



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church  
Worship Service with Holy Communion  
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 ■ 11:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

# St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

## Midweek Lent—Stations of the Cross / Station Four

### 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.

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## 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 Station 4: Jesus Speaks to the Women**. 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 4: Jesus Speaks to the Women**

#### **Leader:**

A great number of the people followed him,  
and among them were women who were beating their breasts  
and wailing for him.

But Jesus turned to them and said,  
"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me,  
but weep for yourselves and for your children.  
For the days are surely coming when they will say,  
'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore,  
and the breasts that never nursed.'  
Then they will begin to say to the mountains,  
'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.'  
For if they do this when the wood is green,  
what will happen when it is dry?" (Luke 23:27-31)

#### **Speaker:**

Jesus, as you struggle along the road toward that awful place of death,  
you see a group of women among the crowd following you,  
already grieving at your impending death.  
You have heard this wailing many times before at funerals and tragic events.

But now, they mourn for you.

You have always shown equal compassion to women  
you have encountered across the years.  
You have always seemed to understand the unique burdens  
that women bear in a world and a culture  
that pushes them to the margins of society.  
So here, as you bear the most unimaginable pain of body and heart,  
you stop to speak to them.  
You are about to die,  
and yet you are more concerned with others  
than with your own suffering and death.

But your words are strange and seem out of place on this road of sorrow.  
They have a prophetic ring to them as if you were still trying to tell people  
something important that they cannot quite grasp,  
or that perhaps they do not really want to hear.  
You speak of even darker days, of far worse things to come upon the people.  
Yet, how can things get worse?

I do remember that you often spoke of repentance,  
calling the people to turn from their wicked ways  
and accept the coming of the Kingdom of God.  
Many times you criticized the religious leaders  
and those who thought themselves righteous,  
warning that they would bring destruction upon the people and the land.  
I remember that once you even spoke of the destruction of the temple.  
But no one really believes that is going to happen.  
God has always been with us,  
and surely he will not let such a terrible thing happen to his people.

And yet, no one thought the exile would happen.  
And here you are on the path of sorrow stumbling toward your death.  
No one thought that would happen either.  
Maybe you understand more than we have realized.  
Maybe you see something that we have refused to believe.  
Maybe we are not as righteous as we have thought.  
Maybe we have rejected repentance,  
not because we did not need it  
but because we needed it more than we dared admit.

Is that what you mean by these strange words?  
Is it possible that your death is only the beginning of things for which to weep?  
Is it possible that our refusal to repent and change the way we live  
is causing these beginnings of sorrow?  
Is our own sin and our refusal to confess it  
really the reason you are on this path?

I would like to think that I have repented,  
that I have confessed my sins and stand righteous before God.  
I would rather play the part of the righteous follower.  
I would rather weep for you, Jesus.  
I do not want to weep for myself and the pain I bring to others  
because of my failures and sin.  
Yet, how long has it been since I have shed tears for my own failures,  
for my own sins?  
Have I really been honest enough with God about who I am?

**Leader:**

O Lord, forgive my unwillingness to repent,  
to confess all that I am before you.  
Help me go beyond the repentance mouthed in words of false piety,  
to sweep away all the facades of who I try so hard to be before others,  
and recall who I really am inside.

Help me once again stand before God with a bare and open heart.  
Help me not just to repent in words,  
but to put that repentance into action in everything I am and do.  
O Lord, give me the gift of tears to weep for my own failures,  
for my sins, for the pain I bring to others,  
and to live the fruits of repentance.

**O Lord, be merciful to us.**

**Hymn**

**“Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery”**

**ELW #334 vs. 1, 2**

**Tree of Life and awesome myst'ry,  
in your death we are reborn;  
though you die in all of hist'ry,  
still you rise with ev'ry morn,  
still you rise with ev'ry morn.**

**We remember truth once spoken,  
love passed on through act and word;  
ev'ry person lost and broken  
wears the body of our Lord,  
wears the body of our Lord.**

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950  
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[The fourth 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.  
Lectors ..... Mary Jo Martinek  
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**

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