

Good Friday Tenebrae

April 3, 2026

St. Matthew's
CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Welcome to St. Matthew's!

We are delighted that you have joined us for worship today! It is our prayer that God would fill you with His grace and peace as we worship our Lord and Savior Jesus. If you have questions about St. Matthew's or would like to speak to one of the pastors, please feel free to reach out to one of them.

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

On Good Friday, we remember the crucifixion of our Lord. While our remembrance is solemn, is not a message of gloom, but a *service of adoration* of the Son of God as he offers up his life as the Lamb of God. Good Friday is part of the larger celebration of the mystery of salvation beginning on Maundy Thursday and culminating in the proclamation of the Easter message, "He is risen!"

To impress upon the hearts and minds of believers the terrible consequences of sin and the magnitude of the Savior's sacrifice, the ancient church would hold a special service called the "Tenebrae" on the last days of Holy Week. *Tenebrae* is a Latin word meaning "shadows" or "darkness." The gradual extinguishing of the candles and darkening of the church during the service remind us of the events that led to the awe-full darkness that covered the earth when our Savior hung on the cross. The climax of the service, the announcement of Christ's death, is accompanied by a loud noise symbolic of the closing of the tomb. Although the Tenebrae is a solemn service, it is not without hope. Throughout the service, one candle – the Christ Candle – will be left burning on the altar to remind us of our Lord's abiding presence.

After the Service — You may remain in silent prayer and meditation as long as you wish. When you leave, please do so quietly, maintaining the spirit of solemn reflection on our Savior's sacrifice. There will be no organ music after the service.

Connection Cards; Offering box is located in the entryway

We are delighted you have joined us for worship today and we would love to stay connected with you. To help us do so, please fill out the Connection Card in the seat back. You may place it in the offering plate or hand it to one of the ushers. You also have the ability to record your worship or give a gift using the appropriate QR code below. Those who have downloaded the St. Matthew's App can check-in and give offerings directly through the app. You may also text GIVE to 833-921-6451.

Guest Form

Welcome

St. Matthew's App

Give Online

Pre-service Silent Meditation

Bell Toll

To begin, a bell tolls seven times in recognition of the seven last words Christ spoke from the cross.

Silent Prayer

Let the incense of my repentant prayer ascend before you, O Lord, and let your mercy descend upon me, that with purified heart and mind I may sing your praises with both the Church on earth and Church in heaven, glorifying your saving name forever and ever. Amen.

Welcome

Hymn 947:1 Lamb of God, Pure and Holy

Responsive Verses

Seek the Lord while he may be found.
Call on him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way,
and the evil man his thoughts.

Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Who may appear in your presence, heavenly Father, and who may call on you for help?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart; he shall receive blessings from the Lord.

Hymn 947:2 Lamb of God, Pure and Holy

Confession of Sins

Precious Savior, the darkness of your hours on the cross surrounds us. We sense what you experienced as you faced the dreadful assaults of Satan as our substitute. We are awed by the commitment to your Father, and to us, that drove you on to the cross to die. Confident that in you we will find help in our time of need, we come to make confession of our sins.

O most holy and righteous Savior and Lord, I am a sinner whose thoughts, words, and actions testify to the evil that lurks within. Though I try to drown my old Adam with his evil deeds and desires by daily contrition and repentance, yet he continues to overcome me. Hear my cry for mercy. Take from me the sin that I have inherited and the sins that I have committed, for the sake of your holy, precious blood and your innocent sufferings and death.

Absolution

God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 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. Amen.

Hymn 947:3 — Lamb of God, Pure and Holy

Prayer of the Day

God Most Holy, look with mercy on this, your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, be given over into the hands of the wicked, and suffer death upon the cross. Keep us always faithful to him, our only Savior, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Sermon Text — Zechariah 3:1-10

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. **2** The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. **4** The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you."

5 Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

6 The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: **7** "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

8 "'Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. **9** See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.

10 "'In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."

Sermon Theme — In a Single Day

THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS

THE FIRST WORD

When Jesus spoke from the cross the first time, he said to his Father:
"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:33)

O Lord Jesus Christ, touch us with your hands
which the sins of the world pierced with nails
and forgive our ignorance, for Lord, we knew not,
indeed we know not what we do in sinning against you.
Touch us and forgive us; bless us, O Lord, for your endless mercies' sake.
Amen.

The first candle is extinguished.

Hymn 423 **The Power of the Cross**
Soloist verses 1-2, Congregation 3-4

THE SECOND WORD

When Jesus spoke the second time, he said to the thief on the cross:
"I tell you the truth; today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

O Lord Jesus Christ, look on us with your eyes
as you looked upon the thief on the cross —
that with him we may confess our sins and ask, humbly,
'Lord remember us when you come into your kingdom,' —
and by your same voice be comforted, for your endless mercies' sake.
Amen.

The second candle is extinguished.

Hymn 426 **Were You There**

THE THIRD WORD

When Jesus spoke from the cross the third time, he said to his disciple John and his mother:
"Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." (John 19:26)

O Lord Jesus Christ,
fill us with your love —
as in your pain you did comfort your mother,
and provide for her need,
and gave her both home and son—
to such love, without compare, without limit,
lead us, O Lord, now and forever.
Amen.

The third candle is extinguished.

Hymn 407:1,3,4 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

THE FOURTH WORD

When Jesus spoke from the cross the fourth time, he cried out in a loud voice:
"My God, my God, why have your forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

O Lord Jesus Christ,
fill us with your faith —
since in your last agony you cried to your Father,
'My God, my God,' —
that no suffering, no shadow of doubt may darken our trust in God,
nor separate us from your Father and ours,
now or ever.
Amen.

To remember our Savior's suffering the very pains of hell for us, let us pause in silence to reflect both upon God's holy justice and infinite love, who both punished sin and forgave sin through his Son.

The fourth candle is extinguished.

THE FIFTH WORD

When Jesus spoke from the cross the fifth time, he gasped:
"I thirst." (John 19:28)

O Lord Jesus Christ,
lead us to see your thirst — as you suffered in your humanity —
that we might drink from you and never thirst again,
but live in your Father's house forever,
for your tender mercies' sake.
Amen.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

Hymn 430:1,2 Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted, see him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected; yes, my soul, 'tis he, 'tis he.
'Tis the long expected Prophet, David's son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it: 'tis the true and faithful Word.

Tell me, as you hear him groaning, was there ever grief like his,
Friends through fear his cause disowning, foes insulting his distress?
Many hands were raised to wound him, none would intervene to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that justice gave.

THE SIXTH WORD

When Jesus spoke from the cross the sixth time, he cried in triumph:
"It is finished!" (John 19:30)

O Lord Jesus Christ,
give us your strength —
as you resolved to do your Father's work
and finish it —
that morning and evening, we live in hope,
knowing that your great work for us is completed,
to the glory of your holy name.
Amen.

The sixth candle is extinguished.

Anthem ***Behold the Lamb of God***
Choir

Silent prayer.

THE SEVENTH WORD

When Jesus Spoke from the cross the final time, he said:
"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

O Lord Jesus Christ,
give us your trust,
unquestioning, complete —
as on the cross
you committed your spirit to your Father —
so that whatever may happen, we may rest
in the same everlasting arms,
for your endless mercies' sake.
Amen.

The Christ candle is removed.

Anthem **Surely He Has Borne Our Griefs**
Choir

The Christ candle returns.

Prayer

Almighty God, we pray that you would graciously behold this your family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed into the hands of wicked men and suffer death on a cross. Help us to remember and give thanks for our Lord's Passion that we may obtain remission of sins and redemption unto eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE BURIAL AND SEALING OF THE TOMB

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

"Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard. (Matthew 27:62-66)

The tomb is sealed.

Choir **Rest, O Christ, from All Your Labor**

You are welcome to stay in silent prayer and meditation.

Please exit the sanctuary quietly.

Join us on Easter Sunday!

Sunrise Service	*6:00am*
Festival Services	*8:00am & 10:30am*
Easter Breakfast	*7:00am – 10:00am*

Join us as we celebrate our Savior's Victory and the gift of Salvation!

Worship Leader:	Pastor Steven Hillmer
Organist:	Char Bouche
Special Music:	Choir

SPECIAL VOTER'S MEETING – April 12
All voting members are encouraged to attend a Special Voters' Meeting on Sunday, April 12, immediately following the late service. Please plan to stay and be part of this important discussion.

OUR MISSION *COMPELLED BY THE LOVE OF CHRIST,*

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School seek to reach out to our families, community and world, using Law and Gospel to make disciples, growing and nurturing them in their Christian faith and life.

PHILIP BIGELOW
Pastor
pbigelow@smls.org

STEVEN HILLMER
Pastor
shillmer@smls.org

DANIEL SCHMIDT
Pastor
dschmidt@smls.org

TOM PLITZUWEIT
Principal
tplitzuweit@smls.org

JULIE NEHR
School Admin Assistant
jnehr@smls.org

HEATHER BIGELOW
Personal Member Ministry
hbigelow@smls.org

GEORGE ZAFEROS
Business Administrator
gzaferos@smls.org

CONNIE ABRAM
Communication Manager
cabram@smls.org

JENNIFER MANSSEN
Church Office Manager
jmanssen@smls.org

AMBER TERRY
First Steps Director
aterry@smls.org

St. Matthew's CHURCH AND SCHOOL

First Steps CHILD CARE CENTER

WORSHIP SERVICES SATURDAY: 5:30 PM
SUNDAY: 8:00 & 10:30 AM

Christian Education For All
SUNDAY 9:15 AM

Phone :

Church:	262.912.6060
School:	262.912.6364
First Steps:	262.912.6338

Welcome Visitors: Please fill out the connection card in pew or scan

SCAN ME

Location :
1650 Brown St, Oconomowoc

Social Media:
@StMatthewsOconomowoc

Website : SMLS.ORG