

Sermon followed by Service

It took three years to complete - one of the world's most famous paintings, with its image found on carpets, carvings, canvas, cardboard, in Altar Guild rooms. It's 15 feet high and 29 feet wide, but it isn't just huge. The expressions on the faces are unlike anything captured at the time. You may have guessed what I'm talking about - *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci.

The story is told that when he finished his masterpiece, da Vinci asked a friend: "Look at it and give me your honest opinion." "It's wonderful!" was the answer back. "Christ's chalice is so real I can't take my eyes off it." Immediately, da Vinci took a brush and painted over the chalice, adamant, "Nothing shall detract from Jesus."

Nothing shall detract from Jesus! And why is that? Because it's all about Jesus. Not just the painting. All of creation is about Jesus; all of life is about Jesus. That's hard to believe, isn't it? We look around and we see a world distracted from Jesus, a world denying Jesus. And it's not just the world out there distracted, not just the world out there denying Jesus. Not only is it hard to believe that the universe is all about Jesus, that life is all about Jesus, it can be hard for us to accept that it's all about Jesus, that life is all about Jesus. Why? There's a "but" inside each of us that always wants to argue: "What about me?!"

It's all about Jesus; all of life is about Jesus. Jesus knew from experience how hard it is for the world to accept that. In his birth town, Herod the Great had his soldiers hunting for Jesus to kill him. In his home town, his old neighbors wanted to throw him off a cliff. For the past year, people

had been coming to Jesus to get what they wanted and when Jesus didn't give them what they wanted, when Jesus didn't tell them what they wanted - they turned their backs on Jesus and left him. For months, leaders in the Jewish church and state, leaders of Jesus' own people, were talking about how to get rid of Jesus. And now, tonight, Jesus tells his disciples: "One of you will betray me."

The disciples didn't know who. They ask: "Is it I?" John is at the table right next to Jesus; Peter tells John to ask Jesus: "Who?" Jesus tells him: "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gives it to Judas and Satan enters into him. At the table, Judas is that close [arm-length] to Jesus, but in his heart Judas is a world away from Jesus. In his heart, Judas is more open to Satan's lies and temptations than he's open to Jesus' promise. In da Vinci's painting, Judas has his hand on a money bag - was it the 30 pieces of silver he got for betraying Jesus? Was it the money bag he would steal from? Either way, that money bag was more important to Judas than Jesus. And so, with Satan in his heart, Judas continues his pretending: "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus sees right through him: "Yes, it is you." "What you are about to do, do quickly." And Judas leaves. With all that's going on at the table, with so many people and so much commotion at the table, we're told that the other disciples didn't catch what Jesus was saying and doing; they didn't know why Judas left.

We know. Judas went to betray Jesus. It's ironic, isn't it? On the night when one of Jesus' chosen disciples betrays him (to give him over to his enemies), Jesus gives himself to his disciples, he gives himself to his church. When we are denied, when we are betrayed, what do we most naturally do? We pull back, not just from the one who denied us, not just from the one who betrayed us. When we are denied and betrayed, it is so easy to pull back from anyone and everyone. Jesus does the opposite.

When he was denied and betrayed, Jesus gave himself over into the hands and hearts of people who every day deny him or betray him in one way or another.

“For you” and “for many.” Luke has Jesus saying: “This is my body given for you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” Matthew has Jesus saying: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Which one is it - “for you” or “for many”? We don’t need to imagine Jesus saying just one or the other. Jesus has a table-ful, a room-ful of people he is serving. As Jesus serves his Supper, we don’t need to imagine him repeating the exact same words every time. It is so good - deep in the heart - to hear Jesus say “for you.” You get imagine Jesus - the Jesus who knows your heart, the Jesus who knows the darkest, ugliest corners of your heart - you get to imagine Jesus looking into your eyes and saying to you: “for you.” “My body for you; my blood for you; my life, my death, for you; my peace, my promise, my forgiveness for you.” For me!

At the same time we get to hear Jesus say “for many.” Jesus isn’t just offering a single serving for me by myself. Jesus’ love and promise are “for many, for his whole church.” Eating alone is better than not eating, but eating together is better, isn’t it? In the Lord’s Supper, we get to eat with Jesus serving “for you,” and we get to share his promise together “for many.”

Now I’m not denying close or closed communion. What do we know? Honey is good for many, but it’s not good for everyone. Milk and eggs and wheat are good for many, but they’re not good for everyone. Penicillin is good for many, but it’s not good for everyone. In something of the same way, the Lord’s Supper is good for many, but it is not always good for

everyone. And so, with close or closed communion we look to be careful that the Lord's Supper we serve is good for you and for many.

"For you" and "for many." What is for you and for many? A promise, God's special new covenant promise: "I will be your God, and you will be my people." Don't imagine the bully boss: "I'm the boss and you're my workers." No, imagine the Father of the prodigal son welcoming his wayward child back home, welcoming you back home. Imagine Jesus, the Good Shepherd, holding his lambs close to his heart, holding you close to his heart. Imagine God, imagine Jesus saying to you: "I'm here for you; I've got you; and you ... you are my family, the people God."

How can that be? With the ugly darkness in our hearts, how can that be? Listen to the last lines of God's new covenant promise: "I will forgive your sins and remember your transgressions no longer." Listen to what Jesus says as he serves his Supper: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." In the Lord's Supper - for you and for many - Jesus promises forgiveness. Forgiveness for the dark, ugly corners of our heart. Forgiveness for the dark ugliness that gets between us and God. Forgiveness for the dark ugliness that gets between us and each other.

Jesus' promise of forgiveness is so real that in the Lord's Supper Jesus entrusts himself, he gives himself, he puts himself into your hands and hearts. "Take eat, this is my body; take drink, this is my blood." Jesus isn't just giving us a picture of himself, a selfie, a reminder of him. Jesus is giving us himself, his real self, his real body, his real blood, his real forgiveness, his real promise - all for you. And that is better than any painting. Let nothing detract from Jesus. Amen.

Holy Thursday

St. John Lutheran
Libertyville, Illinois
April 6, 2023



HOLY THURSDAY

April 6, 2023

WE WELCOME OUR GUESTS and pray that all who are with us today are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns and by an encouraging and warm welcome. Our worship service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ: forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven. The notes below may be helpful for your worship and time with us today. If you have questions, please ask! We are blessed to have you with us!

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church, celebrating the Lord's Supper only with those who are close and united with us in faith and teaching. In this sacrament we give public confession of our doctrinal unity and fellowship; therefore, we invite visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us in the sacrament. We ask our fellow Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice and refrain from the Lord's Supper at this time. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us for worship. Baby noises can be beautiful to our Savior who said, "Let the little children come to me." If children are crying loudly, our nursery and Gathering Area (back of the church) are audio-equipped and available for you and your young children. After the children regain their composure, come back so we can all worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

Hearing Assistance for those with hearing aids is provided through our *Hearing Loop*. More information is available from an usher.

A *wheelchair lift* is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.

Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

ORGAN MEDITATION

Communion Medley

by Valerie Floeter

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent"

Arranged by Carl Ziebell

"I Come, O Savior, to Your Table"

By Valerie Floeter

OPENING HYMN

"O Lord, We Praise You"

Hymn 673

M: Lord God, you have brought us safely to this hour of evening prayer. We thank you for providing all that we need for body and life. Bless us who have gathered in your name. Forgive our sins. Speak to our hearts. Dispel our sorrows with the comfort of your Word, and receive our hymns of thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ, our living Savior, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

THE GREAT LITANY

M: O God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth,

C: **Have mercy on us.**

M: O God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

C: **Have mercy on us.**

M: O God the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide,

C: **Have mercy on us.**

M: From all spiritual blindness; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all lack of charity:

C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**

M: From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, from hardness of heart and contempt for your Word and your will:

C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**

M: From earthquake and tempest; from drought, fire, and flood; from civil strife and violence; from war and murder; and from dying suddenly and unprepared:

C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**

- M: In our times of trouble, in our times of prosperity, in the hour of death, and on the day of judgment:
- C: **Good Lord, deliver us.**
- M: Receive our prayers, O Lord our God.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Govern and direct your holy Church, fill it with love and truth, and grant it that unity which is according to your will.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Enlighten all ministers with true knowledge and understanding of your Word, that by their preaching and living they may declare it clearly and show its truth.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Encourage and prosper your servants who spread the gospel in all the world, and send out laborers into the harvest.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Bless and keep your people, that all may find and follow their true vocation and ministry.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Give us hearts to love and reverence you, that we may diligently live according to your commandments.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: To all your people, give grace to hear and receive your Word and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Come to the help of all who are in danger, necessity, and trouble; protect all who travel by land, air, or water; and show your pity on all prisoners and captives.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Strengthen and preserve all women who are in childbirth and all young children, and comfort the aged, the bereaved, and the lonely.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Defend and provide for the widowed and the orphaned, the refugees and the homeless, the unemployed, and all who are desolate and oppressed.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**
- M: Heal those who are sick in body or mind, and give skill and compassion to all who care for them.
- C: **Hear us, good Lord.**

C: 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.

GOSPEL

John 13:1-15, 34

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

SERMON

John 13:21-30

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE END OF LENT

M: In this Lenten season we have heard again how our Lord walked the path of suffering which led him to the cross for our salvation. We have also heard our Lord's call to intensify our struggle against sin, death, and the devil—all that keeps us from loving God and each other. This is the struggle to which we were committed at Baptism; God's forgiveness and the power of his Spirit to amend our lives continue with us because of his love for us in Jesus, our Savior.

Within the family of the Church, God never wearies of giving peace and new life. In the absolution we receive forgiveness as from God himself. This absolution we should not doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven, for it comes to us in the name and by the command of our Lord.

We who receive God's love in Jesus Christ are called to love one another, to be servants to each other, as Jesus became our servant.

In Holy Communion the members of Christ's body participate most intimately in his love. Remembering our Lord's last supper with his disciples, we eat the bread and drink the cup of this meal. Together we receive the Lord's gift of his body and blood for forgiveness and participate in that new covenant that makes us one with him and one another. The Lord's Supper is the promise of the great banquet we will share with all the faithful when our Lord returns, the joyous culmination of our reconciliation with God and each other.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

M: Let us confess our sins to God and ask for his forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, merciful Father,
I confess to you that I have not loved you with all my heart.
In what I have done and left undone,
I have pursued my ways instead of your ways.
For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.
I am truly sorry for my sins.
I repent of them.
I beg for your mercy, O Lord.**

Silence for meditation.

M: Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ who suffered and died for us.

C: **Cleanse me from my sins.
Release me from my guilt.
Grant me your Holy Spirit to amend my sinful life.**

M: The almighty God has been merciful to us and has sent his Son to die for all. For his sake, God forgives our sins and calls us from darkness to his marvelous light. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

EXHORTATION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven us and reconciled us to God and has promised us the power to forgive and love each other. Relying on his promise, therefore, be reconciled with one another.

All: **Brothers and sisters, may the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, in our words, and in our actions.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion you give us your true body and blood as a remembrance of your suffering and death on the cross. Grant us so firmly to believe your words and promise that we may always partake of this Sacrament to our eternal good; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

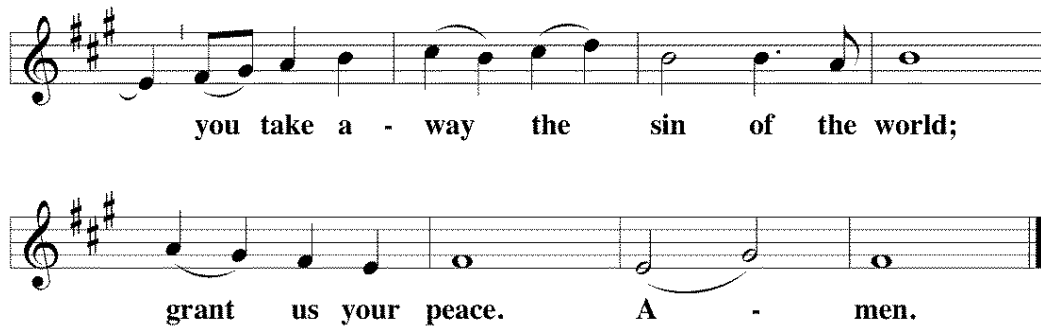
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink, from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,



DISTRIBUTION

(Guests, please see our communion practice on p. 2)

(Gluten free wafers are available; please see Pastor.)

HYMN

"It Was a Dark and Dismal Night"

Hymn 417

SONG OF SIMEON *Nunc Dimittis*

O Lord, now let your servant
 Depart in peace, assured:
 For I have seen your promised
 Incarnate, saving Word –
 A Light that will enlighten
 All gloom where Gentiles dwell;
 The brilliant, crowning glory
 Of those in Israel!

All glory to the Father,
 All glory to the Son,
 All glory to the Spirit,
 Forever three in one;
 For as in the beginning,
 Is now, shall ever be,
 God's triune name resounding
 Through all eternity

CLOSING PRAYER

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

The altar, which symbolizes Christ, is stripped in token of Jesus' abandonment by his disciples in Gethsemane. After the choir finishes singing, we exit the church silently and return to continue our worship tomorrow, Good Friday. If you wish to speak with pastor, he will be available in his office (front pulpit-side of church).

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Awake, Alone in Gethsemane"

*Twilight in Gethsemane, shadows shroud the olive trees.
Twisting branches, dark'ning paths,
on the mountain, night falls fast.
Jesus, with treasured friends, comes to pray 'mid changing winds.
Good and gladsome memories fade with the press of treachery.*

*Awake, alone in Gethsemane.
His friends are heavy-eyed
Resting from sorrow, they lie /Spent from sorrow, they lie.
Strong pleas He makes. Not one stays awake.*

*See, now an angel gives Him aid, strength for bearing all the world's shame
Anguished, His prayers ascend to God, while from His brow comes sweat like blood.
"Father, let this cup pass by!" "Not My will, buy Yours," He cries.
Willing to drink its bitterness, rising to face the traitor's kiss.*

Awake, alone in Gethsemane.

OFFERING

If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.



Acknowledgements

Texts and music covered under OneLicense.net #A-712373 and CCLI Copyright License 11194382, CCLI Streaming License CSPL059933. Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Awake, Alone in Gethsemane © 2016 Shawnee Press/Hal Leonard LLC, words by Julie I. Myers, music incorporating hymn tune “Aberystwyth” by Joesph Parry and “Moonlight Sonata: Adagio” by Ludwig van Beethoven, Arranged by Mary McDonald **O Lord, We Praise You** Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House **When You Woke That Thursday Morning** Text: © 1991 Concordia Publishing House.

We welcome you to come and worship with us again!

*Good Friday Tenebrae Service at 7:00 pm and
Easter Sunday Services at 9:00 and 11:00 am*

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

From Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*

As the head of the family should teach them in the simplest way to those in his household.

The Institution of Holy Communion

First: What is the sacrament of Holy Communion?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the Apostle Paul tell us: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The Blessings of Holy Communion

Second: What blessing do we receive through this eating and drinking?

That is shown us by these words, "Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." Through these words we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in this sacrament. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

The Power of Holy Communion

Third: How can eating and drinking do such great things?

It is certainly not the eating and drinking that does such things, but the words, "Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words are the main thing in this sacrament, along with the eating and drinking. And whoever believes these words has what they plainly say, the forgiveness of sins.

The Reception of Holy Communion

Fourth: Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?

Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words, "Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is not prepared, because the words "for you" require nothing but hearts that believe.