

All Saints Lutheran Church
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Rev Henry Albrechtsen, III, Pastor
518-488-4991 + revalbrechtsen@outlook.com

Maundy Thursday + 9 April 2020
Service of Confession

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

I said I will go to the altar of God.

to God my exceeding joy.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

who made heaven and earth.

The Office of Corporate Confession and Absolution

Beloved in the Lord, it is our intention to receive the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which He strengthens our faith by giving His body to eat and His blood to drink. Therefore, it is proper that we diligently examine ourselves, as St Paul urges us to do, for this holy Sacrament has been instituted for the special comfort of those who are troubled because of their sin and who humbly confess their sins, fear God's wrath, and hunger and thirst for righteousness.

But when we examine our hearts and consciences, we find nothing in us but sin and death, from which we are incapable of delivering ourselves. Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ has had mercy on us. For our benefit He became man so that He might fulfill for us the whole will and law of God and, to deliver us, took upon Himself our sin and the punishment we deserve.

So that we may more confidently believe this and be strengthened in the faith and in holy living, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, broke it, and gave it to His disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My Body, which is given for you." It is as if He said, "I became man, and all I do and suffer is for your good. As a pledge of this, I give you My body to eat."

In the same way also He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." Again, it is as if He said, "I have had mercy on you by taking into Myself all your iniquities. I give Myself into death, shedding My blood to obtain grace and forgiveness of sins, and to comfort and establish the new testament, which gives forgiveness and everlasting salvation. As a pledge of this, I give you My blood to drink." Therefore, whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup, confidently believing this Word and promise of Christ, dwells in Christ and Christ in them and has eternal life.

When we partake of this Sacrament, we do so also in remembrance of Him, showing His death - that He was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification. Giving Him our most heartfelt thanks, we take up our cross and follow Him and, according to His commandment, love one another as He has loved us. For we are all one body; for just as the one cup is filled with wine of many grapes and one bread made from countless grains, so also we, being many, are one body in Christ. Because of Him, we love one another, not only in word, but in deed and in truth.

May the almighty and merciful God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by His Holy Spirit, accomplish this in us.

Amen.

Having heard the Word of God our Father, let us confess our sins to Him, imploring Him for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

O Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them, and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

God be merciful to us and strengthen our faith; our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ. Let us pray together:

Dearest Savior, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever. Amen.

Old Testament Lesson – Deuteronomy 21:22-23

And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

Epistle – Galatians 3:1-14

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by^[a] the flesh? ⁴ Did you suffer^[b] so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶ just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify^[c] the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."^[d] ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit^[e] through faith.

The Holy Gospel - John 13:1-17; 31-35

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped

around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet,^[a] but is completely clean. And you^[b] are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant^[c] is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Meditation – The Trees of the Bible - The Tree of the Cross + Galatians 3:1-14

It had been a thousand generations since God first promised a rebellious and disobedient Adam and Eve when cursing the tempter that there would be *enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring^[e] and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel* [Genesis 3:15]. But now, within the short span of two days, the prophesy of a Savior would be fulfilled, and our salvation secured.

It began with the annual celebration of Passover, Jesus and His disciples gathered together in the Upper Room for the traditional feast commemorating the redemption of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. But this would not be the usual meal of unleavened bread, this would become the Lord's Supper of His body and blood, sacrificed within hours for our sins.

The Passion Narrative then takes off with lightning speed: betrayal, arrest, standing accused before the Sanhedrin, standing condemned before Pilate, whipped, scourged, mocked and finally crucified... finally hanging on the tree of the Cross.

Being hung from a tree has always been a means to shame and execute a criminal, and in some cases, murder an innocent man. The ancient people of Israel did it; Pharaoh did it [Genesis 40:19,22], and so did the Persians [Esther 2:23]. Everyone who was hung on a tree for their crimes was not only executed but also shamed. Everyone... and that would include each of us, for we fail to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul or mind; we fail to love our neighbors. [Matthew 22:37-40] We each know our own failures better than others know them, and God knows them best of all! Such failures flow from the sinful nature we inherited from the first man and woman who ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and for such failures and sinful nature we deserve to be cut off from God's presence for all eternity [Matthew 27:46]. We all deserve to be hung accursed from the accursed tree!

St Paul writes in our Epistle reading: ¹³ *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us — for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" — ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.* [Galatians 3:13-14]. Sinless and righteous Jesus Christ redeemed us from the cursed of the law by becoming a curse for us, being hanged on the tree of the cross. For us and our salvation, Jesus Christ humbly endured the shame of crucifixion, the greatest possible insult – stripped, beaten and left hanging naked to the world – so that all of us might be sinless and righteous [II Corinthians 5:21], not by the Law, but by faith in Him. Jesus Christ took to the cross our sins and the ancient curse that afflicts us.

However, thanks be to God, Jesus did not hang on the cross overnight that first Good Friday, but was taken down before the Sabbath [John 19:31]. And later God revealed the majesty and glory of the crucified Christ by raising Him and exalting Him to His right hand. So now, Jesus Christ works through His Holy Spirit in

all who believe, through the Means of Grace: the Word read and preached, Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar, whose institution we commemorate this evening. At the Sacrament of the Altar, we receive the fruit of the Tree of the Cross – forgiveness and salvation. Thus, the cross becomes for us the Tree of Life. And so, considering the Tree of the Cross, we realize that, although we fail to keep God’s Law and deserve the cross’s shame ourselves, Jesus became accursed for us and so redeems us. Because of our Lord’s sacrifice, and by God’s mercy and grace, we are living among the Trees of the Bible now, and for eternity.

The Prayers

Almighty God, grant that in the midst of our failures or weaknesses we may be restored through the passion and intercession of Your only-begotten Son, who lives and reigns with Your and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Look mercifully, O Lord, we implore You, on the affliction of Your people suffering fear and anxiety in the wake of the coronavirus epidemic sweeping across our nation, and the world. Let not mistrust and sin destroy us, nor hopelessness overwhelm us, but let Your boundless mercy save us, and Your Holy Spirit, the Comforter, calm our anxious hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need, look with favor upon all who have been struck with the Coronavirus, and all who have fallen ill. Assure them of Your mercy, deliver them from the temptation of the Evil One to despair, and give patience and comfort in their illness. If it please You, restore them to health, or give grace to accept this tribulation with courage and hope; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Luther’s Evening Prayer

I Thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. **Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

The Sending

L: Now go in peace and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.