



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Worship Service with Holy Communion
Wednesday, February 24, 2021 ■ 11:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

Midweek Lent—Stations of the Cross / Station Two

Worship Service



Welcome to the Lenten journey to the cross ...

For this season of Lent at St Stephen's we are using the eight biblical Stations of the Cross as a framework for our worship, including Scripture readings, meditations, music and prayers. Beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Good Friday, we will follow Jesus along the *Via Dolorosa*, the Way of Sorrow, as he journeys from Pilate's Hall to his death on the cross, meditating on one station each service.

We enter this journey with the penitent's prayer, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" (Psalm 139:23-24)

We pray that you find peace and be blest by these reflections on God's grace and gift of love. Amen.

WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP

Music

Ben D.

Welcome

*Good evening and welcome to Lent at St Stephen's Lutheran Church in West St Paul, MN. Our 2021 Journey to the Cross focus' our meditation on eight Biblical Stations of the Cross. We are reflecting on one station at each of our midweek Lenten meditations, including Ash Wednesday through Holy Week. This evening we are focusing on **Station 2: Jesus Accepts His Cross**. The remaining stations will be meditated on in the subsequent weeks leading up to Good Friday, Jesus Dies on the Cross. If you've missed previous meditations on the Stations of the Cross, you may view those on our Facebook page, sslcwsp.*

Blessing

*All may make the sign of the cross,
the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God the father,
and the Communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

And also with you.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Reading from the Psalms

Psalm 118:19-29

Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.
This is the LORD's gate; the righteous shall enter through it.
I will give thanks because you have answered me.
You have become my salvation.
The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
This has come from the LORD.
It is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day on which the Lord has acted.
Let us shout with joy and rejoice in it.
Please, save us, O LORD! Please!
O LORD, please bring success!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
We bless you from the house of the LORD.
The LORD is God
He has given us light.
With cords bind the festival sacrifice to the horns of the altar.
You are my God, and I will give thanks to you.
You are my God, I will extol you.
O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.
For his steadfast love endures forever.

Hymn

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

ELW #338 vs. 1, 2

**Beneath the cross of Jesus
I long to take my stand;
the shadow of a mighty rock
within a weary land,
a home within a wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat
and burdens of the day.**

**Upon the cross of Jesus,
my eye at times can see
the very dying form of one
who suffered there for me.
And from my contrite heart, with tears,
two wonders I confess:
the wonder of his glorious love
and my unworthiness.**

Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830-1869
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Prayer

O Lord, we are gathered together here this day as your people,
as those who have been called out of darkness into your marvelous light.
We are here only because you have loved us and been faithful
across the generations that we might be your people.
And yet we quickly confess that we are not worthy of that love.

As we contemplate the Cross and what it means,
we are filled with joy and wonder at the sacrifice that Jesus
has made to show us light in the darkness
and offer us life in the midst of death.
We confess that we have nothing to offer in return for that sacrifice,
nothing that will match such love.
We know that only love can respond to such a gift.
Yet we know that we are not always loving or lovable.

But you remain steadfastly faithful to us.
You love us even when we are not lovable,
and remain steadfast in your grace that calls us
to follow the example of Jesus who is the Christ.

We are committed to that journey,
to be followers of the One who has given so much
that we might be sons and daughters of God.
But sometimes the journey that we take in following Jesus
who is the Christ is not all light and joy.
Sometimes the Way is rough and dimly lit.
Sometimes the darkness of life threatens to engulf the light.

And so we cry out to you, O Lord.
Forgive us for our sometimes faltering steps.
Show us more clearly the Way.
Shine anew the light of your presence into our lives
so strongly that a new love for You will be kindled.
Light within us a love beyond emotion and sentimentality,
a love that is willing to lay aside all privilege and self-centeredness.
Grow within us a love that is willing to surrender
all our fears and uncertainties to you,
that desires nothing more than to love God
with all our being and to love those around us
with the same faithfulness with which you love us.

Now, as we begin this journey of the Cross,
we open our hearts and minds to you.
We lay aside for these moments the trivialities of our life
and bring ourselves into your presence.
Speak to us what we need to hear.
And help us to hear, not just the words that are spoken,
but your Word spoken afresh in our hearts.

Speak, for your servants are listening.

[A short time of silent prayer and meditation]

Let us continue our journey.

Stations of the Cross

Station 2: Jesus Accepts His Cross

Leader:

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters,
and they gathered the whole cohort around him.
They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,
and after twisting some thorns into a crown,
they put it on his head.
They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him
and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe
and put his own clothes on him.
Then they led him away to crucify him. (Matthew 27:27-31)

Carrying the cross by himself,
he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull,
which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. (John 19:17)

Speaker:

Jesus, I cringe at the pain of the thorns.
But I am wounded far more deeply at the humiliation
and degradation you suffer,

that the very thing you came to offer us as a gift
becomes a source of ridicule.
The crowds thought of a King in terms of power.
But you came to be the kind of King who shepherds his people,
who takes responsibility for their well being,
whose principles are faithfulness, justice, and righteousness (Isa 11:3-4).
And yet, the people are not ready for that kind of King.

I would like to think that I am ready to follow you
who offer a Kingdom of peace and love for one another.
But am I?
Am I willing to yield my ideas of what the Kingdom should look like
for the role of a servant?
with power and control and accept a different kind of crown than I was expecting?

I see you accept the Cross in the midst of such mockery.
You could have refused.
What more could they have done to you?
Yet you begin this journey knowing full well where it will lead.
I hear no words of complaint, no protestations of innocence,
no cursing the injustice.
And yet I am so prone to complain and whine about the most trivial things.
Sometimes the things I face in my life are more than trivial.
Sometimes the troubles of life bear down on me.
But I so easily fall into self-pity.
I too often assume that I am the only one who bears a cross,
or that my cross is larger and heavier than any others.

But I am not alone in that.
People all around me bear far more than I must bear.
You accepted your cross without self-pity.
Can I follow your example?

Leader:

O Lord, forgive me for forgetting that in my weakness
I am driven to trust on you,
and that in such trust my weakness becomes your strength.
Forgive my attitudes of self-pity that make me more repulsive than loving.
I do not ask for crosses to bear.
But when they come,
give me the strength to bear them
as one who follows your example.

O Lord, be merciful to us.

Hymn

“Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?”

TFF #237 vs. 1, 2

**Must Jesus bear the cross alone
and all the world go free?
No, there’s a cross for ev’ryone,
and there’s a cross for me.**

**The consecrated cross I’ll bear
till death shall set me free;
and then go home my crown to wear,
for there’s a crown for me.**

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[The second candle is extinguished followed by
a short time of silent prayer and meditation.]

[Screen fades to Black. Silence]



Leaders in Today's Service

Pastor	The Rev. Tim Thompson Ph.D
Lay Liturgist	Debbie Pirkl
Director of Worship	Bryon Dockter
Song Leader	Deborah Ellis, Philip Dahl
Christian Music Leader	Ben D.
Lector	Mary Brunkow
Audio Visual Ministry	Norm Goetzke, Keith Gregory, Jan Perkins
Prayer Chain	Rachel Circle, Mary Circle, Kathy Ericson, Abby Vavra
Altar Guild	Lori Ritt
Outdoor Street Sign	Jerry Thoreson



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Bulletin Acknowledgements

Liturgical texts, prayers, cover art and graphics: Sunday and Seasons.
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