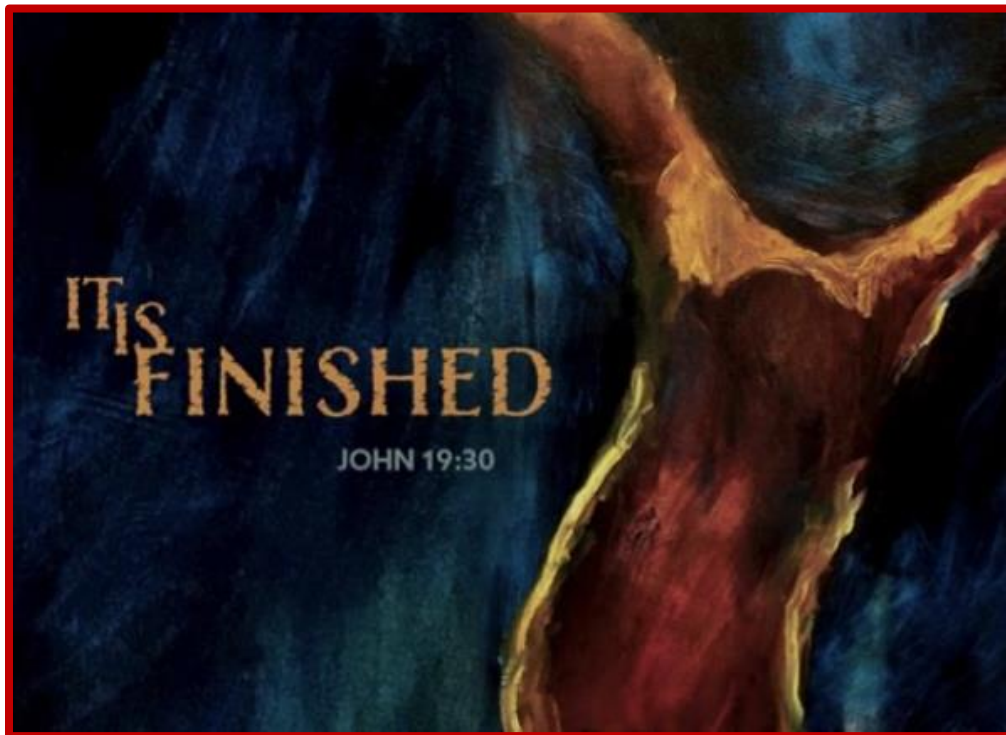


GOOD FRIDAY

The Way of the Cross

April 18, 2025



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 E. Brandt Boulevard

Landisville, PA

Connecting with God; Connecting with others; Connecting others with God

GOOD FRIDAY

The Way of the Cross

P: Pastor A: Assisting Minister C: Congregation (bolded)

The Peacemaking Christ: Stations of the Cross Prayer and Hymn Service

P: Jesus is condemned to death.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: They wanted nothing more, they had everything. They had the truth, they had the law, they had certainty, they had Moses and the Prophets, they had worship, they had an institution. All they were missing was God. They had just bought him for thirty coins.

God is their prisoner. The prisoner of their definitions, the prisoner of their laws, the prisoner of their book, and the prisoner of their religion.

They condemn God to death. They damn him and they throw him into Hell. The fools! That is just where he dreamt of going!

God had had enough of temples, of the reverences of religion, of the formality of ritual, of the tawdry gilt of ceremonies.

God only felt at ease with the poor, with the damned, the condemned, the prisoners, the immigrants, the exiles, the rejects, the lame, the paralytics of misfortune, the lepers. God only came into the world to be alongside those whom the world rejects.

They thought they could humble God by condemnation to a human death. But showing God's own self as one condemned to death – as the ally of the vanquished, the beaten, the scorned and the tortured – was precisely in showing Himself in poverty that God refused to be part of their order.

From now on, the human put to death will always be the fiery image of God.

**We sing: When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.
(ELW 803)**

P: Jesus, help us to see how we condemn you. Help us to grasp that when we condemn another person, we condemn you. Even when our condemnation is justified, we condemn you still.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus takes up the cross.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: Peter, the rock, is alone, because rocks are always alone. Peter disowns the man, it is only the man he denies.

From now on, to deny the man will always be to deny God.

God is no longer an idea, a principle, a concept.

By disowning God Peter gave life to God. God is no longer a notion but a face with eyes full of tears.

God is no longer hidden from our wants. God no longer stays remote in his shelter. God can be hurt.

On that night, Peter started to see. To be perfect, God chose to let God's own self be denied.

They sentence God to the cross.

Like an illiterate person signs with an "X", God signs with a cross.

We sing: Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood. (ELW 803)

P: Jesus, open our hearts to your cross. Help us to understand that your allowing us to deny you is what brings you into our midst. In your embrace of the cross we give you, you join us in our brokenness.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus falls for the first time.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: **By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

A: God is forced out of the town because the town is their paradise.

Like Adam, God in his turn is thrown out, condemned to go away, to quit, to leave.

Like Adam, God is condemned to die. God is on the way in his search to rejoin Adam.

From now on, can God only be God by being absent?

They conduct God to their borders but the man can only be a rebel: eternity is a disobedience. They accuse the man of sowing disorder. They accuse him of being God.

God falls to the ground, embracing a new homeland. God falls like a dead leaf.

God is on the ground like a discarded newspaper. God falls into the uncertain, thus filling the emptiness left by the Word.

God falls and a human rises.

God falls, it is the sign of authority.

We sing: See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown? (ELW 803)

P: Jesus, you allowed us to throw you out, to push you down. Help us to see your love in your fall.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus meets his mother.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: Jesus meets Mary. God passes his mother. She brought him to birth. She is here. She has come here to bear him up in death.

It is very true that death is a birth and that we are never finished with birth.

We sing: **Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small; love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.**
(ELW 803)

P: Jesus, your mother loved you until the end, knowing not that it was the beginning.

Help us to lift up the dying. Help us to see never-ending life in death.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: **We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.**

P: The cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: **By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

A: There is Simon, a man! Requisition him! It is a man who helps God, not an angel, an archangel, or a seraph—a human who comes to the aid of God.

God has become capable of needing. God calls on tenderness. Simon, the servant of God is not a religious leader, not a holy man, not a theologian, not a liturgist not a saint. He's just a passerby, the first on the scene.

Simon, by giving the aid of his shoulder, has just shown that a human being can be destroyed. Without that same aid, humanity's destruction is limitless. There we see the face of God.

P: Jesus, you were helped by a passerby, a stranger. Help us to see that whenever we help another, we are choosing not to destroy another. Help us to choose life, not death.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: A woman wipes the face of Jesus.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: According to tradition, showing himself in the hands of Veronica, giving this woman the trace of his face, God shows nearness in the face of the stranger. God takes off the mask but in doing so adopts another. Once we have looked on the face of God, we can never, never again recognize others as “strangers.”

P: Jesus, help us to see your face in the face of every loved one, every stranger. May we look deeply into the eyes of others and see God.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus falls for the second time.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: God falls for the second time. God falls like rain on the desert dunes; the stones of the prairies break into flower. The silence becomes a garden. God falls like the sunlight in the springtime.

Fallen for the second time, God becomes not our world, but our desire.

P: Jesus, we see your love for us as you stumble under the cross. Turn our hearts toward you. May we desire you, only you.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: They came to see a conqueror, and here is a Lamb led to the slaughterhouse. They expected a bronzed, dynamic body with fine muscles and a smile like steel, and they find a common convict. They dreamed of a messiah and find a worm. They came to acclaim a miracle, but this time the water does not change to wine; it is blood which is poured out.

P: Jesus, you weep for us. You call us to turn from the ways of death. You call us to repent, because you wish us to be free of fear. Help us to turn toward you and toward one another.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus falls for the third time.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.


A: For the third time the Highest of the High has fallen to the depths. God is not playing at being a human, like an actor in a play.

The body of God is not a disguise. The body of God is not a second home.


God falls for the third time.

God is a body. The skin has become the deepest part of him, the flesh a Word at risk, the body is the state of God's spirit.


God is reaching the limit. And it is thus that God is God. In taking flesh God chose to take the way of the stranger.



1 O sa - cred head, now wound - ed, with grief and shame weighed down,
 2 How pale thou art with an - guish, with sore a - buse and scorn;
 3 What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank thee, dear - est friend,
 4 Lord, be my con - so - la - tion; shield me when I must die;



now scorn - ful - ly sur - round - ed with thorns, thine on - ly crown;
 how does thy face now lan - guish, which once was bright as morn!
 for this thy dy - ing sor - row, thy pit - y with - out end?
 re - mind me of thy pas - sion when my last hour draws nigh.



O sa - cred head, what glo - ry, what bliss till now was thine!
 Thy grief and bit - ter pas - sion were all for sin - ners' gain;
 Oh, make me thine for - ev - er, and should I faint - ing be,
 These eyes, new faith re - ceiv - ing, from thee shall nev - er move;



Yet, though de - spised and gor - y, I joy to call thee mine.
 mine, mine was the trans - gres - sion, but thine the dead - ly pain.
 Lord, let me nev - er, nev - er out - live my love to thee.
 for all who die be - liev - ing die safe - ly in thy love.

P: Jesus, you join us in the depths of our brokenness, pain, fallenness. You embrace the stranger. You embrace us. May we be filled with wonder at your love, to pour out your power, and take on this human life.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: **We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.**

P: Jesus is stripped of his garments.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: **By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

A: God is naked. Naked like a baby being born, like the newly born on the threshold of his mother's womb.

This is another birth. God is naked. God will take nothing from the world, brought nothing of our goods, our profits, or our little concerns.

God is going as naked as God came.

The soldiers cast lots for God's clothes. They will be relics, the mortal remains of God. They will attract just the things from which God fled, raising some enormous temple, but God is already elsewhere; the clothes are meaningless now.

We sing: **Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended that man to judge thee hath in hate pretended? By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted. (ELW 349)**

P: Jesus, we are naked. We are nothing. We are dust. And yet you become naked. You become nothing. You become dust with us. What love.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus is nailed to the cross.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: For the nails, God must open the hands which sowed the seeds; God must raise the feet which walked on the water.

We sing: **Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee. 'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee. (ELW 349)**

P: Jesus, even this? Must you bear even this for us?

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus dies on the cross.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A: The cry is empty, the unknown is without a solution, and there is nothing

Silence.

God has accomplished the miracle of death.

We sing: Lo, the Good Shepherd for the sheep is offered; the slave hath sinnèd, and the Son hath suffered; for man's atonement, while he nothing heedeth, God intercedeth. (ELW 349)

A: Jesus... Jesus... God is dead.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus is taken down from the cross.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Silence.

We sing: For me, kind Jesus, was thine incarnation, thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation; thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion, for my salvation. (ELW 349)

P: Jesus, your beloved receive your body in love, to care for it. Help us to love you, God, who joins us in death.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

P: Jesus is laid in the tomb.



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

C: By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Silence.

We sing: Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee, I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee; think on thy pity and thy love unswerving, not my deserving. (ELW 349)

P: Jesus, in your burial, may we find hope. In your death, may we receive life. Open our hearts to embrace you, dying for us. Open our hearts, so that we too, like you, released from the fear of death, might share life - life, not death - with our brothers and sisters, with every child of God.

O Lord, we give you thanks that by your cross we are not condemned, but saved.

C: We praise you, O Christ, for this your gift of life. Amen.

POSTLUDE

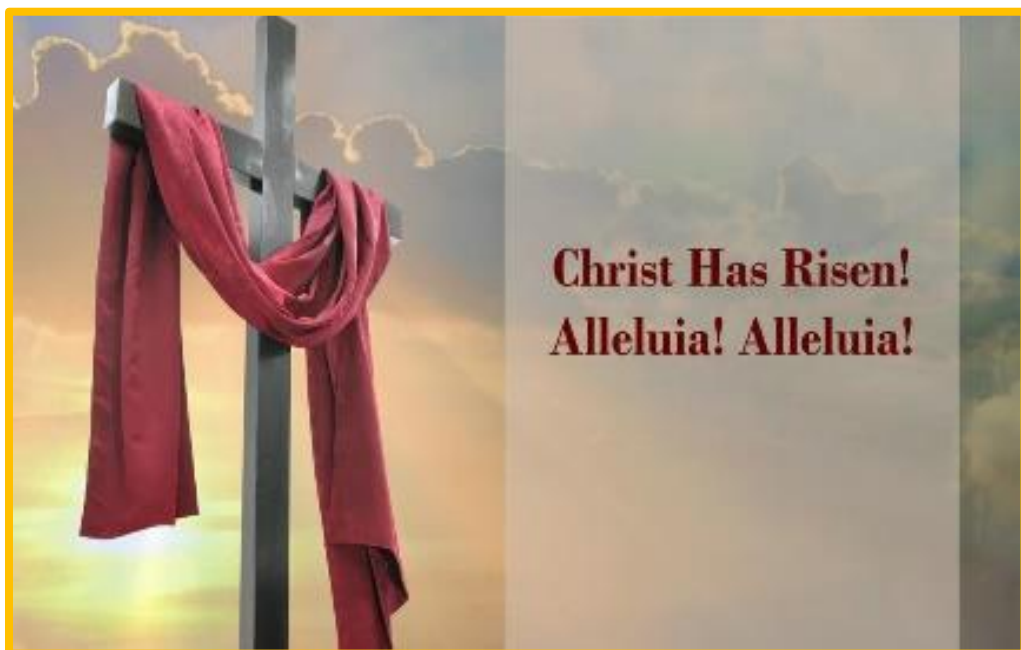
Were You There?

John Landis, soloist

Depart in silence.

***JOIN US ON SUNDAY TO CELEBRATE
CHRIST'S RESURRECTION!***

**Easter Sunday Worship
April 20 at 9:00 a.m.**



MINISTRY LEADERS

Ministers
Pastor
Music Director
Parish Administrator
Worship Technology Assistant
Lay Ministry Assistant
Council President
Council Vice President
Sexton

Members of the Congregation
Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown
John Landis
Anne Rankin
David Albin
Diane Gerlach
Kim Paternoster
Denise Haun
Tom Miller

WORSHIP, SUNDAY SCHOOL, & CONTACT INFORMATION

Worship	Sundays @ 9:00 a.m.
Livestream Link:	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIy_3AeK_pExuVhcUfI2cSw
Bible Study Class (Parlor)	Sundays @ 10:30 a.m. No class on 4/20
Wired Word Class (Zone & Zoom)	Sundays @ 10:30 a.m. https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2283229266 No class on 4/20
Morning Bible Study	Tuesdays @ 9:00 a.m.
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*** THE WAY OF THE CROSS 2024**

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