



Passion Sunday

March 29, 2026; 9 a.m.



St John's
Lutheran Church

(An usher rings the church bell at 8:55 a.m.)

Prelude

(Acolytes light the candles)

Linda Ranney

Gathering Rite *(please stand and face procession)*

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!

Processional Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 21st Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is

this?" ¹¹ The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. We commemorate this day that he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Procession of the Palms

Ride On, Jesus, Ride! African American Spiritual, harmonization by Barbara Jackson Martin, additional text by Marty Haugen; arr. Marty Haugen

Refrain: (*assembly joins at direction of Cantor*)

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the refrain. The first staff is in 2/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics 'Ride on, Je - sus, ride, ride on, Je - sus, ride,' are written below the staff. The second staff continues the melody with quarter and eighth notes, ending with a double bar line. The lyrics 'ride on, Je-sus, con-qu'ring king, ride on, Je-sus, ride.' are written below the staff.

Musical Offering (*please sit*)

Hosanna, Hosanna! by Kathleen Donlan Tunseth
Sunday School Choir

Prayer of the Day

As we now enter into the contemplation of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and meditate on the salvation of the world through his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, let us pray.

Everlasting God, **in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a *(please sit)*

⁴The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens — wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

⁸he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.

⁹It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation *(please stand)*

ELW #358; *Great God, Your Love Has Called Us* vs. 1

1 Great God, your love has called us here
as we, by love, for love were made.

Your living likeness still we bear,
though marred, dishonored, disobeyed.
We come, with all our heart and mind
your call to hear, your love to find.

The Passion of Our Lord

(assembly reads text in bold)

The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

(assembly is invited to sit)

The Plot Against Jesus

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples,

"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the High Priest, who was named Caiaphas, and they made plans to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. But they said, "We must not do it during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

Jesus Is Anointed at Bethany

Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. While Jesus was eating, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar filled with a very expensive ointment. She poured it on his head. The disciples saw this and became angry. "Why all this waste?" they asked. "This ointment could have been sold for a large sum and the money given to the poor!"

Jesus, aware of what they were discussing, said,

"Why are you bothering this woman? It is a fine and beautiful thing that she has done for me. You will always have poor people with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Now, I assure you that wherever this good news is proclaimed all over the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Then one of the twelve disciples, the one who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and asked, "What will you give me if I betray Jesus to you?" They counted out thirty silver coins and gave them to him. From then on, Judas kept looking for a good chance to hand Jesus over to them.

The Last Supper

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Where do you want us to get the Passover meal ready for you?" Jesus said,

"Go to a certain man in the city and tell him: 'The Teacher says, My time is near; my disciples and I will celebrate the Passover at your house.' "

So the disciples did as Jesus had told them and prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, Jesus and the twelve disciples sat down to eat. During the meal Jesus said,

"I tell you, one of you will betray me."

Then the disciples were very upset and began to say to him, one after the other, "Surely, Lord, you don't mean me?" Jesus answered,

" The one who dips his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it has been written about him. But woe to the person, who betrays the Son of Man! It would have been better never to have been born!"

Judas, the traitor, spoke up and said, "Surely, Teacher, you don't mean me?" Jesus answered,

"So you say."

While they were eating Jesus took bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,

"Take and eat. This is my body."

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

"Drink it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Table

Communion Hymn

ELW #494; For the Bread Which You Have Broken

- 1 For the bread which you have broken,
for the wine which you have poured,
for the words which you have spoken,
now we give you thanks, O Lord.
- 2 By this promise that you love us,
by your gift of peace restored,
by your call to heav'n above us,
hallow all our lives, O Lord.
- 3 With the saints who now adore you,
seated at the heav'nly board,
may the church still waiting for you
keep love's tie unbroken, Lord.
- 4 In your service, Lord, defend us;
in our hearts keep watch and ward;
in the world to which you send us
let your kingdom come, O Lord.

Post-Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

The Mount of Olives

Then Jesus said to them,

"All of you will run away and leave me tonight, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd and sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

Peter said to him, "I will never leave you, even if all the rest do." Jesus said to Peter,

"I tell you that before the rooster crows tonight, you will say three times that you do not know me."

Peter answered, "I will never say that, even if I have to die with you!" And all the other disciples said the same thing. Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them,

"Sit here while I go over there and pray."

He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over him, and he said,

"The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch with me."

He went on a little farther, threw himself face downward on the ground, and prayed,

"My Father, if it is possible, take this cup from me. Yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Then he returned to the three disciples and found them sleeping. Jesus said to Peter,

"Were you not able to keep watch with me for one hour? Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is eager but the flesh is weak."

Again a second time he went away and prayed,

"My Father if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

He returned once more and found them sleeping. They couldn't keep their eyes open. He left them again and prayed a third time, saying the same words. Then Jesus returned to the disciples and said,

"Are you still sleeping and resting? Get up, let us go. Look, here comes the one who is betraying me."

The Arrest

Jesus was still speaking when Judas, one of the twelve disciples arrived. With him was a large crowd, armed with swords and clubs and sent by the chief priests and the elders. The traitor had given the crowd a signal: "The man I kiss is the one you want. Arrest him!" Judas went right straight to Jesus and said, "Peace be with you, Teacher," and kissed him. Jesus said,

"Be quick about it, friend!"

Then they came up, arrested Jesus, and held him. One of those there with Jesus drew his sword and struck at the slave of the High Priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus said,

"Put your sword away. All who take the sword will die by the sword. Don't you know that I could call on my Father for help, and at once he would send me more than twelve armies of angels? But then, how could the scriptures come true which say that this must happen?"

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds,

"Did you have to come with swords and clubs to capture me, as if I were an outlaw?" Every day I sat teaching in the Temple, and you did not arrest

me. But all this has happened in order to make what the prophets wrote come true."

Then all the disciples left Jesus and ran away.

Hymn

ELW #347; *Go to Dark Gethsemane* vs. 1-2

- 1 Go to dark Gethsemane,
 all who feel the tempter's pow'r;
 your Redeemer's conflict see.
 Watch with him one bitter hour;
 turn not from his griefs away;
 learn from Jesus Christ to pray.

- 2 Follow to the judgment hall,
 view the Lord of life arraigned;
 oh, the wormwood and the gall!
 Oh, the pangs his soul sustained!
 Shun not suff'ring, shame, or loss;
 learn from him to bear the cross.

Peter's Denial

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to the house of Caiaphas, the High Priest, where the teachers of the Law and the elders had gathered together. Peter followed from a distance, as far as the courtyard of the High Priest's house. He went into the courtyard and sat down with the guards to see how it would all come out. The chief priests and the whole Council tried to find some false evidence against Jesus to put him to death; but they couldn't find any, even though many people came forward and told lies about him. Finally two men stepped up and said, "This man said, 'I am able to tear down the Temple of God and within three days rebuild it.'" The High Priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Have you no answer to give to this accusation against you?" But Jesus kept quiet. Again the High Priest spoke to him, "In the name of the living God I now put you under oath: tell us if you are the Anointed One, the Son of God." Jesus answered him,

"So you say. But I tell all of you: from this time on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

At this the High Priest tore his clothes and said, "Blasphemy! We don't need any more witnesses! You have just heard his blasphemy! What do you think?" They answered, "He is guilty and must die." They spit in his face and beat him. Those who slapped him said, Prophecy for us, Anointed One! Guess who hit you!" Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard when one of the High Priest's servant girls came to him and said, "You, too, were with Jesus of Galilee." But Peter denied it in front of them all. "I don't know what you are talking about," he answered, and went out to the entrance of the courtyard. Another servant girl saw him and said to the men there, "He was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again, Peter denied it and answered, "I swear that I don't know that man!" After a little while the men standing there came to Peter and said, "Of course, you are one of them. After all, your accent gives you away." Then Peter said, "I swear that I am telling the truth! May God punish me if I am not! I do not know that man!" Just then a rooster crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him:

"Before the rooster crows you will say three times that you do not know me."

Peter went out and wept bitterly.

The Trial

Early in the morning all the chief priests and the elders made their plans against Jesus to put him to death. They put him in chains, led him off, and handed him over to Pilate, the Roman governor. When Judas, the traitor, learned that Jesus had been condemned, he repented and took the thirty silver coins back to the chief priests and the elders and he said, "I have sinned by betraying an innocent man to death!" They answered, "What do we care about that? That is your business." Judas threw the coins down in the Temple and left; then he went out and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "This is blood money. It is against our Law to put it in the treasury." After reaching an agreement about it, they used the money to buy Potter's Field, as a cemetery for foreigners. That is why to this very day that

field is called "Field of Blood." Then, what the prophet Jeremiah had said came true: "They took the thirty silver coins, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave the coins to buy the potter's field, as the Lord had commanded me."

Jesus stood before the Roman governor, who questioned him, asking, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered,

"So you say."

But he said nothing in response to the accusations of the chief priests and elders. So Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear all these things they accuse you of?" But Jesus refused to answer a single word, with the result that the Governor was greatly surprised.

Jesus is Sentenced to Death

At every Passover Festival the Roman governor was in the habit of setting free any one prisoner the crowd asked for. At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to set free for you? Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called the Anointed One?" Pilate knew very well that the Jewish authorities had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous. While Pilate was sitting in the judgment hall, his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, because in a dream last night I suffered much on account of him." The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and have Jesus put to death. But Pilate asked the crowd, "Which one of these two do you want me to set free for you?" They said, **"Barabbas!"**

Pilate asked, "What, then, shall I do with Jesus called the Anointed One?" They all answered,

"Crucify him."

But Pilate asked, "What crime has he committed?" Then they started shouting at the top of their voices:

"Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw that it was no use to go on, but that a riot might break out, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am not responsible for the death of this man! This is your doing!" The whole crowd answered,

"Let the responsibility for his death fall on us and on our children!"

Then Pilate set Barabbas free for them; and after he had Jesus whipped, he handed him over to be crucified

Hymn

ELW #349; *Ah, Holy Jesus*; vs. 1-2

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.

Who was the guilty? Who brought his upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.

The Crucifixion

Then Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace, and the whole company gathered around him. They stripped off his clothes and put a purple robe on him. Twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head and they put a reed into his right hand. Then they knelt down in front of him and mocked him, saying "Long live the King of the Jews!" They spit on him and took the reed and hit him over the head with it. When they had finished making fun of him, they took the robe off and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. They came to a place called Golgotha, which means, *The Place of a Skull*. There they offered Jesus wine mixed with a bitter substance, but after tasting it he would not drink it.

They crucified him and then divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots. After that they sat there and watched him. Above his head they put the written notice of the accusation against him: *This is Jesus, the King of the Jews*. Then they crucified two bandits along side Jesus, one on his right and the

other on his left. People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus: "You were going to tear down the Temple and build it back up in three days! Save yourself if you are God's Son! Come on down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and the elders made fun of him: "He saved others, but he cannot save himself! Isn't he the king of Israel? If he will come down off the cross now, we will believe in him! He trusts in God and claims to be God's Son. Well, then, let us see if God wants to save him now!" Even the bandits who had been crucified with him insulted him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours. At about three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?'* which means,

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of the people standing there heard him and said, "He is calling for Elijah!" One of them ran up at once and took a sponge, soaked it in cheap wine, put it on the end of a stick, and tried to make him drink it. But others said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah is coming to save him!" Jesus again gave a loud cry and breathed his last. Then the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split apart, the graves broke open, and many of God's people who had died were raised to life. They left the graves, and after Jesus rose from death, they went into the Holy City, where many people saw them. When the army officer and the soldiers watching Jesus with him saw the earthquake and everything else that happened, they were terrified and said, "He really was the Son of God!" There were many women there, looking on from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee and helped him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the wife of Zebedee.

The Burial

When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea arrived; his name was Joseph, and he also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave orders for the body to be given to Joseph. So Joseph took it, wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and placed it in his own tomb, which he had just recently dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone

across the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The next day, which was a Sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember while that impostor was still alive he said, 'I will be raised to life three days later.' Give orders, then, for his tomb to be carefully guarded until the third day, so that his disciples will not be able to go and steal the body and then tell the people that he was raised from the dead. This last deception would be even worse than the first." So Pilate told them, "Take a guard and go make the tomb as secure as you can." So they left and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and leaving a guard on watch.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Nicene Creed *(please stand)*

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith in the words of the Nicene Creed...

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Petition:
Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always!
And also with you.

Welcome and Announcements

Offering *(please sit)*

*(Ushers collect offering; once collected, it is brought forward immediately
for acolytes to receive)*

In All Our Grief and Fear We Turn to You arr. David Cherwien
St. John's Choir

Benediction

God, who fills the creation with abundance, Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness, Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us, ✠ bless you and bring you to life everlasting. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

(Acolytes extinguish the candles)

ELW #416; *At the Name of Jesus*

- 1 At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee shall bow, ev'ry tongue confess him king of glory now. It is God's good pleasure we should call him Lord, who from the beginning was the mighty Word.
- 2 At his voice creation sprang at once to sight, all the angel faces, all the hosts of light, thrones and dominations, stars upon their way, all the heav'nly orders in their great array.
- 3 Humbled for a season, to receive a name from the lips of sinners unto whom he came, faithfully he bore it spotless to the last; brought it back victorious when from death he passed.

Sending

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Linda Ranney

Altar Flowers

In Honor of Pastor Christine by Eric Nielsen

Chancel Flowers

In Memory of Harold Mueller by Yvonne Mueller

Serving at Worship Today

Presider	Pastor Christine Emerson
Assistant	Rozie Bejin
Lector	Linda LaFave
Acolytes	Braham Gintner, Marley Gintner
Ushers	Norb Kirk, Larry Krause
Greeters	Mike Torud, Brian Wagner

Communion Servers	Eric Nielsen, Patti Sontag, Mark Sontag, Cheryl Mattison
Media & Streaming	Scott Olsen
Screen Operator	Lois Mai
Musicians	Sunday School Children; Linda Ranney, accompanist; Mark Lundin, Director of Music; St. John's Choir; Paul Klomstad, guitar; Frank Larrabee, recorder

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