

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP April 9, 2020
Maundy Thursday

Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

Let us seek forgiveness of our sins from our merciful God.

For we know it is His good pleasure to forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen

Because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived a life of perfect obedience and died a death of perfect atonement, there is no penalty left for your sins. You are an absolutely free and forgiven child of God. Through Jesus the Holy Spirit even now renews your hearts and minds, recreating you in the perfect image of your Savior. You are free and empowered to live a life to God.

Amen.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us gracious Lord.

Amen.

THE HYMN OF PRAISE

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father: We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God: You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

HYMN LSB 427 IN the Cross of Christ I Glory

**In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.**

**When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me;
Lo, it glows with peace and joy.**

**When the sun of bliss is beaming
Light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming
Adds more luster to the day.**

**Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure
By the Cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Exodus 12:1-14

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.

Psalm 116:12-19

What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants. Truly I am your servant, LORD; I serve you just as my mother did; you have freed me from my chains. I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the LORD— in your midst, Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

Hebrews 9:11-22

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 26th chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

Matthew 26:17-30

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.' " So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?" Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so." While they were eating, Jesus 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." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

HYMN LSB 431 Not All the Blood of Bulls and Beasts

**Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away the stain.**

**But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.**

**My faith would lay its hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While as a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.**

**My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear
When hanging on the cursed tree;
I know my guilt was there.**

**Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice
And sing His bleeding love.**

SERMON- The Fear of the God

The Passover—which Jews call the Pesach—was instituted by the Lord some 3600 years ago and has been celebrated by the Jews every year since. It is one of the high holy days of the Jewish calendar and it commemorates God's deliverance of the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt. As you recall, after Pharaoh refused to obey God's command to set His people free so that they could worship Him in their own land, God sent down plagues upon Egypt—ten in all. With each plague, Pharaoh's heart grew harder as he stubbornly set his mind against releasing the Israelites. But with the tenth and most horrible plague—the death of all the firstborn sons of Egypt—Pharaoh was humbled and he agreed to let God's people go. In chapter 12 of the *Book Of Exodus*, God, speaking through Moses, gave the Israelites specific instructions about how they were to escape the plague. They were to slaughter a lamb, take some of its blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of their houses, so that when God passed through Egypt he would pass over the houses of the Israelites and spare the lives of their firstborn sons. In the tenth plague we see the ferocity of God's wrath against those who defy him, and in the Passover we see God's love and mercy toward those who fear Him. Ironically, it is those who do not fear God—like Pharaoh—who have the most to fear from Him, and those who do fear God who have the least to fear from Him.

And that brings us to the subject of this evening's message: The Fear of God. There is perhaps no other aspect of our relationship with god that puzzles us more than this one does. We love God and we feel grateful to him for all he has done for us. We are sorry for our sins, we repent of them and we want to turn away from them. We know how to praise God and worship him. But we don't really know how to fear him. We ask: how can you love and fear someone at the same time? For that matter, why would you fear someone who has shown you so much love? Since we have trouble dealing with the idea of fearing God we struggle to find other words to substitute for the word "fear"—words that mitigate its harshness and give it a kinder, gentler tone. Words like "respect" or "honor" or "regard with awe." "All commendable attitudes, but they stop far short of "fear."

Isaiah didn't say, "There is no respect for god in their eyes," he said, "there is any **fear** of God in their eyes." And the Psalmist didn't write, "Respect for God is the beginning of wisdom"; he wrote, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." In ancient Hebrew—the original language of the Old Testament—the word translated as "fear" is "yirah", which meant "terror" or "dread." The "fear of the Lord" is "Yirat Yahweh."

In Koine Greek, the original language of the new testament, the word which is translated “fear” is *ΦΟΒΟΣ* from which we get the word “phobia,” and *ΦΟΒΟΣ* meant “fear” or “terror”—not “respect” or “awe.” So any way you cut it, “fear” means “fear.” The problem is that in our way of thinking, fear is a completely negative thing. No one chooses to feel fear: how can there be any good in fearing something or someone? In this area, believers and unbelievers are of the same mind: neither of us has any fear of God. We know other kinds of fear: fear of being in front of a group of people, fear of dark alleys, fear of snakes, fear of the IRS, fear of growing old, fear of death. There are even kinds of fear that are recognized as psychiatric disorders: acrophobia—fear of heights; hydrophobia—fear of water; claustrophobia—fear of confined places. There is even pogonophobia which is the fear of beards. There are all these types of fear, but there is no fear of God. Why? Because God is invisible and seemingly silent about our wickedness. After listing the horrible sins of the Israelites, God asks, “...why have you not pondered this in your hearts? Is it not because I have long been silent that you do not fear me?” Moses feared God: when God descended on Mount Sinai in fire and made the earth shake, Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” Jesus said, “...I will show you whom you should fear: fear him who after the killing of the body has power to throw you into hell.” So it is good to fear God and if we will allow him to, he will teach us how. If we pray to the Holy Spirit to create in us a proper fear of God, he will do it.

Now the fear of the Lord begins when we come to understand that he has wrath over sin. Paul writes in romans: “the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, **so that men are without excuse.**” If a man refuses to believe in God, he does so against the evidence of his senses and the use of reason. To deny the existence of God compels one to believe that the universe created itself. And this obviously absurd. The truth is that people **prefer** to believe that there is no God so that they can do anything they want without being held to account. According to Paul, they are, “...storing up wrath against themselves for the day of God’s wrath.” And God’s wrath is, “a consuming fire.” But, you say, we have God’s mercy through the grace he has extended to us in Jesus Christ. Why do we need to have any fear of God? There are four reasons: first and foremost, fear him for your own sake; When Isaiah had a vision of the thrice-holy God in the temple, he responded with trembling: “woe is me for I am lost! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...” We too dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips who do not fear God. If you doubt that, just turn on your TV for a few hours. And whether we like it or not, the world has its way with us: most of us are people of unclean lips. So its right for Christians who struggle daily with their sins to fear what disciplines our heavenly father might bring upon them to help them abandon them. This is why Paul wrote, “Therefore work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” We should fear God for our own sake.

Second, fear God on behalf of those who do not fear him. We who have been blessed with saving faith have been given eyes which discern spiritual realities to which the faithless are blind.

One of these spiritual realities is the existence of hell to which our unsaved relatives, neighbors, co-workers and friends are heading. Since there is no fear of god in their eyes, we must fear on their behalf, having our hearts wrenched with anguish over their destiny and letting that anguish move us to plead with them with great urgency. Paul wrote, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though god were making his appeal through us." We **are** our brother's keeper.

Third, let the fear of God drive away your fear of people. Since there is no fear of god animating most of the people in our increasingly secular culture, it is becoming more and more aggressive in showing its anger and contempt for biblical Christianity. Recently the New York Times printed an op-ed column entitled: "The Road To The Coronavirus Hell Was Paved By Evangelicals." Atheists and secular humanists are every bit as committed to their religion as were the citizens of Ephesus who screamed, "great is [our pagan goddess] Artemis" for two solid hours. If we do not fear God, we will let the fear of humans cow us into shameful silence. But Christ said, "If anyone is ashamed of me, I will be ashamed of him in the presence of my Father."

Finally, let your fear of God move you to seek and save the lost. We need to minister the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers as their only hope for deliverance from eternal death. We need to tell them the good news of a heaven which is free from all death, mourning, crying and pain. When this virus finally dissipates, it will be a good time to do that very thing, for God can use the fear of sickness and death to open people's minds to the gospel. We need to summon the courage to speak the truth to people—even when they would rather not hear it.

Through the prophet Ezekiel, God calls for people who will "rebuild the wall and stand in the breach for his guilty nation." The prospect of "standing in the breach in the wall" to defend God's truth against all comers is scary. But if we have a healthy fear of the Lord and of the wrath he will visit upon all those who "suppress the truth out of wickedness," it will give us the courage to man the wall. Make no mistake, there is a day of wrath coming which will make our current problem seem like child's play. But as God showed the ancient Israelites his love and mercy by saving them through the blood of a lamb, so now he shows us his love and mercy by saving us through the blood of the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world—even Jesus Christ.

Amen.

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Father in heaven, As we labor under fear of this virus, please give us confident hearts, knowing that you are in control of all things and that you will rein in this disease and deliver our country from economic chaos.

We especially pray for the following people:

- For Milt Colburn who is receiving physical therapy at Anna Maria. Lift his spirits and strengthen his body so that he can return home soon.
- For Glenda Colburn during this time of separation from her husband Milt.
- For Wyatt Mullins, that he will receive an accurate and favorable diagnosis of his liver problems and be enabled to live a normal and healthy life.
- For all healthcare workers who are exposed to the Covid-19 virus every day, that you would keep them safe and healthy and bless the important work that they do.

We pray all these things in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD'S 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.

CLOSING HYMN LSB 564 Christ Sits at God's Right Hand

Christ Sits at God's Right Hand His saving work complete.

To reign till every foe will lie beneath His feet.

All that the Father planned, The Son sought to fulfill,

When first He said "Lord here I am to do your will."

Christ was the priest God swore, Uniquely First and Last,

Who would in righteousness and love, Be unsurpassed:

"A priest for evermore" An oath God would not break,

"A priest within the order of Melchizedek"

Christ's altar was the tree, where on the world's behalf

He shed a blood, unlike he blood of goat or calf,

To seal God's guarantee Of Grace that cannot fail;

With blood He entered for our good behind the veil.

What costly sacrifice to cover human sin!

Who but Christ Jesus had the right to enter in?

His blood, that sprinkled price, so we might be assured

That our inheritance in light has been secured.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and † give you peace.

Amen.