composure, come back so we can all worship together.

## **We Care about Your Special Needs**

*Hearing Assistance* for those with hearing aids is provided through our *Hearing Loop*. More information is available from an usher.

A *wheelchair lift* is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.

## **Our Facilities**

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

ORGAN MEDITATION

*Joyous Light*

Setting by Jeremy S. Bakken

*Lord Jesus, Who, Our Souls to Save*

Friedrich Zipp

*O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken*

*Lamb of God, Pure and Holy and O Christ, Thou Lamb of God*

Kevin Hildebrand

*Forty Days and Forty Nights*

*In the Hour of Trial*

Charles Callahan

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

Arranged by Don Whitman

OPENING HYMN

*"O Lord, We Praise You"*

Hymn 673

M: Lord God, you have brought us safely to this hour of evening prayer. We thank you for providing all that we need for body and life. Bless us who have gathered in your name. Forgive our sins. Speak to our hearts. Dispel our sorrows with the comfort of your Word, and receive our hymns of thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ, our living Savior, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

THE GREAT LITANY

M: O God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth,

C: **Have mercy on us.**

M: O God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

C: **Have mercy on us.**

M: O God the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide,

C: **Have mercy on us.**

M: From all spiritual blindness; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all lack of charity:

C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**

M: From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, from hardness of heart and contempt for your Word and your will:

C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**

- M: From earthquake and tempest; from drought, fire, and flood; from civil strife and violence; from war and murder; and from dying suddenly and unprepared:
- C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**
- M: In our times of trouble, in our times of prosperity, in the hour of death, and on the day of judgment:
- C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**
- M: Receive our prayers, O Lord our God.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Govern and direct your holy Church, fill it with love and truth, and grant it that unity which is according to your will.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Enlighten all ministers with true knowledge and understanding of your Word, that by their preaching and living they may declare it clearly and show its truth.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Encourage and prosper your servants who spread the gospel in all the world, and send out laborers into the harvest.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Bless and keep your people, that all may find and follow their true vocation and ministry.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Give us hearts to love and reverence you, that we may diligently live according to your commandments.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: To all your people, give grace to hear and receive your Word and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Come to the help of all who are in danger, necessity, and trouble; protect all who travel by land, air, or water; and show your pity on all prisoners and captives.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Strengthen and preserve all women who are in childbirth and all young children, and comfort the aged, the bereaved, and the lonely.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Defend and provide for the widowed and the orphaned, the refugees and the homeless, the unemployed, and all who are desolate and oppressed.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**



- M: Heal those who are sick in body or mind, and give skill and compassion to all who care for them.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- C: **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.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING**

**Exodus 12:21–30**

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. None of you shall go out of the door of your 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.

“Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. 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.’ ” Then the people bowed down and worshiped. The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

**HYMN**

***“The Blood of the Lamb”***  
**Hymn 418**

**GOSPEL****Luke 22:7-20**

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

"Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there."

They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

And 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."

In 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."

**HYMN OF THE DAY***"When You Woke That Thursday Morning"***Hymn 416****SERMON****Luke 22:7-20****INSTRUCTION FOR THE END OF LENT**

M: In this Lenten season we have heard again how our Lord walked the path of suffering which led him to the cross for our salvation. We have also heard our Lord's call to intensify our struggle against sin, death, and the devil—all that keeps us from loving God and each other. 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 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.

#### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

M: Let us confess our sins to God and ask for his forgiveness.

**C: Almighty God, merciful Father,  
I confess to you that I have not loved you with all my heart.  
In what I have done and left undone,  
I have pursued my ways instead of your ways.  
For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.  
I am truly sorry for my sins.  
I repent of them.  
I beg for your mercy, O Lord.**

*Silence for meditation.*

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

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

M: 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.

**C: Amen.**

### EXHORTATION

M: 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.

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

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion you give us your true body and blood as a remembrance of your suffering and death on the cross. Grant us so firmly to believe your words and promise that we may always partake of this Sacrament to our eternal good; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: 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."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

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 your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION

(Guests, please see our communion practice on p. 2)  
(Gluten free wafers are available; please see Pastor.)

HYMN

*"It Was a Dark and Dismal Night"*  
Hymn 417

SONG OF SIMEON *Nunc Dimittis*

O Lord, now let your servant  
Depart in peace, assured:  
For I have seen your promised  
Incarnate, saving Word –  
A Light that will enlighten  
All gloom where Gentiles dwell;  
The brilliant, crowning glory  
Of those in Israel!

All glory to the Father,  
All glory to the Son,  
All glory to the Spirit,  
Forever three in one;  
For as in the beginning,  
Is now, shall ever be,  
God's triune name resounding  
Through all eternity.

### CLOSING PRAYER

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

### STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

The altar, which symbolizes Christ, is stripped in token of Jesus' abandonment by his disciples in Gethsemane. After the choir finishes singing, we exit the church silently and return to continue our worship tomorrow, Good Friday. If you wish to speak with pastor, he will be available in the parking lot, weather permitting.

### CHOIR ANTHEM

#### *"How Can You Love Me So Much"* Words and Music by Timothy Samelson

*In the dark of a church in a rough, splintered pew,  
There I shudder to see all that they did to you.  
As the moon lights the stories of thick leaded panes:  
That your death paid the price to wash out my sin's stains.*

*How can you love me like this? How can you love me so much?*

*In my shame, I shout blame, "God, you made me this way!"  
And the Devil screams, "Justice! This sinner must pay."  
When you left ninety-nine to find one who was lost  
Only you knew your life was the ultimate cost.*

*How can you love me like this? How can you love me so much?*

*Like a neighbor of Noah, I laughed at the flood;  
Like a rat, I would drown in my own guilty blood.  
I was vainly attempting to fight my own fight  
So then why did you step in and set it all right?*

*How can you love me like this? How can you love me so much?*

*Justice demands sacrifice; I know I can't pay the price.*

*So the scourge I deserve you received in my place,  
And they beat you and cursed you and spat in your face.  
I've done nothing for you, there's no goodness in me.  
If I can't earn your love, well then how can this be?  
I've done nothing for you, there's no goodness in me.  
I will ask you once more, Lord, then how can this be?*

*How can you love me like this? How can you love me so much?*

**OFFERING**

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***We welcome you to come and worship with us again!***

***Good Friday Tenebrae Service at 7:00 pm and  
Easter Sunday Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am***

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**Service Participants**

**Preacher and Presiding Minister**  
**Organist**  
**Choir Director**  
**Choir**  
**Musicians**

Pastor Kevin Raddatz  
Mrs. Monica Wintrone  
Dr. Tim Samelson  
St. John Senior Choir  
Mr. Greg Haak, *flute*

## **The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**From Martin Luther's *Small Catechism***

As the head of the family should teach them in the simplest way to those in his household.

### **The Institution of Holy Communion**

*First: What is the sacrament of Holy Communion?*

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ for us Christians to eat and to drink.

*Where is this written?*

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the Apostle Paul tell us: 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."

### **The Blessings of Holy Communion**

*Second: What blessing do we receive through this eating and drinking?*

That is shown us by these words, "Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." Through these words we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in this sacrament. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

### **The Power of Holy Communion**

*Third: How can eating and drinking do such great things?*

It is certainly not the eating and drinking that does such things, but the words, "Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words are the main thing in this sacrament, along with the eating and drinking. And whoever believes these words has what they plainly say, the forgiveness of sins.

### **The Reception of Holy Communion**

*Fourth: Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?*

Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words, "Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is not prepared, because the words "for you" require nothing but hearts that believe.