

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH FREISTATT, MO

April 3, 2026 7:30 PM

TENEBRAE

Tenebrae, a Latin word meaning "shadows" or "darkness," is an ancient service in which we meditate on the lengths to which our Savior went for the sake of our salvation.

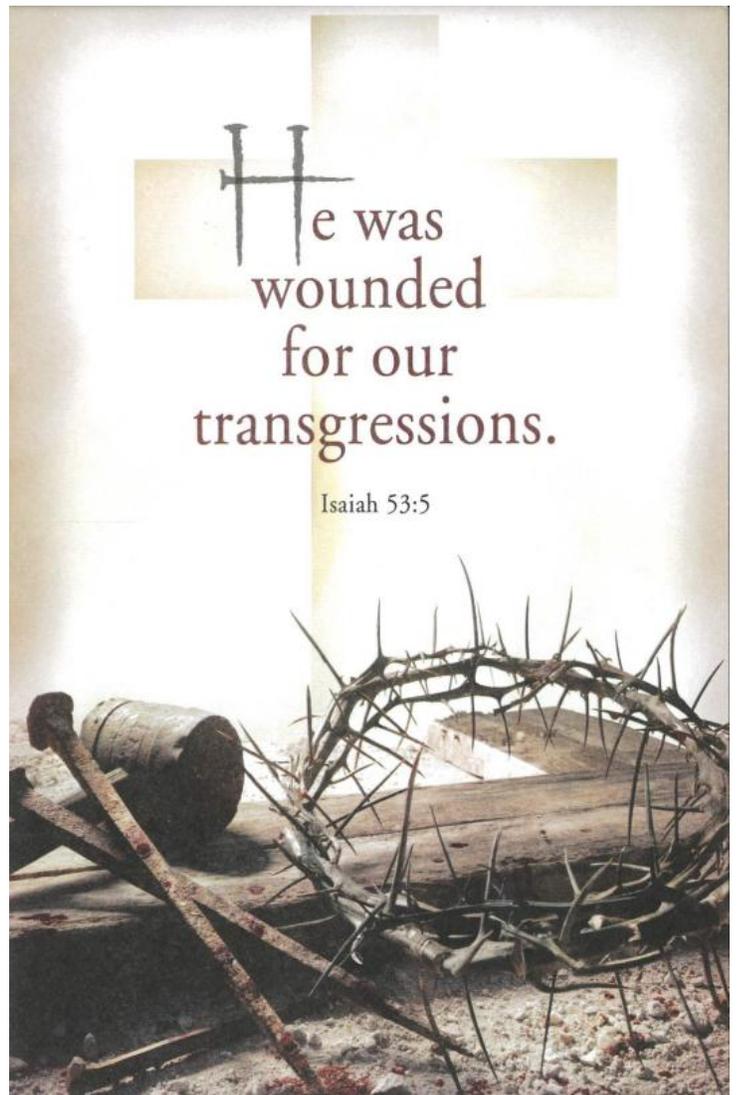
Shortly before his suffering began, Jesus said, "Now is the hour of the power of darkness." As the record of Jesus' suffering, death and burial is read this evening, the church will be slowly darkened, symbolizing the growing darkness as Jesus is deserted by everyone and left to die alone. At several points Pastor says, "Let us pray," and the congregation responds by reading aloud the printed prayer.

At his burial the Christ Candle is removed and the church is left in darkness; that candle will return Easter morning at the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. The loud shutting of the book at the end of the service indicates that Christ has finished his task of paying for our sins.

The sharp sound of a book being shut at the close of the service reminds us that with Christ's death it is finished: the Scriptures have been fulfilled and our salvation has been paid for in full.

After the benediction the congregation exits the darkened church in silence.

You may place your offering in the plates at the door.



LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

ANOINTING OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:1-8

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Which one am I, Lord? Am I the loving woman or the loveless critic? Do I serve you out of a loving heart, or am I self-serving? Are my words a help or hindrance to others? I pray you, take control of my thoughts, words and deeds. Remove from me whatever does not come from a pure heart. Create in me a right and loving spirit.

HYMN

Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

LSB 437 vv.1, 3, 5

BETRAYAL FORETOLD

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:12-21

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Lord Jesus, it must have hurt you deeply to see Judas turn against you. It hurts me, too, to see someone leave the faith, especially when it is someone I know personally. If it could happen to them, could it happen to me? Help me, Lord, for by myself I am helpless. Save me, for I cannot save myself. Hold onto me, for my grip on you is weak.

DESERTION FORETOLD

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:27-31

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Lord Jesus, I promise to be faithful to you. I especially mean that promise when I remember what you have done for me; I cannot imagine failing to keep it. But you know me better than I know myself; you know that I will let you down. How different you are. Not only do you promise to stay with me; you keep your promise. In that I find my confidence: not that I will stay with you, but that you will stay with me.

HYMN

I Lay My Sins on Jesus

LSB 606 vv.1-2

PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:32-42

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Jesus, why did you choose me to be a disciple? What did you see in me? I am so undependable. You ask me to be there for you, but I fail you. When you called me to be a disciple, what did you see in me? You saw that I need you. It's not that you need me; I need you. I need you to stay with me, to stay awake for me, to pray for me.

HYMN

Abide with Me

LSB 878, vv.1-2

BETRAYAL AND ARREST

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:43-51

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Lord Jesus, how often I play right into the devil's hands. How skillfully he sets me up and uses me. Yet, you took the terrible events of that night, and caused them to fit into your plan for my salvation. That assures me that you will take me also, with all my weaknesses, and cause it to accomplish your good purpose.

TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:53-65

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: There are times, Lord, too many times, when I say nothing in your behalf. Or, when I do say something, no one takes me seriously. Even when we Christians speak with a united voice, we seem to make little impression on the world around us. Are we just a tiny, inconsequential minority? Or do you see something I cannot see? Do you see that my Christian life is having an effect on someone? Do you see that our congregation's witness is touching lives? Do you have silent disciples that I don't even know about, some of whom have become disciples because of me?

PETER'S DENIAL

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:66-72

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Lord, I am so like Peter, too ashamed to tell anyone how I have denied you. Yet, here I am, admitting it to you. Why? It's because of what you did for me that night and the next day. Because of that, I know that I can tell you the awful truth about myself, know that I can cry in your presence, know that I am forgiven.

HYMN

O Christ, You Walked the Road

LSB 424 vv.1, 4, 5

TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:1-15

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Lord, I should have suffered the consequences for my sin; and you should have enjoyed freedom as the Son of God. But you exchanged places with me: you took my place and bore my sin; and you gave me your place as a free child of God. I owe you my life.

HYMN

O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken

LSB 439 vv.1, 5

MOCKERY BY SOLDIERS

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:16-20

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: It has happened to me, too, Jesus. People have laughed and made fun of me, for no good reason at all, just to be spiteful. I try to laugh it off, but it hurts. You couldn't pretend it didn't hurt. The taunting words, the torture, it had to hurt terribly. Yet, you endured it all for my sake, to win my salvation. When I suffer at the hands of others, especially when I suffer for your sake, give me strength to bear it patiently.

HYMN

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

LSB 450 vv.1, 4

CRUCIFIXION

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:21-32

PASTORAL MEDITATION

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: Jesus, why have I not joined those under the cross, making fun of you? Why have I not taken my frustrations out on you, as did the robbers alongside you? Why do I sit here this evening, filled with thoughts and feelings too deep for words? It is because you have opened my heart to what you did for me there: your blood has reconciled me to God; your despair has given me hope; your death has brought me new life. Thank you, Lord.

HYMN

Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

LSB 451 vv.1, 2

DARKNESS AND DEATH

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:33-41

BURIAL

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15:42-47

SOLO

Via Dolorosa

Catherine James

PRAYER

Almighty God, we beseech you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be given into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. Amen.

SHUTTING OF THE BOOK

BENEDICTION

Offering can be placed in the basket in the narthex.

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Darkness has its hour, but the light of God's power and love has not been extinguished--only hidden for a moment. It will burst forth in new brightness on Easter morning.

We will exit in silence while the church is yet dark.