



beneath the cross

BENEATH THE CROSS
2026 Midweek Lenten Service

Provided by the Western North Dakota Synod-ELCA

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Siblings in Christ,

Lent is a time of growing deeper in faith. In this time of reflection, we focus on the symbol that sums up our faith: the cross of Christ. We look at the empty cross so that we can focus our hearts and minds on the blessings of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

This resource contains only a mid-week service. For other worship resources, please see the 2025 resource. Be sure to change dates, scripture, etc., to match the readings for this year, Year A in the lectionary cycle.

If you are interested in being part of a future writing project, please let me know. Please share this resource among colleagues and friends near and far.

Blessings,

Rev. Tera Kossow, Director for Evangelical Mission, Western North Dakota Synod

* During these services, there is a time for quiet reflection following the reading of the gospel text. In the weeks before Lent, encourage people to bring crosses from home to be blessed during the service. You could also make a cross that you can hang (paper on the wall, wood standing cross, be creative) so that people can write their burdens on cloth or paper and hang them on the cross. These could also be laid at the foot of a cross that already exists in your worship space

*To use the graphic on the cover, simply right-click on it and save or copy. This graphic was generated using Gemini AI

“BENEATH THE CROSS” MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE

February 25, 2026 Week 1: Beneath the Cross of Jesus I Long to Take My Stand

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING DIALOGUE (Mark 14:18-19, 27-31, 38; 15:34, 39):

Please stand as you are able.

Keep awake, and pray with me. **My spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak.**
One of you this night will betray me. **Lord, is it I?**
Before the cock crows, you will all desert me. **Lord, I will never deny you!**
My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? **Truly, this man was God's Son!**

GATHERING SONG: ELW324/LBW104 *In the Cross of Christ / Glory*

GREETING

God who created all, who bore the cross, and who dwells in us, be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of our hope, we journey with you to the foot of the cross. Stay with us when difficulty comes. Grant us courage and peace in the face of persecution. Turn our pain into joy, our mourning into dancing. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

You may be seated.

READING: Philippians 2:1-11

A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy,²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here ends the reading. Please stand as you are able for the reading of the gospel.

GOSPEL: John 16:16-33

Our gospel reading comes from the 16th chapter of the Gospel of John.

"A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me." Then some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying to us, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They said, "What does he mean by this 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'? Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy.

When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. "I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father. On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father." His disciples said, "Yes, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure of speech! Now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

The gospel of the Lord. You may be seated for a time of silent reflection and prayer.

SILENT REFLECTION AND PRAYER

During this time, as you are comfortable, go to the table and take a piece of cloth/paper to write your prayers, burdens, etc. Take them to the cross and hang/lay them, entrusting them into the care of Jesus. You may also bring to the table a cross to be blessed, which you can take home after the service.

REFLECTION

We gather with the disciples, with Mary and the other women, with the soldiers, and with the passersby at the foot of the cross. As he faced death, Jesus tried to prepare his disciples for what was to come. He knew that, like Peter, we long to claim that we will never deny our Lord, that we will never lose our faith beneath the cross. Jesus proclaims to the disciples and to us: "Take courage; I have conquered the world!"

PRAYERS

Let us pray. Beneath the cross of Jesus, **we lift up our joys and our sorrows to God.**

O Lord, amid the shifting sands of this world, **be our rock and our foundation.**

In the fears and uncertainties of our lives, **be our home and our resting place.**

When we lay our sins and burdens before you, **be our comfort and our guide.**

As we gaze upon the cross of Christ, **be our hope and our salvation.**

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to us because you love us and want to save us.

By the power of the cross of Christ, you free us from sin to live each day for you.

We offer to you our burdens and prayer, entrusting them to Christ, who we trust will look upon them with compassion.

Bless + these crosses, signs of your glory, and let them remind us that Jesus died and rose for all. Help us to carry our cross, and to follow Jesus in serving others.

God of grace, you know what we need before we do, and we pray that you would show us clearly that you are among us. As our creator, make us a new creation. As our savior, make us right before you. As our guide, lead us to do your will in the world. Give us strength to journey with Jesus to the cross of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

As the offering is collected, turn to your neighbor and share a word of peace.

OFFERING PRAYER

Please stand as you are able.

Let us pray. **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. We give you thanks for nourishing us in body, mind, and spirit, by the faith and fellowship we share. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

Let us pray. We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.

BLESSING

People of God, you have been crucified with Christ,
and it is no longer you who live, but it is Christ who lives in you.
The peace of God (+), which surpasses all our human understanding,
keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW338/LBW107 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

DISMISSAL: Go in peace, led by the cross of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

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“BENEATH THE CROSS” MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE
March 4, 2026 Week 2 A Shadow of a Mighty Rock Within a Weary Land

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING DIALOGUE (from Psalm 61):

Please stand as you are able.

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. **From the end of the earth I call to you.**
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I; **you are my refuge, a strong tower.**
Let me abide in your tent forever, **and find refuge under the shelter of your wings.**
You, O God, have heard my vows. **I will always sing praises to your name.**

GATHERING SONG: ELW597/LBW294 *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*

GREETING

God who created all, who bore the cross, and who dwells in us, be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of our salvation, you are the rock in whom we take refuge. Hear our cry and make our way safe. Plant our feet on solid ground. Support us with your love shown to us through the cross of Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.** *You may be seated.*

READING: 1 Peter 2:4-10

A reading from first Peter.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Here ends the reading. Please stand as you are able for the reading of the gospel.

GOSPEL: Matthew 7:24-27

Our gospel reading comes from the 7th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

The gospel of the Lord. You may be seated for a time of silent reflection and prayer.

SILENT REFLECTION AND PRAYER

During this time, as you are comfortable, go to the table and take a piece of cloth/paper to write your prayers, burdens, etc. Take them to the cross and hang/lay them, entrusting them into the care of Jesus. You may also bring to the table a cross to be blessed, which you can take home after the service.

REFLECTION

Images of Plymouth Rock or the Rock of Gibraltar connote strong foundations and mighty power. In a popular game, rock smashes scissors but is overcome by a simple sheet of paper. How often do the cares and weariness of life drape themselves over the rocks of wealth or prestige or anything else to which we cling, revealing them as shaky, sandy foundations on which to build our lives? God alone is our rock and our salvation.

PRAYERS

Let us pray. Beneath the cross of Jesus, **we lift up our joys and our sorrows to God.**

O Lord, amid the shifting sands of this world, **be our rock and our foundation.**

In the fears and uncertainties of our lives, **be our home and our resting place.**

When we lay our sins and burdens before you, **be our comfort and our guide.**

As we gaze upon the cross of Christ, **be our hope and our salvation.**

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to us because you love us and want to save us.

By the power of the cross of Christ, you free us from sin to live each day for you.

We offer to you our burdens and prayer, entrusting them to Christ, who we trust will look upon them with compassion.

Bless + these crosses, signs of your glory, and let them remind us that Jesus died and rose for all. Help us to carry our cross, and to follow Jesus in serving others.

God of grace, you know what we need before we do, and we pray that you would show us clearly that you are among us. As our creator, make us a new creation. As our savior, make us right before you. As our guide, lead us to do your will in the world. Give us strength to journey with Jesus to the cross of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

As the offering is collected, turn to your neighbor and share a word of peace.

OFFERING PRAYER

Please stand as you are able.

Let us pray. **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. We give you thanks for nourishing us in body, mind, and spirit, by the faith and fellowship we share. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

BLESSING

People of God, you have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer you who live, but it is Christ who lives in you.

The peace of God (+), which surpasses all our human understanding, keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW338/LBW107 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

DISMISSAL: Go in peace, led by the cross of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

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“BENEATH THE CROSS” MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE
March 11, 2026 Week 3 A Rest Upon the Way

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING DIALOGUE (from Psalm 84):

Please stand as you are able.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! **My soul longs for the courts of the Lord.**
Even the sparrow finds a home there, **and the swallow a nest for herself.**
Happy are those who live in your house. **Happy are those whose strength is in you.**
For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.
My heart sings for joy in the house of my God.

GATHERING SONG: ELW765/LBW469 *Lord of All Hopefulness*

GREETING

God who created all, who bore the cross, and who dwells in us, be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of our longing, you prepare a home and dwelling place for our weary souls.**
Grant that we may rest in you. Build our foundation on the cornerstone of Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

You may be seated.

READING: Ephesians 2:11-22

A reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

¹¹So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and

aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God,²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. Here ends the reading.

GOSPEL: John 14:1-7

Our gospel reading comes from the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.²In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.”⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

The gospel of the Lord. You may be seated for a time of silent reflection and prayer.

SILENT REFLECTION AND PRAYER

During this time, as you are comfortable, go to the table and take a piece of cloth/paper to write your prayers, burdens, etc. Take them to the cross and hang/lay them, entrusting them into the care of Jesus. You may also bring to the table a cross to be blessed, which you can take home after the service.

REFLECTION

Where is your home? Perhaps a farmhouse in the middle of a wind-swept field, or an apartment overlooking a city street. Maybe it is a plot of land that has been in your family for generations, or a house you moved into just yesterday. It could be surrounded by dense forest, or it could be along a shoreline. Wherever our earthly homes lay, our true dwelling place remains with God.

PRAYERS

Let us pray. Beneath the cross of Jesus, **we lift up our joys and our sorrows to God.**

O Lord, amid the shifting sands of this world, **be our rock and our foundation.**

In the fears and uncertainties of our lives, **be our home and our resting place.**

When we lay our sins and burdens before you, **be our comfort and our guide.**

As we gaze upon the cross of Christ, **be our hope and our salvation.**

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to us because you love us and want to save us.

By the power of the cross of Christ, you free us from sin to live each day for you.

We offer to you our burdens and prayer, entrusting them to Christ, who we trust will look upon them with compassion.

Bless + these crosses, signs of your glory, and let them remind us that Jesus died and rose for all. Help us to carry our cross, and to follow Jesus in serving others.

God of grace, you know what we need before we do, and we pray that you would show us clearly that you are among us. As our creator, make us a new creation. As our savior, make us right before you. As our guide, lead us to do your will in the world. Give us strength to journey with Jesus to the cross of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

As the offering is collected, turn to your neighbor and share a word of peace.

OFFERING PRAYER

Please stand as you are able.

Let us pray. **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. We give you thanks for nourishing us in body, mind, and spirit, by the faith and fellowship we share. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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, The power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

BLESSING

People of God, you have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer you who live, but it is Christ who lives in you.

The peace of God (+), which surpasses all our human understanding,

keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW338/LBW107 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

DISMISSAL: Go in peace, led by the cross of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

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“BENEATH THE CROSS” MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE
March 18, 2026 Week 4 From My Contrite Heart, With Tears

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING DIALOGUE (from Psalm 84):

Please stand as you are able.

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven.

Happy are those in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away.

My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Then I confessed my transgressions to the Lord, **who forgave the guilt of my sin.**

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous. **Shout for joy, all you upright in heart.**

GATHERING SONG: ELW623/LBW327 *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me*

GREETING

God who created all, who bore the cross, and who dwells in us, be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of our joy, you cleanse our hearts and renew our spirits. Have mercy on us according to your steadfast love, that we may sing aloud of your goodness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

You may be seated.

READING: 1 John 1:5-10

A reading from first John.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Here ends the reading. Please stand as you are able for the reading of the gospel.

GOSPEL: Luke 7:36-50

Our gospel reading comes from the 7th chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak." ⁴¹"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

The gospel of the Lord. You may be seated for a time of silent reflection and prayer.

SILENT REFLECTION AND PRAYER

During this time, as you are comfortable, go to the table and take a piece of cloth/paper to write your prayers, burdens, etc. Take them to the cross and hang/lay them, entrusting them into the care of Jesus. You may also bring to the table a cross to be blessed, which you can take home after the service.

REFLECTION

From the depths of our hearts we cry to God, confessing our sins. Even from the cross, Jesus cries, "Father, forgive them!" We are surrounded by grace, showered with the forgiveness and love of God shown to us on the cross.

PRAYERS

Let us pray. Beneath the cross of Jesus, **we lift up our joys and our sorrows to God.**

O Lord, amid the shifting sands of this world, **be our rock and our foundation.**

In the fears and uncertainties of our lives, **be our home and our resting place.**

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OFFERING

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

As the offering is collected, turn to your neighbor and share a word of peace.

OFFERING PRAYER

Please stand as you are able.

Let us pray. **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. We give you thanks for nourishing us in body, mind, and spirit, by the faith and fellowship we share. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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, The power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

BLESSING

People of God, you have been crucified with Christ,
and it is no longer you who live, but it is Christ who lives in you.
The peace of God (+), which surpasses all our human understanding,
keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW338/LBW107 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

DISMISSAL: Go in peace, led by the cross of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

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“BENEATH THE CROSS” MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE
March 25, 2026 Week 5 I Take, O Cross, Your Shadow for My Abiding Place

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING DIALOGUE (from Psalm 57):

Please stand as you are able.

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful, **for in you my soul takes refuge.**
In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, **until the destroying storms pass by.**
I cry to God Most High, **to God who is with me to the end.**
God will send from heaven and save me.
God will send forth steadfast love and faithfulness.

GATHERING SONG: ELW785/LBW346 *When Peace Like a River (It Is Well With My Soul)*

GREETING

God who created all, who bore the cross, and who dwells in us, be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of our redemption, keep us ever near the cross. Remind us of the extravagant love you showed to us through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Teach us to take up our cross and follow you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You may be seated.**

READING: Colossians 1:15-20

A reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Here ends the reading. Please stand as you are able for the reading of the gospel.

GOSPEL: Mark 8:31-9:1

Our gospel reading comes from the 7th chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” 9And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

The gospel of the Lord. You may be seated for a time of silent reflection and prayer.

SILENT REFLECTION AND PRAYER

During this time, as you are comfortable, go to the table and take a piece of cloth/paper to write your prayers, burdens, etc. Take them to the cross and hang/lay them, entrusting them into the care of Jesus. You may also bring to the table a cross to be blessed, which you can take home after the service.

REFLECTION

Where is your home? Perhaps a farmhouse in the middle of a windswept field, or an apartment overlooking a city skyline, or a plot of land that has been in your family for generations, or a house you moved into just yesterday. Wherever our earthly homes lay, the true dwelling place of our soul remains with God.

PRAYERS

Let us pray. Beneath the cross of Jesus, **we lift up our joys and our sorrows to God.**

O Lord, amid the shifting sands of this world, **be our rock and our foundation.**

In the fears and uncertainties of our lives, **be our home and our resting place.**

When we lay our sins and burdens before you, **be our comfort and our guide.**

As we gaze upon the cross of Christ, **be our hope and our salvation.**

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to us because you love us and want to save us.

By the power of the cross of Christ, you free us from sin to live each day for you.

We offer to you our burdens and prayer, entrusting them to Christ, who we trust will look upon them with compassion.

Bless + these crosses, signs of your glory, and let them remind us that Jesus died and rose for all. Help us to carry our cross, and to follow Jesus in serving others.

God of grace, you know what we need before we do, and we pray that you would show us clearly that you are among us. As our creator, make us a new creation. As our savior, make us right before you. As our guide, lead us to do your will in the world. Give us strength to journey with Jesus to the cross of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

As the offering is collected, turn to your neighbor and share a word of peace.

OFFERING PRAYER

Please stand as you are able.

Let us pray. **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. We give you thanks for nourishing us in body, mind, and spirit, by the faith and fellowship we share. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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