

Good Friday

April 3rd, 2026



“Revealed through Nonviolence”

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Gethsemane Lutheran Church
3600 Hampton - St. Louis, MO 63109

Worship God, welcome all to nurture a community of harmony, healing, and justice.

Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John's passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ's death offers life to all. We gather in silence and in solemn devotion, but always with the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life. We depart silently.

GATHERING

The congregation rises in body or spirit.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, look with loving mercy on your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given over to the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C: Amen.

The congregation is seated.

WORD

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 52:13 - 53:12

The fourth servant poem promises ultimate vindication for the servant, who made his life an offering for sin. The servant pours himself out to death and is numbered with the transgressors, images that the early church saw as important keys for understanding the death of Jesus.

¹³See, my servant shall prosper, shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high. ¹⁴Just as there were many who were astonished at him —so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— ¹⁵so shall my servant startle many nations; rulers shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. ^{53:1}Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²For the servant grew up before the Lord like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground; having no form or majesty that we should behold, nothing in appearance that we should desire. ³He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity, and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. ⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases, yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep

have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed, and was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a ewe that is silent before the shearers, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with affliction. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. ¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out himself to death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 10:16-25

In the death of Jesus, forgiveness of sins is accomplished and access to God is established. Hence, when we gather together for worship and when we love others, we experience anew the benefits of Jesus' death.

[After the Holy Spirit says,] ¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds,” ¹⁷and then is added, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” ¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. ¹⁹Therefore, my dear family, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that Christ opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for the one who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

JOHN 18:12-27

¹²So the soldiers, their officer, and the Judean police arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.

¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” ¹⁸Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. ¹⁹Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jewish people come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.” ²²When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” ²³Jesus answered, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” ²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. ²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

THE SECOND CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

HYMN: *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, (stanzas 1-2)*

HYMN# 351

JOHN 18:28-40

²⁸Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.

²⁹So Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” ³⁰They answered, “If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.” ³¹Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.” The Judean authorities replied, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death.” ³²(This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.) ³³Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” ³⁵Pilate replied, “I am not Jewish, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶Jesus answered, “My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Judean authorities. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” ³⁷Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

³⁸Pilate asked him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went out to the Judeans again and told them, “I find no case against him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ⁴⁰They shouted in reply, “Not this man but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a rebel.

THE THIRD CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

HYMN: *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, (stanzas 3-4)*

HYMN# 351

JOHN 19:1-7

^{19:1}Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. ⁴Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” ⁵So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” ⁶When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.” ⁷The Judean authorities answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

THE FOURTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

HYMN: *Ah, Holy Jesus, (stanzas 1-2)*

HYMN# 349

JOHN 19:8-16a

⁸Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰Pilate therefore said to him, “Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you?” ¹¹Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” ¹²From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Judeans cried out, “If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar.” ¹³When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover, and it was about noon. He said to the Judeans, “Here is your King!” ¹⁵They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?”

The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” ¹⁶Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

THE FIFTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

HYMN: *Ah, Holy Jesus, (stanzas 3-5)*

HYMN# 349

JOHN 19:16b-22

So they took Jesus,¹⁷ and carrying the cross by himself he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.¹⁸ There they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”²⁰ Many of the Judeans read this inscription because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.²¹ Then the chief priests of the temple said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

THE SIXTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

HYMN: *Were You There, (stanzas 1-2)*

HYMN# 353

JOHN 19:23-30

²³When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says, “They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.”²⁵ And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.”²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.”

²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

THE SEVENTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

HYMN: *Were You There, (stanzas 3-4)*

HYMN# 353

JOHN 19:31-42

³¹Since it was the day of Preparation, the Judean authorities did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed.³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him.³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.³⁵ (The one who saw this has testified. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth, so that you also may continue to believe.)³⁶ These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.”³⁷ And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”³⁸ After these things,

Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Judean authorities, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so Joseph came and removed his body. ³⁹Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

THE EIGHTH CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED

HYMN: *Were You There, (stanza 5)*

HYMN# 353

A sound is heard, signifying the closing of the tomb and the earthquake.

MEDITATION

The congregation rises in body or spirit.

BIDDING PRAYER

AM: Let us pray, brothers and sisters and siblings, for the holy church throughout the world.

Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ. By your Holy Spirit guide the church and gather it throughout the world. Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your name, and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for Yehiel and Donna, our bishops, for Cheryl our pastor, and all servants of the church, and for all the people of God.

Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold our bishops, pastors, other ministers, and lay leaders. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the church, and help each of us in our various vocations to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for those preparing for baptism.

Almighty and eternal God, you continue to bless the church. Increase the faith and understanding of those preparing for baptism. Give them new birth as your children, and keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for our sisters and brothers and siblings who share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Almighty and eternal God, you give your church unity. Look with favor on all who follow Jesus your Son. Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith, and keep us united in the fellowship of love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, and for ourselves, that we may reject hate and be surrounded by your all-embracing love.

Almighty and eternal God, your promise to the Jewish people is rooted in our common scripture. We pray that you remember those promises this day and always. Grant us forgiveness for our own continued rejection of all people you claim as your own. Save us from violence done in your name. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of the love made known to us in your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for those who do not believe in God.

Almighty and eternal God, you created humanity so that all may long to know you and find peace in you. Grant that all may recognize the signs of your love and grace in the world and in the lives of Christians, and gladly acknowledge you as the one true God. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for God's creation.

Almighty and eternal God, you are the creator of a magnificent universe. Hold all the worlds in the arms of your care and bring all things to fulfillment in you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for those who serve in public office.

Almighty and eternal God, you are the champion of the poor and oppressed. In your goodness, give wisdom to those in authority, so that all people may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

AM: Let us pray for those in need.

Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary and new courage to those who have lost heart. Heal the sick, comfort the dying, give safety to travelers, free those unjustly deprived of liberty, and deliver your world from falsehood, hunger, and disease. Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask, praying as Jesus taught us.

The congregation whispers the following prayer

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.

The congregation is seated.

CHOIR ANTHEM: *Were You There*

Spiritual, Arr. by Kyle Pederson

During the singing of the solemn reproaches, you are invited to walk to the front to light a candle.

SOLEMN REPROACHES

Refrain (choir and congregation)



Ho-ly God, Ho-ly and migh-ty, Ho-ly and Im-mor-tal, have mer-cy on us.

Choir: *Oh my people, O my church, what have I done to you? ...but you have prepared a cross for your Savior. Refrain*

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

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

The congregation will depart in silence with guidance by the ushers to exit the sanctuary. Please refrain from stopping for fellowship until you have exited the building.

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WORSHIP LEADERS	
PRESIDER	Rev. Cheryl Walenta Gorvie
GREETER	Chris Schmidt
USHER	John Sandberg
ASSISTING MINISTER	Phyllis Saathoff
LECTOR	Debbie Schaller
ALTAR GUILD	Maryn Olson and Angie Fulton
CAMERA	Gretchen Jenson

Cover Art: “Revealed through Nonviolence”

By Lauren Wright Pittman, Inspired by Luke 22:47-53

Creating this image was overwhelming. I sought to capture Jesus’s nonviolent response to relentless violence. As I considered each moment of his journey to the cross, I felt despondent. I know how hard it is to resist the reactive urge that course through me even experiencing mild forms of violence. How much more difficult then for Jesus to endure such dehumanizing acts? Was he stripped so completely of his humanity that only divinity remained—and even that restrained from retribution?

Begin at the center with Judas’s kiss—intimate, subversively violent. Follow the sword behind Judas to the top left: a disciple fiercely defends Jesus, while to his right, the high priest’s slave screams after his ear is cut. Jesus reproves the violence and heals the servant.

Moving clockwise, a man—representing the chief priests and temple police—points an accusatory finger, wielding the authority to kill an innocent man. To his right, a man crafts Jesus’s cross, quietly sustaining the violence of the status quo. Below him, an opportunist casts lots for Jesus’s clothes, while a leader laughs at the impossibility that the Messiah will save himself. Finally, in the bottom left, a man offers Jesus sour wine in a moment of deep thirst—physical and spiritual.

At the heart of it all is Jesus, tearful, looking at us. His halo shines, revealing the many faces of violence around him. From the foundation of his steady posture grows an olive tree. Its branches extend beyond his clothing, reaching out to embrace those around him.

Through his nonviolent stance, the truth of a violent world is revealed. And in that truth, the good news of peace finds soil in which to take root, to grow, and to flourish.

--Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Gethsemane is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation Affirmation of Welcome

Christ's welcome knows no boundaries! Therefore, our welcome knows no boundaries and we invite all people to full participation in the life of the congregation.

We at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Saint Louis embrace...

People of any race or ethnicity...

People who are male, female, transgender, intersex or any other gender identity...

People of any age...

People wherever they are, or wherever they have been, on their faith journeys...

People who are single, married, widowed, divorced, separated or partnered...

People who are gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, or any other sexual orientation...

People with a variety of political perspectives...

People who have, or had, addictions, phobias, abortions, or a criminal record...

People who are homeowners, renters, living with parents, or homeless...

People who are fully-abled, disabled, or of differing abilities...

People of differing educational backgrounds...

People of any socio-economic condition...

People not mentioned above, all of whom are created and loved by God!

As we celebrate and seek to preserve the beautiful, amazing diversity of God's creation, we pledge to ourselves and to all others that we will strive to live as a reconciling people in our life together and in our outreach to the world. We are committed to being a radically loving and welcoming community of faith.

CHURCH STAFF

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Outside of these hours, please call before coming to the church to ensure someone will be here to let you in.

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