



## **BENEATH THE CROSS**

**Week 1: Beneath the Cross of Jesus, I Long to Take My Stand**

***Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026***

2026 Midweek Lenten Service: Provided by the Western North Dakota Synod-ELCA

### **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**OPENING DIALOGUE** (Mark 14:18-19, 27-31, 38; 15:34, 39): *Please stand as you are able.*

Keep awake, and pray with me. **My spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak.**

One of you this night will betray me. **Lord, is it I?**

Before the cock crows, you will all desert me. **Lord, I will never deny you!**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? **Truly, this man was God's Son!**

### **GATHERING SONG:**

*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

ELW #324

### **GREETING**

God who created all, who bore the cross, and who dwells in us, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### **PRAYER**

Let us pray. **God of our hope, we journey with you to the foot of the cross. Stay with us when difficulty comes. Grant us courage and peace in the face of persecution. Turn our pain into joy, our mourning into dancing. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

**READING:** Philippians 2:1-11

A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians. If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup>he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here ends the reading.

**GOSPEL:** John 16:16-33

*Please stand as you are able for the reading of the gospel.*

Our gospel reading comes from the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John. "A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me." Then some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying to us, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They said, "What does he mean by this 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'? Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. "I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father. On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father." His disciples said, "Yes, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure of speech! Now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

The gospel of the Lord.

## **SILENT REFLECTION AND PRAYER**

*During this time, as you are comfortable, go to the table and take a piece of paper to write your prayers, burdens, etc. Take them to the cross and lay them, entrusting them into the care of Jesus.*

## **REFLECTION**

We gather with the disciples, with Mary and the other women, with the soldiers, and with the passersby at the foot of the cross. As he faced death, Jesus tried to prepare his disciples for what was to come. He knew that, like Peter, we long to claim that we will never deny our Lord, that we will never lose our faith beneath the cross. Jesus proclaims to the disciples and to us: "Take courage; I have conquered the world!"

## **PRAYERS**

Let us pray. Beneath the cross of Jesus, **we lift up our joys and our sorrows to God.**

O Lord, amid the shifting sands of this world, **be our rock and our foundation.**

In the fears and uncertainties of our lives, **be our home and our resting place.**

When we lay our sins and burdens before you, **be our comfort and our guide.**

As we gaze upon the cross of Christ, **be our hope and our salvation.**

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to us because you love us and want to save us.

By the power of the cross of Christ, you free us from sin to live each day for you.

We offer to you our burdens and prayer, entrusting them to Christ, who we trust will look upon them with compassion.

Bless + these crosses, signs of your glory, and let them remind us that Jesus died and rose for all. Help us to carry our cross, and to follow Jesus in serving others.

God of grace, you know what we need before we do, and we pray that you would show us clearly that you are among us. As our creator, make us a new creation. As our savior, make us right before you. As our guide, lead us to do your will in the world. Give us strength to journey with Jesus to the cross of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

As the offering is collected, turn to your neighbor and share a word of peace.

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

*Please stand as you are able.*

Let us pray. **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. We give you thanks for nourishing us in body, mind, and spirit, by the faith and fellowship we share. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

People of God, you have been crucified with Christ,  
and it is no longer you who live, but it is Christ who lives in you.  
The peace of God (+), which surpasses all our human understanding,  
keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.  
**Amen.**

### **SENDING SONG:**

*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

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### **DISMISSAL:**

Go in peace, led by the cross of Christ. **C: Thanks be to God.**

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