

THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST
Good Friday, April 2, 2021
American Lutheran Church - Filley, Nebraska
Pastor LuRae Hallstrom

(Everyone who considers themselves a sinner is asked to sign in as you enter.)

P. We gather today, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Tonight is sacred time. Let us contemplate the meaning of Christ's death, as we experience a series of readings, responses, silent reflection and prayer designed to help us enter more deeply into the meaning of Good Friday as we consider the wounds that Christ endured on his right hand, his left hand, his scalp, the flogging of his body, his right foot, his left foot, his side.

Call to Worship - (inspired by John 1:1-4 and the Nicene Creed)

P. Keep silence:

C. God from God

P. is no longer.

P. Hold vigil:

C. Light from Light

P. has been extinguished.

P. Be convicted:

C. True God from True God

P. has been judged to be false and punished.

P. Gather together:

C. One Being, Begotten Not Made

P. has been broken apart.

P. Let us pray

C. O merciful God, you did not spare your only Son, but offered him up for us all, that he might bear our sins upon the cross. Grant that we might so examine ourselves that we realize our own sinfulness, so great as to spiritually crucify him anew. Help us, as we hold nails in our hands which are similar to those driven into Christ's body, that we may be transformed into more faithful disciples in his name. Amen.

THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST

(Betrayal, Pride, Indecision, Cruelty, Envy, Hatred, Fear)

THE NAIL OF BETRAYAL

1st Reading - Mark 14:43-50 English Standard Version - ESV

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.' All of them deserted him and fled.

L. Lord, we don't know for certain what motivated Judas to betray Jesus. Was it for financial gain or retaliation for an implied slight? Jesus clearly knew what kind of person Judas was and nonetheless, Judas was given a position of some importance, treasurer of the group, though he proved to be dishonest. Before he "turned aside, to go to go his own way", Judas served as a treasured disciple of Jesus, an individual of promise when chosen and an obvious leader. Lord, you know that there is no need to be motivated by greed as you have promised to provide for our every need.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

P. O God, help us consider how we betray others,

How we abandon them in their time of need, how we think of ourselves first.

C. O God, do not let us deceive ourselves.

Our acts of betrayal hurt us and create walls between us and others.

P. O God, we know too that our betrayal hurts you.

HYMN: WERE YOU THERE

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 NAIL OF PRIDE

2nd Reading - Mark 15:1-15 (ESV)

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

L. Lord, we remember Pontius Pilate, and how a failed Roman administrator, a puffed-up little man, presumed to sit in judgement over the one whom you have made Judge over the living and the dead. We know the pride of Pilate which says – “now look here Christ, prove yourself to us, and we may favor you with our belief.” We know how much store we put by whatever position we have managed to achieve in the world, and if we sense that others are in our power, we lord it over them. Our pride makes it difficult for us to confess our faults because we are so busy trying to put the best face forward – and in the end we actually begin to believe our own propaganda. Lord we know that no mask can deceive you. Do not let us deceive ourselves.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

P. O God, help us consider our own pride and where it leads.

C. O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our pride hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

P. O God, we know too that our pride hurts you.

HYMN: WERE YOU THERE

Were you there when they mocked the son of God? Were you there when they mocked the son of God? Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble; Were you there when they mocked the son of God?

THE NAIL OF INDECISION

3rd Reading - Mark 15:6-15 (ESV)

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

L. Lord, we see Pilate here morally weak and yielding to the pressure of the crowd, although he knew that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over, and that Jesus had done no evil. Lord, how many times have we been a party to injustice because we failed to take a firmer stand. How many times have we yielded to the pressure of the group, against our better judgement of what we knew to be right. How often, Lord, when your Spirit would stir us to some action do we procrastinate, avoid and resist the voice of your prompting.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

P. O God, help us consider how we waver, how we seek to avoid responsibility and to blame others for our actions.

C: O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our indecision hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

P. O God, we know too that our indecision hurts you

HYMN: WERE YOU THERE

Were you there when he walked the road alone? Were you there when he walked the road alone?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble; Were you there when he walked the road alone?

THE NAIL OF CRUELTY

4th Reading - Mark 15:16-20

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

L. Lord we hate to look at the cruelty you endured, but on this day we force ourselves to remember the lashes they gave you, the crown of thorns and the purple robe they placed on you in mockery. We remember their blows to your head with a reed, their vile spitting, their gambling for your clothes when you were not yet dead, and the way they made you carry your cross, so that all might see the "dead man walking." O Lord, as we shake our heads at these barbarities, cause us to see the cruelty of which we all are capable. Lord help us to replace cruelty with kindness.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

P. O God, help us consider how we are cruel to others, how we malign and slander others and add to the evil that comes upon them.

C: O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our cruelty hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

P. O God, we know too that our cruelty hurts you.

HYMN: WERE YOU THERE

Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes? Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes? Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble; Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?

THE NAIL OF ENVY

5th Reading - Mark 15:21-24

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). 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.

L. Lord, you were a victim of abuse and injustice due to those who were envious of your goodness. The Jews' strong emotions and Pilate's desire to pacify them at all costs led to the death of an innocent man. We have a lot in common with those people. When we sacrifice the truth in order to please the crowd, when we desire that which isn't intended for our use to satisfy unhealthy wants and needs, we ourselves crucify Jesus and others whom we innocently harm. Lord, help us look with courage and wisdom at our own envious hearts and stop the trail of tears.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

P. O God, help us consider how we envy others, how we desire more than we receive and seek to influence and rule over others.

C. O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our envy hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

P. O God, we know too that our envy hurts you.

HYMN: WERE YOU THERE

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 NAIL OF FEAR

6th Reading - Mark 15:25-32

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.

L. Lord, we see the Religious Leaders and Roman rulers driven by fear of controversy and the potential of losing power. We, like them, are often motivated by fear of the unknown, and overcompensate for our uncertainty and insecurities with harmful words and deeds. How many times have we, ourselves, acted out in fear when all we need is easily within our grasp. Lord, calm our fear and raise our trust in your plan of love for the world.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

P. O God, help us to look to you in our fear, that we may know instead the peace that passes all human understanding.

C. O God, do not let us be fearful of others. Our fear hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

P. O God, we know too that our fear hurts you.

HYMN: WERE YOU THERE

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 NAIL OF HATRED

7th Reading - Mark 15:33-39

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

L. Lord, how did all of this anger, bitterness and hatred become focused on someone so kind and good? How did it go so far as to ultimately killed you? Why was so much anger allowed to fester and grow into something that would dim such a bright light and source of hope? Lord, help us to rid ourselves of bitterness, anger and harsh words and instead be kind to one another; showing forgiveness as we ourselves have been forgiven.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

P. O God, help us consider how we show hate to others, how we fail to care for others and make distinctions among them.

C: O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our hatred hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

P. O God, we know too that our hatred hurts you.

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

P. We come to you, Jesus, burdened with our own sin.

Our own calls for revenge and violence,
which may or may not have included the words,

C. "Crucify him, crucify him!"

P. Our own betrayals, with or without the thirty pieces of silver.

Our own denials, whether or not we have heard the cock crowing.

You know the sins we carry, secretly or openly,
the way they crush us, the weight of them.

C. We bring these to your cross...

The sinners/condemned names are brought forward.

P. You know our secret sins of
Betrayal **(BELL TOLLS)**
Pride **(BELL TOLLS)**
Indecision **(BELL TOLLS)**
Cruelty **(BELL TOLLS)**
Envy **(BELL TOLLS)**
hatred **(BELL TOLLS)**
fear. **(BELL TOLLS)**

THE DRIVING OF THE NAILS

P. Christ Jesus received the punishment for the sins of the world, including
the sins of *(the nails are pounded)*

THE CROSS IS RAISED UP

P. The story has been told.
Christ's body is dead and buried.
Now, we return to a world where evil lurks, and hope for a miracle.
Where life might defy death,
Where sorrow may be turned to joy,
Where a new beginning could change this tragic ending.
While we wait, and darkness covers the land of faith,
remember that no matter how abandoned we may feel
We are not alone.
The Father did not abandon his Son...nor will He abandon us.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

The congregation exits silently.

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This service is loosely based on a service by Richard and Charlene Fairchild

"Were You There" - Text: African American spiritual, alt.; Tune: African American spiritual, Public Domain

WELCOME to this Good Friday service at American Lutheran Church. Our hope is that you would enter expectantly, worship deeply, and leave quietly this evening with your heart centered on the suffering of Christ for you and your salvation.

WORSHIP HELPERS:

Council – Dave Norton-President, Virgil Jobman-Vice President, Carol Frerichs-Secretary, Brenda Hippen-Treasurer, Linda Searcey-at large
PowerPoint Preparer/Presenter – Brenda Hippen
Audio/Video – Dave Norton
Accompanist – Sandy Mahler