



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

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

Midweek Lent—Stations of the Cross / Station Six

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 6: Jesus Is Nailed to the 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 6: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

Leader:

And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh;
but he did not take it. And they crucified him,
and divided his clothes among them,
casting lots to decide what each should take.
It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him.
The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."
And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.
Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying,
"Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days,
save yourself, and come down from the cross!"
In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes,
were also mocking him among themselves and saying,
"He saved others; he cannot save himself.
Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now,
so that we may see and believe."
Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. (Mark 15:23-32)

Speaker:

Jesus, I do not want to see this.

Yet I force myself to watch.
I hear the sharp crack of hammer against nail and shudder.
It sounds so final. Is it over?
Did all those wonderful lessons you taught by the seaside mean anything?
You spoke of being a light to the world,
but it seems that darkness is winning.

How they mock you!
You said that you could rebuild the temple in three days
and I thought that anyone who can raise the dead
surely could deal with broken stones.
But it is not the stones in the temple that matter to you, is it?
Your greater concern is how we relate to you and to one another.
You so want us to know the power of living love.
Is love stronger than this evil that now surrounds you?

I want to rage at the injustice of this.
The cruelty of the Romans.
The hypocrisy of the High Priest and religious leaders.
The cowardice of the disciples.
The treachery of Judas.
The fickleness of the crowds.
Do they not remember that you spoke of loving one another,
of bearing the burdens of others, even of loving our enemies?
They should know better, they should have listened and learned.

And yet, would I have done differently?
Is the guilt just of those who drove the nails and the rest of us are innocent?
Or is it human sin that drives the nails? *My sin.*
The old American spiritual asks the question,
"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"
I want to deny it. I want to pretend that it is someone else's guilt,
someone else's sin. But I *was* there. Jesus, you are here, dying,
because of *my sin*. I *was* there. It was I who drove the nails.

Leader:

O Lord, remind me of the deathly cost of sin. Forgive me for those things I have done that are displeasing to you. Forgive me for not allowing you to deal with the darkness that I harbor in the hidden recesses of my heart. Forgive me for fooling myself into believing that I am more righteous than I am, that I am better than others, and that I have no need to repent. Forgive me for those things I should have done, but found excuses not to do. O Lord, make me better than I am, transform me into what I can be by your grace.

O Lord, forgive us for those things we have done and those things we have left undone. In your grace, be merciful to us.

Hymn

"Were You There?"

ELW #353 vs. 1, 2

**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?**

Text: African American spiritual
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[The sixth 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 | Vicki Jackson |
| 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 |



Senior Pastor John Snider | Associate Pastor of Discipleship Tim Thompson
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Bulletin Acknowledgements

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