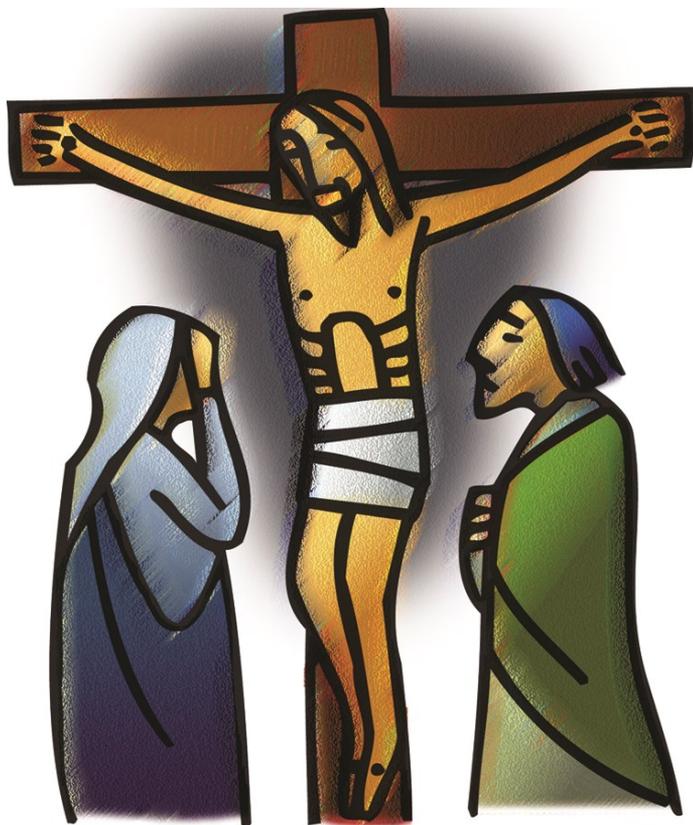


Welcome home! **BAY VIEW** **LUTHERAN CHURCH** ELCA



April 2, 2021
Good Friday

PRELUDE: *Lord Teach Us How To Pray*
By Red River Worship, Fargo, North Dakota

WELCOME

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Today is one of the grey areas of the Christian year: a day when the lights are dimmed and the sky feels overcast even if it isn't: a day when theologians and poets feel as if a heavy veil is drawn over heart and mind. An inexplicably sad day.

We resist the grey areas, prefer to see everything in black and white, look for cloudless, sunny skies, try not to read between the lines; throw in a bright color or two to try and enliven the scene.

In the grey light of early morning - after a night in the ecclesiastical high court, and denial by one of his own circle Jesus found himself at the gates of the reluctant Pilate, who promptly tried to hand him back to the Jews.

And though the sun rose that morning, the whole world turned grey for One who found himself without friend or helper, faced with drinking a cup he'd prayed would be turned away from him, knowing that life was about to be drained out of him.

We are invited to accompany Jesus through this grey day: to be witnesses to his suffering, to keep silence before his cry of dereliction. In our imaginations, let us trudge through Jerusalem, until we come to the place of the Cross: and then, let us not turn our faces away.

In this grey day lie all the sorrows and failings of a humanity that strives for high success, yet comes up against human limitations, and falls to the ground in despair.

A humanity whose peace plans give way to guns, and whose political promises become papers in filing cabinets.

Here is a day marked by the brokenness of the world. But it is not a day to wallow in misery, or to indulge in morbid thoughts about the crucifixion. It is simply a somber, dignified day when we remember how it was for Jesus, and find at the foot of the cross a place to lay down ours and the world's sorrow.

On grey days it is hard to see clearly, difficult to understand things that aren't clear. Yet all we are asked to do today is to be present to the sacred story as it is retold, and to the inexplicable, mysterious, wondrous transaction that was, and still is taking place.

OPENING PRAYER

God of mystery and wonder, because we know the ending of the story, it's tempting for us to ignore the darkness of this day. It's tempting for us to go about our business as usual. It's tempting for us to move too quickly to the dawn of light on Easter morning.

But give us courage and strength on this day to live for a while in the darkness, to set aside comfort and pleasure, to feel the darkness in which so many of your children dwell, the darkness into which your son Jesus entered.

As we reflect on the frailty of Christ, remind us of the frailty of all life. As we cringe at the suffering of Christ, make us mindful of suffering throughout the world.

As we witness the death of Christ, bring us back full circle to the beginning of Lent, to the wisdom of Ash Wednesday: the awareness of our mortality and the mortality of those we love.

Gracious God, deep in the human heart is an unquenchable trust that life does not end with death. Like a seed which is buried in order to bring forth life, Christ goes to the tomb to usher in new life.

We trust that we too will be raised to new life, in this world, here and now, and in the mystery of what lies beyond physical death.

We trust that the whole world will be born anew, that your kingdom is coming as a new heaven and a new earth.

On this day of darkness, it is for this kingdom that we boldly pray.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. **Amen.**

SONG: *God Love the World*

By Red River Worship, Fargo, North Dakota

CONFESSION

We can truly share only in a limited measure in the suffering of others.

We are not Christ, but if we want to be Christians it means that we are to take part in Christ's greatness of heart, in the responsible action that in freedom seizes the hour and faces the danger, and in the true sympathy that springs forth not from fear but from Christ's freeing and redeeming love for all who suffer.

Inactive waiting and dully looking on are not Christian responses. Christians are called to action and sympathy not through their own firsthand experiences, but by the immediate experience of [others] for whose sake Christ suffered.

It is infinitely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than in the freedom of one's very own responsible action.

It is infinitely easier to suffer in community with others, than in solitude.

It is infinitely easier to suffer publicly and with honor, than in the shadow and in dishonor.

It is infinitely easier to suffer through putting one's bodily life at stake than to suffer through the spirit.

Christ suffered: In freedom, in solitude, in the shadow and in dishonor, in body and in spirit.

Since then, many Christians have suffered with him. We confess that we have chosen ease over the cost of discipleship, indolence over action, we have turned away from injustice, all the while knowing that Christ's hands and feet are our own. Lord, have mercy on us.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 10:11-31

11-18 Every priest goes to work at the altar each day, offers the same old sacrifices year in, year out, and never makes a dent in the sin problem. As a priest, Christ made a single sacrifice for sins, and that was it! Then he sat down right beside God and waited for his enemies to cave in. It was a perfect sacrifice by a perfect person to perfect some very imperfect people. By that single offering, he did everything that needed to be done for everyone who takes part in the purifying process. The Holy Spirit confirms this:

This new plan I'm making with Israel isn't going to be written on paper, isn't going to be chiseled in stone; This time "I'm writing out the plan in them, carving it on the lining of their hearts."

He concludes,

I'll forever wipe the slate clean of their sins. Once sins are taken care of for good, there's no longer any need to offer sacrifices for them.

19-21 So, friends, we can now—without hesitation—walk right up to God, into "the Holy Place." Jesus has cleared the way by the blood of his sacrifice, acting as our priest before God. The "curtain" into God's presence is his body.

22-25 So let's do it—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshipping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we

see the big Day approaching.

26-31 If we give up and turn our backs on all we've learned, all we've been given, all the truth we now know, we repudiate Christ's sacrifice and are left on our own to face the Judgment—and a mighty fierce judgment it will be! If the penalty for breaking the law of Moses is physical death, what do you think will happen if you turn on God's Son, spit on the sacrifice that made you whole, and insult this most gracious Spirit? This is no light matter. God has warned us that he'll hold us to account and make us pay. He was quite explicit: "Vengeance is mine, and I won't overlook a thing" and "God will judge his people." Nobody's getting by with anything, believe me.

SONG: *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*
By Red River Worship, Fargo, North Dakota

MEDITATION: Christ on the Cross

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do

Here is love caught between the powers of the world and the breaking of heaven on the long journey home we do not know what it is we do and the Last Word forgives

Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise

Here is love found between two thieves crucified among the lost and the Last Word turns and promises paradise

Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother

Here is love lonely on the cross and with nothing left the Last Word even now brings together mother and son

My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

Here is love some gargoyle of grace abandoned by heaven and the Last Word breaks with loneliness

I thirst

Here is love and in the last moments of life seeks solace and the Last Word in the final moment yet appeals to humanity

It is finished

Here is love and here what it is like when every hope comes to an end and the Last Word is finished

Father, into our hands I commit my spirit

Here is love clinging to one last hope that not everything is lost and the last word dies

SENDING

The story has been told, and now we return to the world where we live and wait. The worship is over?

No, the worship continues while we wait and watch. Our worship will close after the stone has been removed and the flame of hope

has been re-lit.

So, we go out to wait, we watch for the hope that defies despair,
the life that defies death, the beginning that defies the end.

While we wait, while darkness covers the land of faith, remember
that no matter how abandoned we may feel we are not alone.

God has not and will not abandon us. Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: *Alas! And did my Savior Bleed*
By Red River Worship, Fargo, North Dakota

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