

# The Tenebrae Service: A Day of Darkness and Deliverance

First Lutheran Church  
Princeton, Illinois      March 29, 2024  
**Rev. William J. Shields, Pastor**

*In the early church, Christians observed Good Friday with a solemn worship service in which candles were extinguished one by one, as a reminder of the darkness that covered the earth during the time that Jesus suffered on the cross. The service became known as “Tenebrae,” which means “darkness.”*

*The service begins with a litany and prayer. The offering is taken near the beginning of the service, so that it does not disrupt the Tenebrae readings and hymns. During the Tenebrae, candles and lights are gradually extinguished as we read about how Jesus was arrested, abandoned by his friends, tried on false charges, beaten severely, and then crucified. We are reminded that Jesus endured all of this pain and suffering as payment for our sins, so that we might have the joy and blessing of eternal life in heaven. The removal of the lighted candle from the altar symbolizes the death of Jesus. The closing of the book symbolizes the closing of the tomb.*

*In keeping with the mood of the Tenebrae service, the congregation is asked to exit the sanctuary in silence following the final hymn. The pastor will not be greeting people at the back of the sanctuary.*

## Prelude

## Welcome & Announcements

## Opening Prayer

**\*The Opening Hymn # 324** (2 vs)

**“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”**

## \* Invocation

*Pastor:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. ***Congregation:* And also with you.**

## Responsive Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-25

*P:* The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing,

***C:* But to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

*P:* The Jews demand signs and the Greeks seek wisdom,

***C:* But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.**

*P:* But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,

***C:* Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

*P:* For the foolishness of God is wiser than men,

***C:* And the weakness of God is stronger than men.**

**Prayer All:** Father in Heaven, You have called us to be your Church in the world. Strengthen our faith, so that our witness will be strong. Give us hearts that love and hands that serve. And in all that we do, help us to glorify our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us on the cross. In his holy name we pray. Amen.

## Offering & Choir Anthem

**“Vision Of The Cross”**

*We now enter the darkness of the Tenebrae service. As we do, we remember that Jesus called us to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses, and to follow him. During the hymns of the Tenebrae, you are invited to come to the cross, pick up a nail and one of the hammers, and drive that nail into the wood of the cross. This is a reminder of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross for our sake and of our commitment to follow him in our daily walk of life.*

## THE TENEBRAE

**The Darkness of Conspiracy:**                      **Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16**  
*Hymn* "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" vs. 1 & 2                      ELW No. 337  
***The first candle is extinguished.***

**The Darkness of Unshared Vigil:**                      **Matthew 26:36-46**  
*Hymn* "Go To Dark Gethsemane" vs. 1 & 2                      ELW No. 347  
***The second candle is extinguished.***

**The Darkness of Betrayal:**                      **Matthew 26:47-50**  
*Hymn* "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross" vs. 1 & 2                      ELW No. 803  
***The third candle is extinguished.***

**The Darkness of Desertion & Denial:**                      **Matthew 26:55-58, 69-75**  
*Hymn* "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" vs. 1 & 2                      ELW No. 338  
***The fourth candle is extinguished.***

**The Darkness of Accusation:**                      **Matthew 26:59-66, 27:1-2, 15-16, 21-23**  
*Hymn* "Ah, Holy Jesus" vs. 1,2 & 3                      ELW No. 349  
***The fifth candle is extinguished.***

**The Darkness of Crucifixion & Death:**                      **All four Gospels**  
*Hymn* "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" vs. 1 & 2                      ELW No. 351  
***The sixth candle is extinguished.***

**Sermon**                      **"Jesus Suffered For Us"**  
*(text: The Seven Last Words Of Christ)*                      **Pastor William Shields**  
*Hymn* "What Wondrous Love Is This" vs. 1 & 2                      ELW No. 666  
***The seventh candle is extinguished.***

**The Darkness of the Tomb:**                      **Matthew 27:57-61**  
*Please pray and meditate in silence as the Light is removed.*

### **A Reading from Isaiah 53:3-6**

### **The Book is closed!**

**Closing Hymn:**                      **"Were You There?"**                      **ELW No. 353**

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
2. ...nailed Him to the tree?
3. ...laid Him in the tomb?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

***The congregation now leaves the church in silence.***