



Good Friday

April 2, 2021

St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Waukesha, WI

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GATHERING

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, ... who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

MUSICAL OFFERING

Ah, Holy Jesus

Helmut Walcha

GOSPEL: John 18:1--19:42

The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Gospel is read.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

MUSICAL OFFERING

Were You There

spiritual

BIDDING PRAYER

The assembly kneels or sits. The assisting minister leads the invitations to prayer (the bids). Silence for prayer follows each bid. The presiding minister leads the prayers that conclude the silence. At the conclusion of each prayer, "...through Christ our Lord," the assembly responds, "Amen."

The prayers conclude:

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

**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.**

PROCESSION OF THE CROSS

Behold the life-giving cross,
on which was hung the Savior of the whole world.

Oh, come, let us worship him.

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ADORATION OF THE CROSS

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

By your holy cross you have re- | deemed the world.

All depart in silence.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

April 2, 2021

GOOD FRIDAY

Truth in a Post-truth World

Each year the editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary* at Oxford University nominate a word that characterizes the year in a way no other word can. In a landscape blooming with new and previously unimaginable media platforms, 2016's word was *post-truth*. The organization cited the ways that truth is now thought to be shifted and shaped by emotion, and the difficult task of pinning down truth in a world bustling with emerging communication technologies and constant production of information.

In our gospel for Good Friday, we learn that perhaps “post-truth” is not so new after all. Indeed, we meet Pilate in a post-truth moment. Before him stands a man, Jesus, who has been betrayed, handed over to his enemies, arrested, and beaten. We sense that Pilate has a hunch this man is innocent, but his world of scapegoating and power games cannot recognize innocence or guilt or even justice: it simply screams for blood. “What is truth?” Pilate barks (John 18:38), not so much at Jesus but at the reality of the unfolding despair and cynicism around him, suffocating him. Pilate's superiors in Rome would probably belittle him for thinking twice about executing a rabble-rouser like Jesus.

This moment in John's gospel is the story's epicenter of despair. It is the epicenter of hopelessness and cynicism, the juncture at which the forces of death attempt a coup d'état against the forces of life.

In the haze and trauma of moments like this it is easy to feel like truth is fleeting. Yet John's gospel began with a reminder that Jesus is God's *true* light, and that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5). This is the word of truth that pierces us even in our most hopeless moments, even when Jesus' words “It is finished” (John 19:30) seem so final. It is a word of truth we carry together into Good Friday, a word spoken most truthfully in our most despairing days of a post-truth world.

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