



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS A Tenebrae Service

The word Tenebrae is from a Latin word for darkness. As the Passion Story unfolds, and as we recount Jesus' final words from the cross, the darkness increases as candle by candle is extinguished. With the death of our Lord, only one light is left burning. This light, the Christ candle, is carried out of the sanctuary to symbolize Jesus' three days in the tomb.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

1187 C.R. 128 & U.S. Rt. 20
Fremont, Ohio 43420
Pastor Tim Miller

Church: 419-332-6820
faithchurch@amplex.net
www.faithfremont.org

Good Friday

April 3, 2026

GATHER IN SILENCE

ADORATION OF THE CROSS

*The cross moves in procession, stopping **three times** for the following responses:*

P Behold, the life-giving cross upon which was hung the salvation of the world.

C **Oh, come, let us worship him.**

Silence, then...

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

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

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Let us pray.

C **Merciful God - as we remember how your son Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross, how seven times he spake, seven words of love, we ask you to bless our hearing.**

P Father, as we recall how all three hours His silence cried for mercy on the souls of all, we ask you to help us to understand the mystery of your love and make us into a people who are ever more worthy of it.

C **Amen.**

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS

THE FIRST WORD Luke 23:33-34 Reader: Angi LaFave-Miller

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

*** Meditation on the First Word**

They do not know what they are doing. They do not know? They who killed Jesus? Who is "they"?

It is so easy to name others to blame the Romans, the crowd, Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, they all played their part and conspired against Jesus or simply followed orders to maintain the peace to keep Jesus' kingdom from infringing on theirs.

And yet where are we when Jesus' kingdom infringes on ours? On our peace and our order? On our prosperity and our security?

Where are we when the victims of our peace cry for justice? When those disenfranchised by our order call for compassion? When the hungry and the lonely beg us to share our prosperity, our security, our power? Where are we when Christ is crucified among us?

Surely, he should have raged at the sinners who nailed him to the tree. Surely, he should have raged at us for the evil we do, the evil we do both knowing and unknowing. Yet compassion is there in the first words that he utters. He intercedes for us before the Father.

Compassion that called him into being in his mother's womb, Compassion that compelled him to the cross, Compassion that brings incredible, unbelievable grace, Compassion that echoes through the centuries to all who participate in the killing of Christ: Compassion that cries out from the cross: "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing"

Extinguishing The 1st Candle

P Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

C **You suffered and died that we might be made whole.**

* **HYMN:** ***“What Wondrous Love Is This”*** **ELW 666**

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 to 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.

THE SECOND WORD Luke 23:39-43 Reader: Miranda Garlock

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

*** Meditation on The Second Word**

How much are we like the first thief? Full of anger - because we are not rescued from our sin? Full of hate - because we suffer because of the sins of others? How much do we want God to snap his fingers and make right what we have made wrong? What we have allowed others to make wrong? How easy it is to cry "save us" and to rail against God when there is no magic cure, no miraculous recovery, no legions of angels to take away pain and bring wholeness.

How easy it is to scorn the Messiah, to mock the goodness of the world and condemn the light of the world because we are unwilling to face what we have done?

Yet there is goodness There is a cure for sin, a cure that does not promise magical solutions but promises that the pain of sin is not the end, that when all this is over, when the suffering is finished that the final word is not torture and defeat but life -- life springing out of the ashes, life transformed and fulfilled in Paradise.

To the compassionate thief. To the one who could still recognize the good in the world. To the one who tried to comfort and protect that good. To the one who sought good -- Comfort was given, "Today, you will be with me in paradise."

Extinguishing The 2nd Candle

P Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

C **You suffered and died that we might be made whole.**

HYMN: "Jesus, Remember Me" (Repeat 3 times) ELW 616

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

THE THIRD WORD

John 19:25-27

Reader: Toni Cooper

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, [a] here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

*** Meditation on the Third Word**

Who can grasp the grief? The grief of Mary watching her son suffer? The grief of Mary watching him die? And who can grasp the grief of the son? The son who must see his mother mourn?

What gift can a man give his mother? What can he offer when he is gone? How can he help her? Hold her? Comfort her? Honor her? "Woman, here is your son"

Here is one I love, to love you, and for you to love. One who knows me. One who is my brother and who can speak of me. One Who can hold you, comfort you, and honor you; One who shares your grief.

"Here is your mother." Here is one I love, for you to love, and to love you. The one who taught me, the one who fed me, the one who wiped away my tears, the one who hugged me, the one who grieves with you. Women, behold your children; children, behold your mothers.

Extinguishing The 3rd Candle

P Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

C **You suffered and died that we might be made whole.**

HYMN: ***"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"*** **ELW 335**

Jesus, keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain; free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv'ry's mountain.

REFRAIN: *In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever; till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.*

Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me; there the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me.

REFRAIN: *In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever; till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.*

Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me; help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me.

REFRAIN

Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever, till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river.

REFRAIN

THE FOURTH WORD Mark 15:33-34 Reader: Amy Wagner

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

* Meditation on the Fourth Word

Of all the agony of that tortuous day the lacerations of the scourging the chafing of the thorns around his head the convulsions of his tormented, dehydrated body as it hung in the heat all the day, nothing reaches the depth of this anguished cry of desolation "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Jesus, who found his purpose and strength in the presence of God who was sustained by the immediacy of his relationship with God and who endured all by the tangible power of God always at work within him, always a center of vitality and peace, found himself totally alone on the cross.

Jesus, who's very being was God, found himself utterly, absolutely, despairingly. Cut off from all that gives life and breath, cut off from all that gives purpose and hope, cut off from the source of his being cut off, even from himself plumbing the depths of the human condition to walk in the place of the utter absence of God, in the place of sinners, in the place of those who reject God.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In these words, is the central mystery of the crucifixion which cannot be fully comprehended, that there is no despair so deep or evil so overwhelming or place so far removed from joy, light, and love from

the very heart of God that God has not been before us, and where God cannot meet us and bring us home.

Extinguishing The 4th Candle

P Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

C **You suffered and died that we might be made whole.**

HYMN: "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" (Verses 1-4) ELW 351

*O sacred Head, sore wounded, with grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown; 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 cruel pain. Lo, here I fall, my
Savior, turn not from me thy face; but look on me with favor, and
grant to me thy grace.*

*What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend, For this
Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end? O make me Thine forever,
and should I fainting be, Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to
Thee.*

*Be near when I am dying, O show thy cross to me; and for my succor
flying, come, Lord, to set me free. These eyes, new faith receiving,
from thee shall not remove, for all who die believing, die safely
through thy love.*

THE FIFTH WORD

John 19:28

Reader: Cheryl Paeth

*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that
the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."*

*** Meditation on the Fifth Word**

There is a kind of timelessness about hanging on a cross. It is not a quiet death, over in an instant in one glorious moment of martyrdom like being torn apart by lions. A cross is as much an instrument of torture as it is a gallows from which to hang,

And as the day wears on seconds stretch into minutes which stretch into hours until there comes a point when time can no longer be measured except in the gradual weakening of the body and its ever more insistent demands for that substance which is so vital to life, so foundational to all living things, so basic to existence as we know it: -- water.

Water to moisten a parched mouth. Water to free a swollen tongue. Water to open a rasping throat that cannot gasp enough air. Water to keep hope alive, to keep life alive just a few moments longer. Water, to a crucified man, is life.

"O God, thou art my God, I seek thee, my soul thirsts for thee; my flesh faints for thee as in a dry and weary land where no water is." Who can tell if these words from Psalm 63 went through Jesus' mind but a thirst for water is a thirst for life and a thirst for life is a thirst for God who promises streams in the desert mighty rivers in the dry land and living water to wash away every tear.

Here, at the end of it all, those promises seem far away, -distant. And yet Jesus - forsaken by God still clings to the memory and the hope of life. "I thirst."

Extinguishing The 5th Candle

P Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

C You suffered and died that we might be made whole.

HYMN: "Were You There" (verses 1-3) ELW 353

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?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

THE SIXTH WORD

John 19:29-30

Reader: Karly Paeth

A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of hyssop, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

*** Meditation on the Sixth Word**

What a sigh of relief! What a cry of deliverance, that finally, after seemingly endless pain and gasping torment, it is over at last. The suffering is ended. The ordeal is finished, and nothing remains but the blessed peace of the absence of all sensation.

When all there is, its pain its ceasing, is the greatest blessing of all even when its ceasing comes only with death.

But Jesus' cry is more than just welcoming the ending of pain, it is more than joy at the deliverance death brings.

He does not merely say, "it is over" he says, "it is accomplished, fulfilled, achieved."

Jesus's cry isn't a cry of defeat and despair. It is a cry of success and triumph - even at the moment of death - that the race has been run that he has endured to the end, that the strife is over, and the battle is won. Jesus' cry is a cry of relief, to be sure, but it is also a cry of victory: "The work I came to do is complete" there is nothing more to add. "It is finished."

Extinguishing The 6th Candle

P Lord Jesus - you gave your life for us.

C **You suffered and died that we might be made whole.**

HYMN: ***"Were You There"*** **(verses 4-5)** **ELW 353**

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

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?

THE SEVENTH WORD

Luke 23:46

Reader: Kendra Paeth

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

*** Meditation on the Seventh Word**

It is the end, the very end, the end of the ordeal, the end of the suffering and Jesus alone on the cross tortured, exhausted, abandoned by his friends, forsaken by God, gasps for a last breath and gathers the strength for one final cry.

Why would he choose to speak so close to the end? Why would he muster the last energy he had to cry out with a loud voice? Couldn't God have heard his thoughts? Unless God wasn't the only one intended to hear. Unless his voice was pitched loud so that we too might hear this final dedication of his soul.

A dedication made despite the pain, despite the mocking, despite the agony, despite the sense of horrible aloneness he felt. A dedication made to God before the resurrection, before the victory of the kingdom, before any assurance other than that which faith could bring.

Jesus entrusts his spirit -- his life -- and all that has given it meaning --to God in faith, even at the point of his own abandonment, then the good seems so very far away he proclaims his faith in God, the darkness cannot overcome it. "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit"

SILENCE IS KEPT

EXTINGUISHING AND REMOVAL OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

THE SLAMMING OF THE BOOK (Represents the sealing of the tomb)

THE BELL TOLLS (Marking the 33 years of Jesus' life.)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (WHISPERED)

**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.**

THE CHRIST CANDLE RETURNS (Representing the hope of the Resurrection)

PRAYER AND REFLECTION TIME

You are invited to remain in the sanctuary as long as you would like for silent reflection on the cross and a time of prayer. During this time, worshipers may come to the front of the sanctuary to make a sign of reverence. Reverencing the cross may include actions such as pausing before the cross, bowing, kneeling before it in prayer, or making the sign of the cross.

DEPART IN SILENCE

Copyright - Rev. Richard J. Fairchild - Spirit Networks, 1999-2006

Song *What Wondrous Love Is This*, Arr. © 1955 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
Song *Jesus, Remember Me*, Text and music © 1981 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent. 7404 S.
Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

Song *Were You There*, Arr. © 1999 Augsburg Fortress.

Permission was gained thru One License #A-739669 for printing, streaming and recording.

Used by permission. All rights reserved.

WELCOME

Today is Good Friday, a day of terrible suffering and sacrifice, a day of crucifixion. We invite you to join hearts and hands with us in remembrance of He who bore his crown of thorns willingly, arose from the dead, and defeated death that we might have eternal life.

DYING WORDS

Although there is no way of determining their actual chronological sequence, for centuries we have listened to ‘Jesus’ Seven Last Words’ and allowed them to penetrate our hearts. In doing so the death of our Lord touches us in a very deep and personal way.

By meditating on the dying words of our Savior, we have been able to enter into his suffering and find meaning in our own time and place. Jesus’ final testament gives us courage to face our own trials and impending death. It also teaches us to be fully human-both in life and in death-to personally encounter Jesus, the God of love, and allow him to dwell in our hearts and in our midst.

Out of reverence for Jesus, the Son of God, and his chosen means for the world’s redemption, death by crucifixion was outlawed in the Roman Empire by Constantine the Great in 337 A.D. By that time, the cross had long since been transformed from a symbol of brutality to one of unconditional love and hope for humanity. Jesus’ last words from the cross played an integral role in this passage from death to life. To this day, they continue to have the same probing and penetrating effect.



THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO ASSISTED TONIGHT

Readers: Angi LaFave-Miller, Miranda Garlock,
Toni Cooper, Amy Wagner,
Cheryl Paeth, Karly Paeth, Kendra Paeth

Acolyte: Jackson Fought