

GOOD FRIDAY | VENERATION OF THE CROSS

Friday, April 3rd 2026

WELCOME TO
HOLY TRINITY

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the largest progressive Lutheran body in the United States. As Lutherans, we go about Christianity in a Lutheran way, emphasizing that we are reconciled with God (justified) not by anything we do, but through and because of God's love, freely given (grace). We love questions more than quick fixes (paradox), and we read the Bible in a way that honors it as the source and norm of faith, but not as a literal handbook. As Lutherans, we also lift up the gifts and capacity for ministry (vocation) that every person unquestionably holds.

As a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation (and the first in the Metropolitan New York Synod), Holy Trinity welcomes all persons, including all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Holy Trinity is also committed to practicing racial equity, learning anti-racism, and modeling radical hospitality and inclusion across age, class, national origin, physical and mental health and ability, family configuration, and language.

With a heart for the city, a passion for justice, and a commitment to the arts, we seek to be a place where all God's people will know they are loved. Welcome. We've been waiting for you. There is a place for you here.

LIVE STREAMING
AT HOLY TRINITY

Please be aware that worship this evening is being filmed, photographed, and live streamed on our YouTube channel. Your likeness and/or voice may be captured by our equipment. Please alert an usher at the entrance if you have any concerns. Selections from this live stream may be used on our website and in our public relations materials.

PLEASE NOTE

Weapons, including firearms, knives, scissors; aerosols such as pepper spray and mace; and any hazardous materials are strictly prohibited on church property. All bags are subject to inspection upon entry into the sanctuary.

A NOTE BEFORE
HEARING
THE PASSION

On Good Friday, the story of Jesus's passion is heard in its entirety from the Gospel according to John, a sacred yet problematic text which makes critical references to "the Jews." Make no mistake, as Lutheran Christians, we renounce the ways John's Gospel has not only been used to falsely assign blame for the death of Jesus, but also obscures the fact that Jesus and his disciples were themselves Jews. Both are forms of antisemitism.

So let us hear this text precisely: in his passion narrative, John's references to "the Jews" refer specifically to local political leaders who fully embraced Roman methods and systems of domination, and most certainly do not refer to an entire identity, religion, culture, or place of origin, either then or now. As such, many such references have been revised to make this clear.

As Lutheran Christians, we must recognize in anti-Semitism a contradiction and an affront to the Gospel, a violation of our hope and calling. We oppose bigotry in all its deadly manifestations and strive for mutual understanding, respect, and partnership with our Jewish neighbors and among people of all faiths. Hearing this passion from the Gospel according to John both precisely and honestly is one way we do that.

GATHERING

prelude

Etude no. 1: Harmonies

György Ligeti
(1923-2006)

The assembly gathers in silence.

greeting

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

prayer of
the day

Let us pray. *Silence is kept.* Merciful God, your Son was lifted up on the cross to draw all people to himself. Grant that we who have been born out of his wounded side may at all times find mercy in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The assembly sits.

WORD

from the
hebrew
scriptures

Isaiah 52:13—53:12

Silence is kept after the reading.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

the passion

John 18-19

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Saint John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The assembly is invited to make a small cross over your forehead, lips, and chest, inviting Jesus the Word into your heart, mind, and speech.

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these people go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

So the soldiers, their officer, and the temple police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish people that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jewish people come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jewish authorities replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. But as it is, my kingdom is not from

here.” Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate asked him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went out to the crowd again and told them, “I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” They shouted in reply, “Not this man but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a rebel.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” When the chief priests and the temple police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.” The crowd answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, “Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the crowd cried out, “If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar.”

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover, and it was about noon. He said to the crowd, “Here is your King!” They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross by himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between

them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many of the Judeans read this inscription because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the temple said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.” When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

“They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

And that is what the soldiers did.

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

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.” A 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. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jewish authorities did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth, so that you also may continue to believe.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.” And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

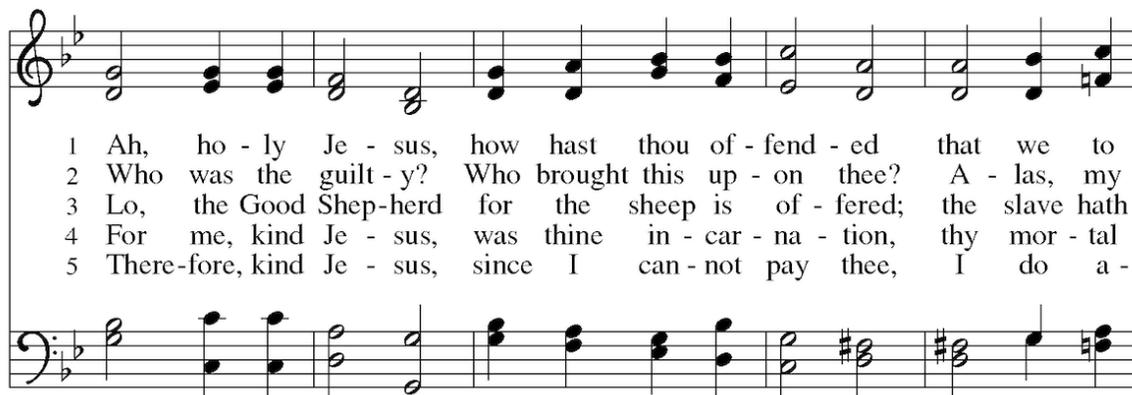
After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the temple authorities, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and

removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jewish people. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

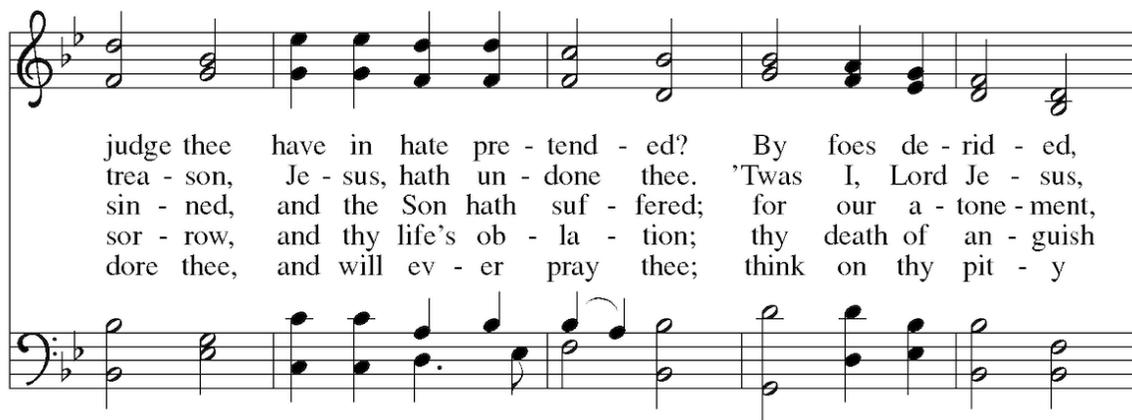
Silence is kept.

The Gospel of the Lord.

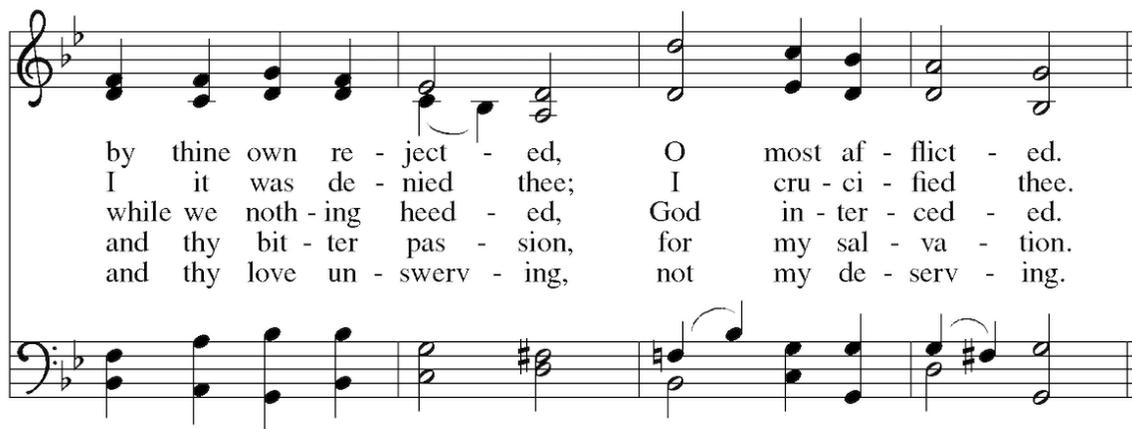
Thanks be to God.



1 Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how hast thou of - fend - ed that we to
2 Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on thee? A - las, my
3 Lo, the Good Shep - herd for the sheep is of - fered; the slave hath
4 For me, kind Je - sus, was thine in - car - na - tion, thy mor - tal
5 There - fore, kind Je - sus, since I can - not pay thee, I do a -



judge thee have in hate pre - tend - ed? By foes de - rid - ed,
trea - son, Je - sus, hath un - done thee. 'Twas I, Lord Je - sus,
sin - ned, and the Son hath suf - fered; for our a - tone - ment,
sor - row, and thy life's ob - la - tion; thy death of an - guish
dore thee, and will ev - er pray thee; think on thy pit - y



by thine own re - ject - ed, O most af - flict - ed.
I it was de - nied thee; I cru - ci - fied thee.
while we noth - ing heed - ed, God in - ter - ced - ed.
and thy bit - ter pas - sion, for my sal - va - tion.
and thy love un - swerv - ing, not my de - serv - ing.

bidding
prayer

Silence is kept. The assembly may kneel or stand.

Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy church throughout the world.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ. By your Holy Spirit guide the church and gather it throughout the world. Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your name, and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for Katrina and Yehiel, our bishops; for Tim, our pastor; for Austin, Robby, Christian, Emily, and all the servants of this church, and for all the people of God. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold our bishops, pastors, other ministers, and lay leaders. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the church, and help each of us in our various vocations to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those preparing for baptism. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, you continue to bless the church. Increase the faith and understanding of those preparing for baptism. Give them new birth as your children, and keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for our sisters and brothers who share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you give your church unity. Look with favor on all who follow Jesus your Son. Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith, and keep us united in the fellowship of love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for the Jewish and Muslim people. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and your teaching to Moses. You protected Hagar and blessed her son Ishmael. Hear our prayers that these siblings of faith whom you have also called your own may each receive the fulfillment of your covenant's promises. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. *Silent prayer.*
Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to all inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of the love made known to us in your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not believe in God. *Silent prayer.*
Almighty and eternal God, you created humanity so that all may long to know you and find peace in you. Grant that all may recognize the signs of your love and grace in the world and in the lives of Christians, and gladly acknowledge you as the one true God. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for God's creation. *Silent prayer.*
Almighty and eternal God, you are the creator of a magnificent universe. Hold all the worlds in the arms of your care and bring all things to fulfillment in you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who serve in public office. *Silent prayer.*
Almighty and eternal God, you are the champion of the poor and oppressed. In your goodness, give wisdom to those in authority, so that all people may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

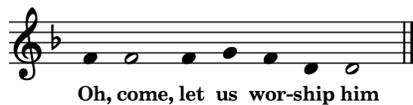
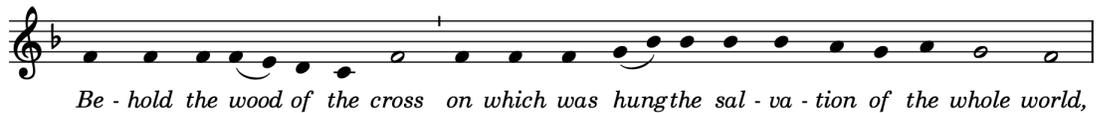
Let us pray for those in need. *Silent prayer.*
Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary and new courage to those who have lost heart. Heal the sick, comfort the dying, give safety to travelers, free those unjustly deprived of liberty, and deliver your world from falsehood, hunger, and disease. Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask:

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.**

adoration
of the cross



The assembly sits in silence. During this time the assembly may come to the cross to make a sign of reverence. It is an ancient custom of the Church to express physically one's love of the crucified Jesus by coming forward to offer a personal expression of thankful adoration. This has traditionally taken a variety of forms: kneeling near the cross for prayer, kissing or touching the wood of the cross, lighting a candle, or offering a profound bow. Feel free to move forward as you desire.

versicle

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The assembly stands and sings, proclaiming the triumph of the cross. While Nun danket may seem like an unexpected choice, this hymn was sung without fail at every Vespers in Leipzig, including on Good Friday, April 19, 1726.



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,
 2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
 3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,



who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
 with ever joyful hearts, and blessed peace to cheer us,
 the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven,



who, from our mothers' arms, has blessed us on our way
 and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
 the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;



with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
 and free us from all harm in this world and the next.
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

There is no benediction or postlude. You are encouraged to remain in the church for prayer, meditation and adoration of the crucified Christ. Worship in this Paschal season continues with Bach Vespers and Tenebrae this evening at 7:00 p.m.

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