

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS



April 10, 2020
Zion Lutheran Church
Camas, Washington
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A service of prayer and meditation

A Tenebrae Service is a prolonged meditation of Christ's suffering upon the cross. There will be a prayer followed by a short scripture. Each scripture will be based on one of the seven statements of Jesus while he was dying on the cross. After each reading a candle will be extinguished, a verse from a hymn sung and the lights will be dimmed. We use this service to ponder the depth of Christ's suffering and death. The service will end in darkness with the exception of the eternal flame that is kept burning, knowing that Christ is forever and always present in our lives even on the darkest of nights.

Call to Worship

L: God of the cross, God of the resurrection,

C: **keep lighting the way in the dark places.**

L: Help us, O Lord,

C: **to see meaning in this terrible story.**

L: Help us, O Lord,

C: **to keep the light of hope alive in our hearts.**

L: Amen.

C: **Amen**

Silence is kept for reflection

Prayer for a national crisis – Lutheran Book of Prayer

Heavenly Father, I come to Your throne of mercy, bowed down and wearied by the weight of suffering and disaster visited upon our country. I beg You to protect this nation in our hour of need. I acknowledge my trespasses before You and do not deny either my own transgressions of Your holy Law or the sins of other citizens of my homeland. We are laden with iniquity, but

You call us to Your forgiveness, salvation, hope, and life. Turn the hearts and minds of all to You, that they might find peace through the cleansing of Jesus' blood. Let me not be confounded or dismayed, so that I, a child of Your grace, may courageously speak to this needy world of the hope that is within me. Make me an instrument of Your peace in a world of conflict, a witness to the power of faith in a world lost in unbelief, and a bearer of the joy that overcomes the sorrow of a fallen world. Grant to the leaders of this nation and all the nations of the world wise counsel, calm thinking, and unselfish aims. Amid the tumult of disaster, build Your kingdom and turn even more souls to Yourself. Because of Your grace, we are not altogether lost but find peace and forgiveness in You. O Lord, give me the grace to seek You, trust You, and confess You; in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Hymn

"Where Charity and Love Prevail"

Number 359

- 1 Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.
- 2 With grateful joy and holy fear, God's charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in return.
- 3 Let us recall that in our midst dwells Christ, God's holy Son;
as members of each body joined, in him we are made one.
- 4 Let strife among us be unknown; let all contentions cease.
Be God's the glory that we seek; be his our only peace.

Prayer for Preparation

L: Jesus, crucified and living Savior,

C: **We do not like this story. We do not want to be separated; we do not want to be forsaken; we do not want "good-byes"; we certainly do not want to follow you to a cross. Life is full of brokenness and uncertainty. You have gone before us through suffering and tragedy. You have faced danger and conquered death. On this Good Friday, we come closer to each other, willing to share pain, confident there can be no bad Friday or lonely Saturday beyond your love. Amen.**

Reading for Preparation

Responsive Reading

Psalm 22

L: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

C: **My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer; by night, but I find no rest.**

L: Yet you are the Holy One, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

C: ***Our ancestors put their trust in you, they trusted, and you rescued them.***

L: They cried out to you and were delivered; they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

C: ***But as for me, I am a worm and not human, scorned by all and despised by the people.***

L: All who see me laugh me to scorn; they curl their lips; they shake their heads.

C: ***Trust in the LORD; let the LORD deliver; let God rescue him if God so delights in him."***

L: Yet you are the one who drew me forth from the womb, and kept me safe on my mother's breast.

C: ***I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.***

L: Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

C: ***Many young bulls encircle me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me.***

L: They open wide their jaws at me, like a slashing and roaring lion.

C: ***I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; my heart within my breast is melting wax.***

L: My strength is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; and you have laid me in the dust of death.

C: ***Packs of dogs close me in, a band of evildoers circles round me; they pierce my hands and my feet.***

L: I can count all my bones while they stare at me and gloat.

C: ***They divide my garments among them; for my clothing, they cast lots.***

L: But you, O LORD, be not far away; O my help, hasten to my aid.

C: ***Deliver me from the sword, my life from the power of the dog.***

L: Save me from the lion's mouth! From the horns of wild bulls you have rescued me.

C: ***I will declare your name to my people; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you.***

L: You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's line, give glory. Stand in awe of the LORD, all you offspring of Israel.

C: ***For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face hidden from them; but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.***

L: From you comes my praise in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the sight of

those who fear the LORD.

C: ***The poor shall eat and be satisfied, Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!***

L: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of nations shall bow before God.

C: ***For dominion belongs to the LORD, who rules over the nations.***

L: Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

C: ***Their descendants shall serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.***

L: They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying to them,

C: ***"The LORD has acted!"***

Special Music *"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"* Ray Palmer, Lowell Mason
Pat Hagensen, Judy Swanson, accompanist Gary Ritter

The Seven Last Words of Jesus on the Cross

The first word: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!

Prayer

L: Almighty and eternal God,

C: ***you give strength to the weary and courage to those who have lost heart. Heal the sick, comfort the dying, free those unjustly deprived of liberty, and deliver your world from hunger, crisis and disease. Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, receiving your help in their time of need. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

Reading

Luke 23:26, 32-34

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. ³²Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing.

First candle is extinguished

“Were You There”

v. 1 Number 353

1. 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?

The second word: Today you will be with me in paradise.

The 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.

Reading

Luke 23:35-43

And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!"³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine,³⁷ and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"³⁸There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."⁴²Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."⁴³He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Second candle is extinguished

“Were You There”

v. 2 Number 353

2. 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?

The third word: Woman, behold your son. Behold your mother.

Prayer

Jesus, my Savior and the Shepherd of my soul, embrace me with Your love, and protect me throughout this day. I need You, for I am wounded and bruised, sick at heart, and in trouble and distress. To You I come. Forgive me all my sins in Your mercy and love, and uphold me amid these trials and tribulations. Strengthen my faith. Take every doubt out of my heart, and lead me into Your Word, where You promise to be with me always in every situation of life. Calm my nerves. Put my mind at ease. I know you will provide for me and place me in your love. Make me hopeful and patient. O Christ, have mercy upon me. O Christ, be with me now and forever. **Amen.**

Reading

John 19:25b-27

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Third candle is extinguished

“Were You There”

v. 3 Number 353

3. Were you there when they pierced him in the side? Were you there when they pierced him in the side? Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

The fourth word: My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

Prayer

O dear God and Lord! I live, yet I know not how long. I must die and yet I do not know when. But as You alone know, then, O Lord, my heavenly Father, let it be so! Should this day (this night) be the last of my life, Lord, Your will be done, for it alone is the best way. Therefore, I am ready to live and die in true faith in Christ, my Redeemer. O merciful Father, do not forsake me and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Give me enough time and space for repentance that I may acknowledge and confess the transgressions of my heart, that I may obtain forgiveness and comfort from Your saving Word, and that I may be preserved for eternal life. O Lord, who knows all hearts, my heart yearns for its future with You. **Amen.**

Reading

Matthew 27:45-46

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Fourth candle is extinguished

“Were You There”

v. 4 Number 353

4. Were you there when the sun refused to shine? Were you there when the sun refused to shine? Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

The fifth word: I thirst.

Prayer

Surely, O Lord, You made me Yours through water and Word and keep me with Jesus Christ in the one true faith, while we face crisis and affliction. It drains my will, tests my patience, and challenges my endurance. You have promised that You will not impose upon Your children more than we can endure, and I know the truth of this word. However, I remain weak and days of full health and renewed vigor seem far away. I know not if I am closer to the beginning or the end of this trial. In weakness and uncertainty, sins of doubt and despair tempt me. Forgive these and all my other iniquities of thought, word, and deed. Remind me of Your grace, keeping my eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith. Lead me through this wilderness of testing for the sake of Your Son, Jesus, who knows my pain and weakness through His own temptation and passion. **Amen.**

Readings

John 19:28-29

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty."²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

Psalm 69:16-21

¹⁶Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. ¹⁷Do not hide your face from your servant, for I am in distress — make haste to answer me.

¹⁸Draw near to me, redeem me, set me free because of my enemies. ¹⁹You know the insults I receive, and my shame and dishonor; my foes are all known to you. ²⁰Insults have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. ²¹They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Fifth candle is extinguished

"Were You There"

v. 5 Number 353

- 5. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

The sixth word: It is finished.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, strength of the weary and a very present help to all who are in distress, I come to You with my many burdens and sins. Cleanse my soul, O Lord, and heal my body. Safely see me through the troubled waters of the day. Remove all sinful thoughts and worries from my heart, and let me find peace in You. Lead me again to Calvary to behold Your boundless love, O gracious Savior. Fill my soul with the joy of forgiveness and the hope of everlasting life. Let not the sufferings and cares of this day make me despondent. Teach me to believe that Your abiding presence will uphold me from hour to hour. Keep me steadfast in the faith to the end. I ask this of You who has redeemed me with Your own blood. **Amen.**

Reading

John19:30

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Sixth candle extinguished

"Were You There"

v. 1 Number 353

- 1. 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?

The seventh word: Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.

Prayer

L: We witness your death, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

L: Christ, have mercy.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

L: We whisper a humble amen.

C: **Amen, amen.**

Readings

Luke 23:44-46

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁵From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:54

Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Strepitus

Service ends in silence

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"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

Ray Palmer, Lowell Mason

"Were You There"

Text and Music: African American Spiritual

"Where Charity and Love Prevail"

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