

Palm Sunday—Sunday of the Passion

March 29, 2026

Welcome!

We delight in having guests and are glad that you have joined us today.

First Lutheran Church

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firstlutheranwaltham.org

Follow us on Facebook at
First Lutheran Church - Waltham, MA

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Vicar Trevor Boe, Intern
firstlutheranwalthamvicar@gmail.com

Today's Worship Leaders

Pastor

Tom Maehl

Vicar

Trevor Boe

Musician

Cynthia Niiler

Assistant Minister

Sandy Hebert

Acolyte

Jayden Montenegro

Lector

Holly Diaz

Passion Readers

Emily Citrone, Signe Johns, LuAnn
Kimker, Paul Pintus, Jake Villalta

Ushers

Milena and Aidan Rauhut

A/V

Ted Sjodin

Altar Care

Catherine and Peter Pinch

Counters

Joan Clemens, Scott Niemann

*The congregation gathers in the Pearson room.
Branches are distributed before the service begins.*

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine.

On this day, we hear the Passion account according to St. Matthew. In this story we find betrayal, anguish, injustice, fear, greed, hatred, cruelty, death, and grief. These are, of course, experiences faced by human beings of every age. Jesus was fully human; yet also, God was in him in such a way that we acknowledge the crucified and risen Christ as divine. Therefore, in Jesus, God has entered the suffering that we human beings inflict on one another; and the risen Christ is present in places of suffering still.

Today, during the reading of Matthew's version of The Passion, we will be presenting a series of images. They are meant to help us reflect upon Jesus the Son of Man suffering for us on the cross, and Jesus the Son of God suffering with us, and with our neighbors all around the world even now. Our thanks to Signe Johns, LuAnn Kimker, and Paul Pintus for gathering images, and to Signe Johns for artfully collecting the images into a collage format.



PROCESSION WITH PALMS

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Processional Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew the 21st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" ¹¹ The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Blessing of the Palms:

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Procession:

Let us go forth in peace,

in the name of Christ. Amen.

Processional Hymn: "Pave the Way with Branches"

Sung as we process into the Sanctuary

*Je - sus is com - ing. Pave the way with branch - es.

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melody of eighth and quarter notes with lyrics underneath. The lower staff is in bass clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment of eighth and quarter notes.

Je - sus is com - ing. Ho - san - na. san - na.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. It includes a first ending bracket labeled '1' and a second ending bracket labeled '2'. The lyrics are 'Je - sus is com - ing. Ho - san - na. san - na.'.

Ho - san - na, Je - sus is com - ing. Ho -

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. It includes a repeat sign at the beginning. The lyrics are 'Ho - san - na, Je - sus is com - ing. Ho -'.

san - na to the Prince of peace. Prince of peace.

The fourth system concludes the melody and accompaniment. It includes a first ending bracket labeled '1' and a second ending bracket labeled '2'. The lyrics are 'san - na to the Prince of peace. Prince of peace.'.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The congregation is seated

Song: "Let All the Gates Be Opened Wide"

Johannes Brahms, arr. Hal H. Hopson

Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

⁴The Lord GOD has given me
a trained tongue,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens,
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I did not turn backward.

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

⁸he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?
Let us stand in court together.

Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.

^{9a}It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 31:9-16

- ⁹Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.
- ¹⁰**For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.**
- ¹¹I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay to my acquaintances;
when they see me in the street they avoid me.
- ¹²**Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind;
I am as useless as a broken pot.**
- ¹³For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around;
they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.
- ¹⁴**But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD.
I have said, "You are my God.**
- ¹⁵My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.
- ¹⁶**Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love."**

Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

- ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.
- And being found in appearance as a human,
⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
- ⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,
¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

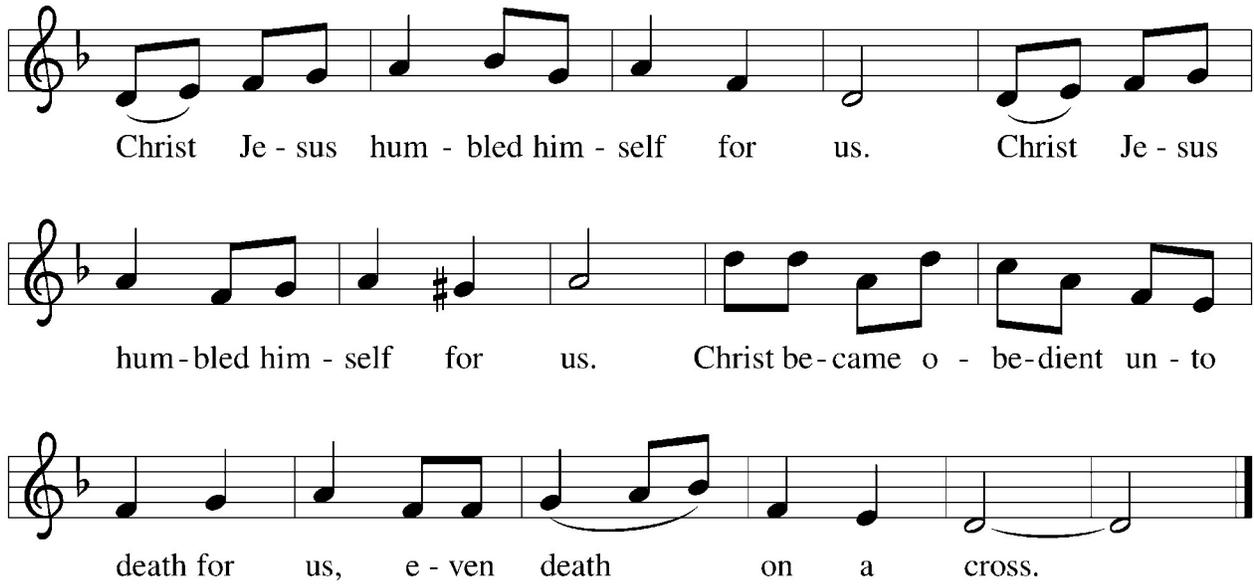
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Children's Sermon

The congregation is invited to stand

Gospel Acclamation



Christ Je - sus hum - bled him - self for us. Christ Je - sus
hum - bled him - self for us. Christ be - came o - be - dient un - to
death for us, e - ven death on a cross.

Text: Philippians 2:8

Music: José Ruiz

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The Passion of Jesus According to St. Matthew: Matthew 26:14—27:66

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

The congregation is seated

Betrayal (26:14-30)

Hatred (27:11-26)

Anguish (26:31-46)

Cruelty (27:27-44)

Injustice (26:47-58)

Death (27:45-54)

Fear (26:59-75)

Grief (27:55-66)

Greed (27:1-10)

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

The congregation is invited to stand

Hymn of the Day: "My Song is Love Unknown"

1. My song is love un - known, my
 2. He came from his blest throne sal -
 3. Some times we strew his way and
 4. We cry out, we will have our

Sav - ior's love to me, love to the love - less
 va - tion to be - stow; the world that was his
 his sweet prais - es sing; re - sound - ing all the
 dear Lord made a - way, a mur - der - er to

shown that they might love - ly be. Oh,
 own would not its Sav - ior know. But,
 day ho - san - nas to our king. Then
 save, the prince of life to slay. Yet

who am I that for my sake my
 oh, my friend, my friend in - deed, who
 "Cru - ci - fy!" is all our breath, and
 cheer - ful he to suf - fring goes that

12

Lord should take frail flesh and die? My
 at my need his life did spend; who
 for his death we thirst and cry. And
 he his foes from thence might free; that

Lord should take frail flesh and die?
 at my need his life did spend!
 for his death we thirst and cry.
 he his foes from thence might free.

5. In life no house, no home
 my Lord on earth might have;
 in death no friendly tomb
 but what a stranger gave.
 What may I say?
 Heav'n was his home
 but mine the tomb wherein he lay.

6. Here might I stay and sing—
 no story so divine!
 Never was love, dear King,
 never was grief like thine.
 This is my friend,
 in whose sweet praise
 I all my days could gladly spend!

Prayer Concerns

New: Gloria Plamann (aunt of Catherine Sukow); Giorgi Gabunia (relative of the van der Weide family)

Members of our First Lutheran Community: Norm Adams; Glow, Bethany, and Roland Adams; Joyce Anderson; Jen Biter; Ardeith Froeberg; June Jahrling; Erika Jerram; Lovequist/Shread family; Kathryn McCowan; Don & Britta McNemar; Kerry Meaney; Cynthia Niiler; Joan Niiler, Stacey Reed; Karson Sprague; Valarie Waters.

Friends and Family: Clinton Braganza; Rhona Chen; Emily Dallman; Evan DaRos; Sheila Dumbrowik; Lisa Fugger; Jay Higham; Josh Kalisa; Sylvia & Chris Lee-Thompson; Nathan Maehl; Pappas family; Roland Pesch; Rachel and sons; Frank Raymond; Lynn Reihart; Brian Schmitz; Roger & Margie Schroeder; JoAnn Shade; Fay Sieving; Wilson Viertel; Chip Weinkauff; Jim Wroe; Marlys Yu.

For our partners: Santuario Luterano, the Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation in Waltham. For other organizations we actively support: the Waltham Family School, the Waltham Community Day Center, Chaplains on the Way, WATCH, Camp Calumet, and ELCA World Hunger.

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession:

Response: Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The congregation is seated

Offering is Gathered

Musical Offering: My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

Karl Osterland



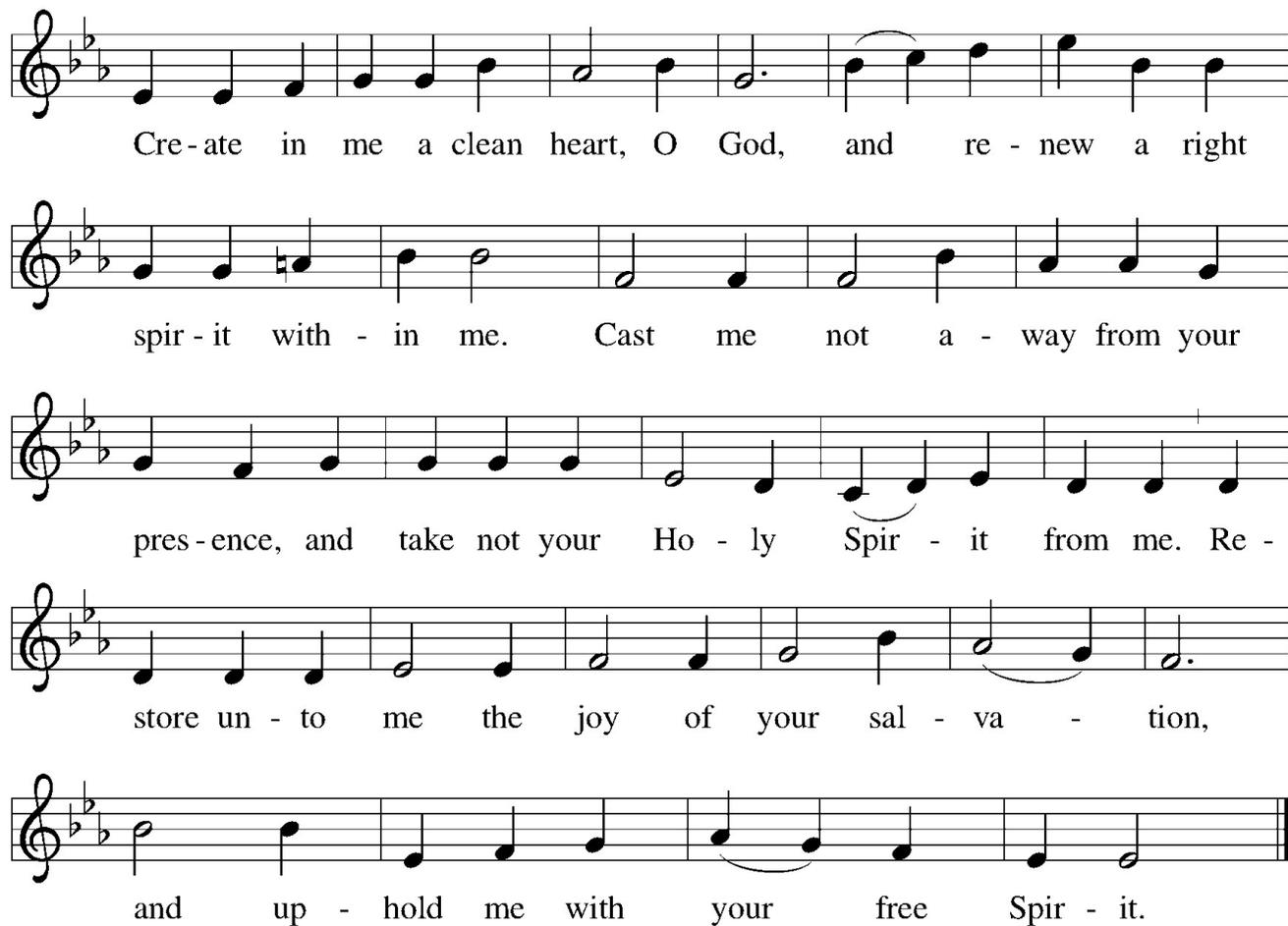
Another way to collect the morning offering.

Our church provides both spiritual, physical and emotional nourishment for all who attend in person and online. ***We invite you to consider donating*** to support the mission of our church, as we work to support programs in the church, in the community, and for the online community.

You can make your morning offering through credit card by scanning the code to the above.

The congregation is invited to stand

Congregational Offertory



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670–1739

Offering Prayer

Gracious Provider,
you set your immense treasures among us,
opening your heart to the world.
As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,
deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others,
through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

About Communion

We believe that Jesus Christ is present in the bread and wine we share and therefore he is the host of the meal. *In his name, we welcome all who desire to commune.*

- An usher will direct you to come forward, and you may either kneel or stand at the altar rail.
- *Bread:* The pastor will place bread in your hands, which you may then consume. We have *gluten free bread available*; indicate to the pastor/vicar if that is your preference.
- *Wine/Juice:* the assistant will then offer a tray of individual glasses (juice in the center ring). The acolyte will follow with a tray for empty glasses. Also, you may skip the wine altogether trusting that Christ is fully present in the bread.
- Children and adults who do not yet commune are welcome to come to the altar for a blessing.
- If walking is difficult for you, please inform an usher, then stay in your pew and the pastor will come to you.

SHARING THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

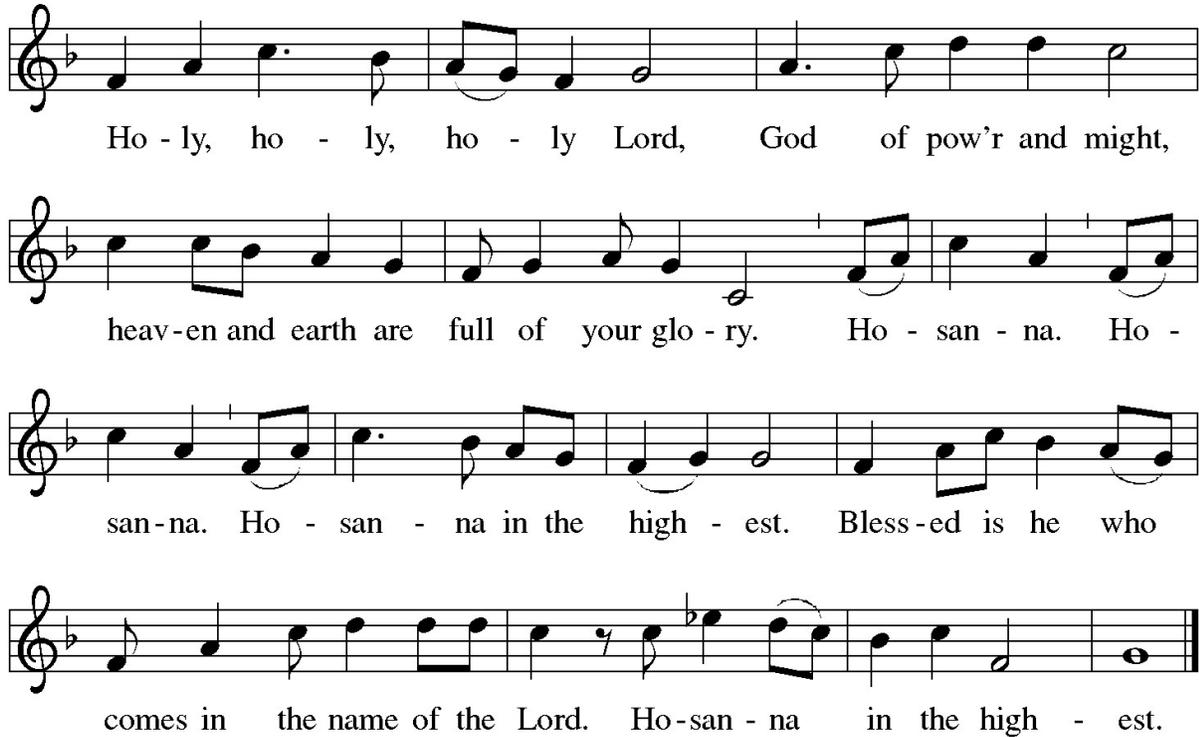
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy ...
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Eucharistic Prayer

Blessed are you as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

...

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

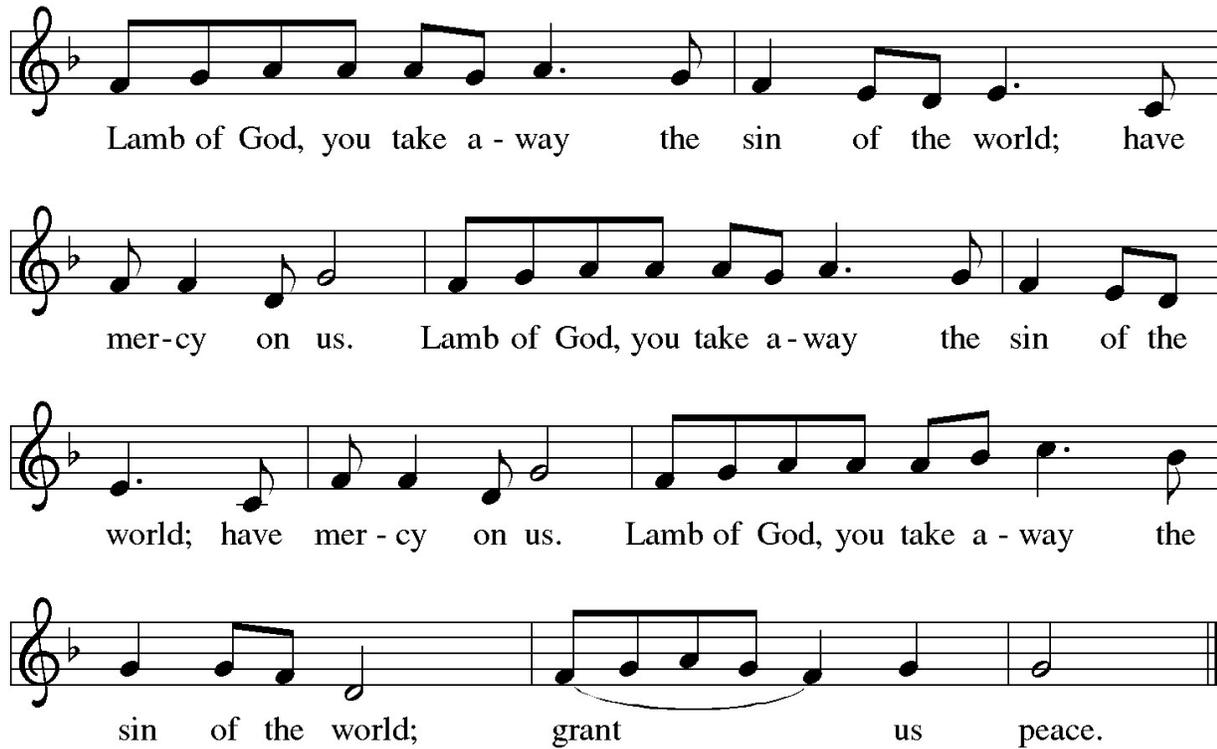
**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

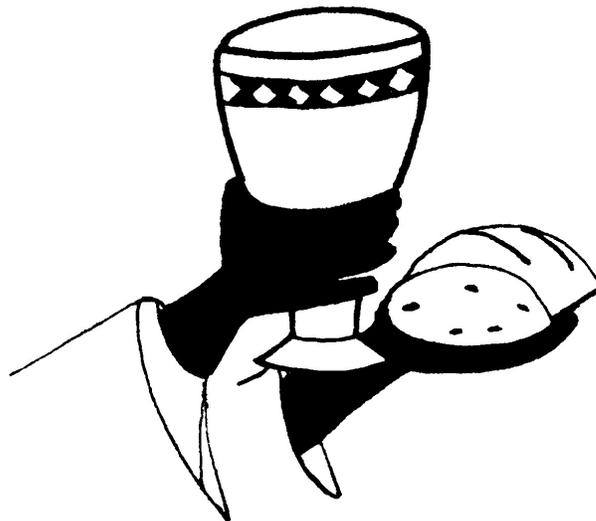
Thanks be to God.

The congregation is seated

Lamb of God



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 peace.



Distribution of Communion

“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

1 My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,
2 May thy rich grace im - part strength to my faint - ing heart,
3 While life's dark maze I tread and griefs a - round me spread,
4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, when death's cold, sul - len stream

Sav - ior di - vine! Now hear me while I pray, take all my
my zeal in - spire; as thou hast died for me, oh, may my
be thou my guide; bid dark - ness turn to day, wipe sor - row's
shall o'er me roll; blest Sav - ior, then, in love fear and dis -

guilt a - way, oh, let me from this day be whol - ly thine!
love to thee pure, warm, and change - less be, a liv - ing fire!
tears a - way, nor let me ev - er stray from thee a - side.
trust re - move; oh, bear me safe a - bove, a ran - somed soul!

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808–1887
Music: OLIVET, Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

“Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart”

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
 2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
 3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
 4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wear it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
 no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,
 all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
 one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:

stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,
 no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;
 I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.
 the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
 but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
 Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
 my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

“Restore in Us, O God”



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
4 Three-per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

The congregation is invited to stand

Post-Communion Prayer

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.

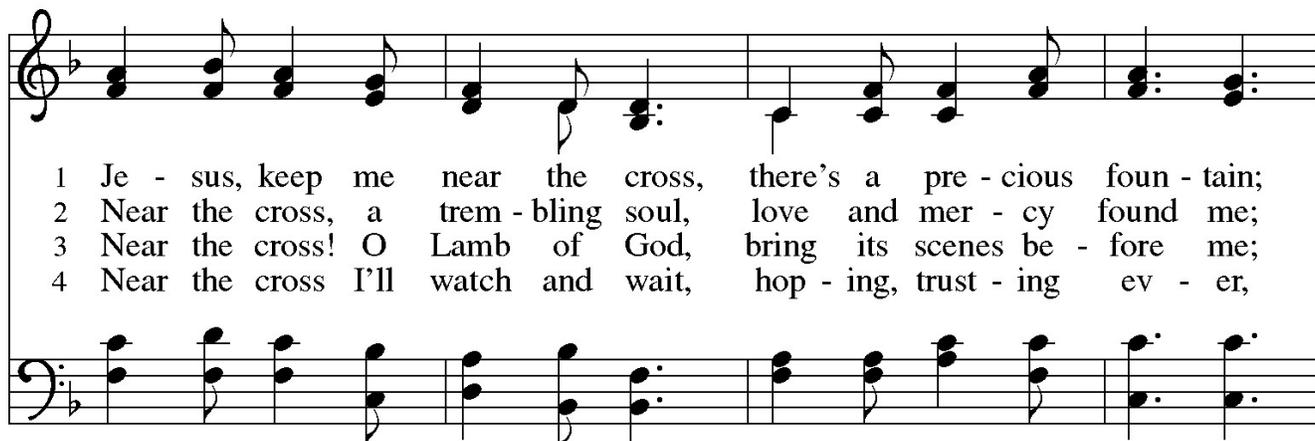
Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

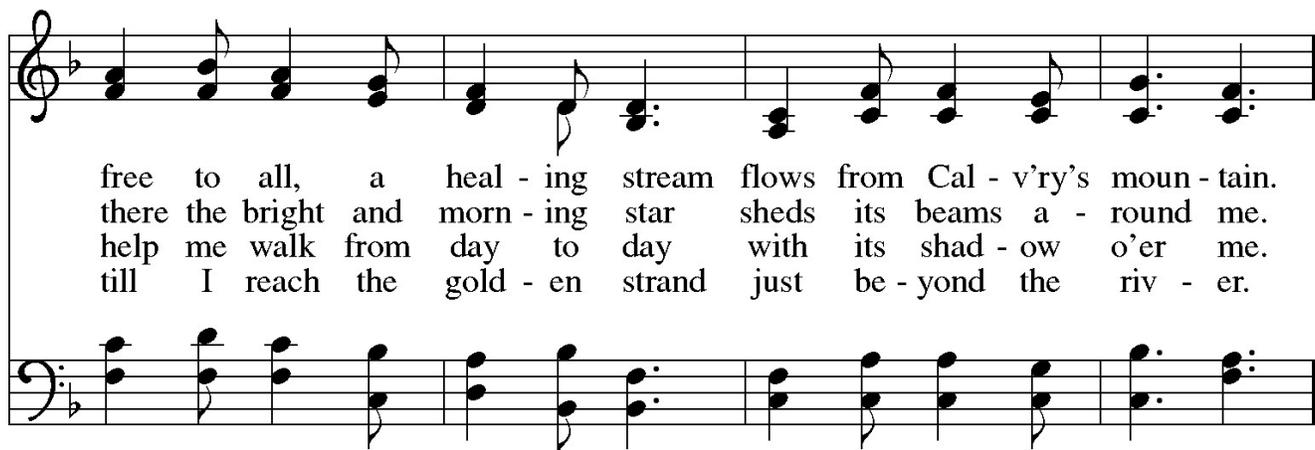
SENDING

Benediction

Sending Hymn: "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

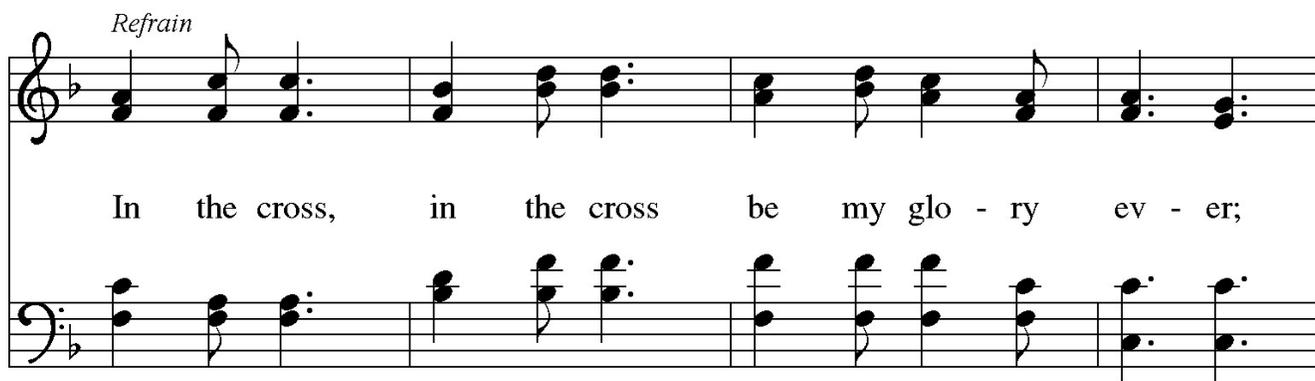


1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,

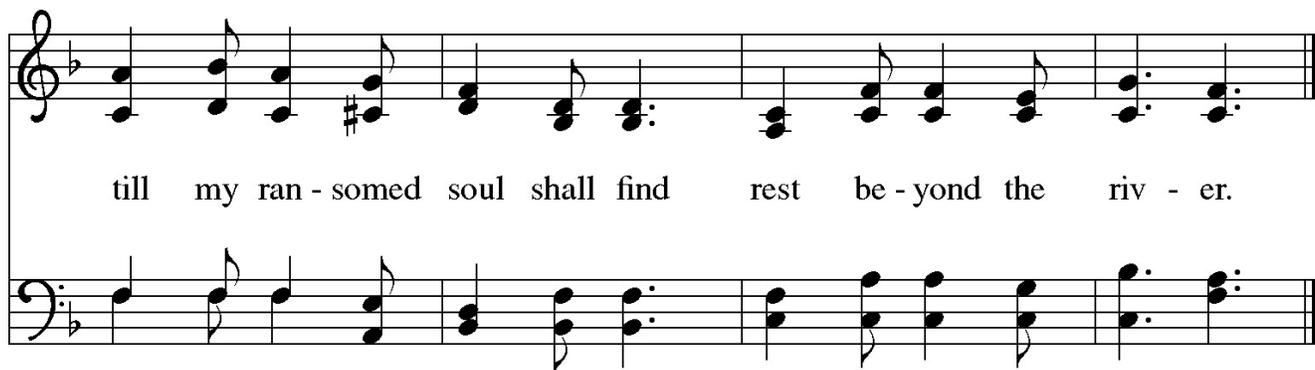


free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.

Refrain



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude: “Prelude in G minor”

J.S. Bach

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Gospel Acclamation: “Christ Jesus Humbled Himself”

Text: Philippians 2:8

Music: Jose Ruiz © 1998 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Used by permission

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“Jesus Is Coming”

Text and music: Bret Hesla, b. 1957 © 1999 Bret Hesla, admin. Augsburg Fortress

“My Song Is Love Unknown:

Text: Samuel Crossman, 1624-1683, alt.

Music: John D. Edwards. 1806-1885

“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808-1887

Music: Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

“Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart”

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860

Music: Frederick C. Atkinson, 1841-1897

“Restore in Us, O God”

Text: Carl P. Daw jr., b. 1944 ©1989 Hope Publishing Company

Music: Hal H. Hopson, b.1933 © 1985 Hope Publishing Company

“Jesus Keep My Near the Cross”

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915

Music: William H. Doane, 1832-1915

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“Let All the Gates Be Opened Wide” Brahms/arr. Hal H. Hopson © 1996 Choristers Guild

“Olivet—My Faith Looks Up to Thee” Karl Osterland ©2000 Augsburg Fortress

Holy Week

Join us as we retell, reengage, and celebrate the central story of our Christian faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

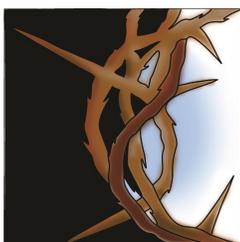
April 2 - Maundy Thursday

11:30 am - An abbreviated service of Holy Communion at the end of Thursday Knitters.

7:30 pm - A service with optional individual absolution, communion, and stripping of the altar for Good Friday.



April 3 - Good Friday

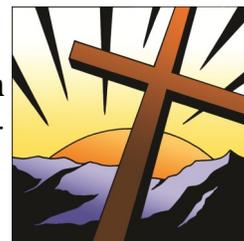


7:30 pm

Worship including the reading of Saint John's passion account and the Solemn Reproaches of the Cross.

April 4 - Easter Vigil

7:15 pm *in person only* - We celebrate Christ's Passover from death to life in a worship service that includes an outdoor fire, stories of deliverance, the Easter account, Baptism, and Holy Communion.



April 5 - Easter Sunday

10:30 am - Festive worship with Holy Communion, flowers, bells, choir, and brass.



Potluck Easter Breakfast

9:15 am

Join us on Easter morning for a potluck breakfast.

Sign up online (link in the This Week email) or in the Pearson Room to let us know you can help: setting up, providing food, or cleaning up.

Today's Worship Leaders

Pastor

Tom Maehl

Vicar

Trevor Boe

Musician

Cynthia Niiler

Assistant Minister

Sandy Hebert

Acolyte

Jayden Montenegro

Lector

Holly Diaz

Passion Readers

Emily Citrone

Signe Johns

LuAnn Kimker

Paul Pintus

Jake Villalta

Ushers

Milena and Aidan Rauhut

A/V

Ted Sjodin

Altar Care

Catherine and Peter Pinch

Counters

Joan Clemens

Scott Niemann



First Lutheran's Welcome Statement:

Walking together in God's love, we rejoice in the diversity of God's wonderfully made children. We celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and non-binary people and all members of our human family regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, physical and mental ability, faith history, economic status, education, family configuration, or immigration status. We renounce the sin of racism and all forms of discrimination. We welcome all to join us in worship, leadership, participation in rites and sacraments of the church, and fellowship on our journey of nurturing faith, doing justice, and serving all.