

A Service of Tenebrae, or "Shadows," is based on a twelfth-century late night/early morning service and is an extended meditation on the passion of Christ. The readings given below are by James H. Charlesworth. He accurately translates John 18:1 –19:42, with special sensitivity to Jews, Judaism, Jesus' Jewishness, and the Jewish origins of Christianity.

God is light, in whom there is no darkness at all.
Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world,
and we loved darkness rather than light.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

**Almighty God, look with loving mercy on your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given over to the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen.**

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST (John 18:1-19:42)

Fourteen candles, along with a central Christ candle, are lighted at this point or before the service begins; then one is extinguished at the conclusion of each section. Hymns or hymn stanzas may be interspersed.

Go to Dark Gethsemane ELW 347, vs 1

1

Jesus... went forth with his disciples across the Kidron valley,
where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.
Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place;
for Jesus often met there with his disciples.
So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers
and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees,
went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him,
came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"
They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth."
Jesus said to them, "I am he."
Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.
When he said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.
Again he asked them, "Whom do you seek?"
And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."
Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he;
so, if you seek me, let these men go."
This was to fulfill the word which he had spoken,
"I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."
Then Simon Peter, having a sword,
drew it and struck the high priest's slave and cut off his right ear.
The slave's name was Malchus.
Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath;
shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?"

A reader extinguishes the first candle.

2

So the band of soldiers and their captain
and the officers of the Judean authorities seized Jesus and bound him.
First they led him to Annas;
for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.
It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the religious authorities
that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

The second candle is extinguished.

Go to Dark Gethsemane ELW 347, vs 2

3

Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple.
As this disciple was known to the high priest,
he entered the court of the high priest along with Jesus,
while Peter stood outside at the door.
So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest,

went out and spoke to the woman who guarded the gate,
and brought Peter in.
The woman who guarded the gate said to Peter,
"Are not you also one of this man's disciples?"
He said, "I am not."
Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire,
because it was cold,
and they were standing and warming themselves;
Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The third candle is extinguished.

4

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.
Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world;
I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple,
where all Jewish people come together;
I have said nothing secretly. Why do you ask me?
Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them;
they know what I said."
When he had said this,
one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying,
"Is that how you answer the high priest?"
Jesus answered him,
"If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong;
but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"
Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

The fourth candle is extinguished.

Go to Dark Gethsemane ELW 347, vs 3

5

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself.
They said to him, "Are not you also one of his disciples?"
He denied it and said, "I am not."
One of the servants of the high priest,
a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked,
"Did I not see you in the garden with him?"

Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

6

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters.
It was early.

They themselves did not enter the headquarters,
so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

So Pilate went out to them and said,
"What accusation do you bring against this man?"

They answered him,
"If this man were not an evildoer,
we would not have handed him over."

Pilate said to them,
"Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

The religious authorities said to him,
"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken
to show by what death he was to die.

The sixth candle is extinguished.

Go to Dark Gethsemane ELW 347, vs 4

7

Pilate entered the headquarters again and called Jesus, and said to him,
"Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord,
or did others say it to you about me?"

Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew?
Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me;
what have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world;
if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight,
that I might not be handed over to the religious authorities;
but my kingship is not from the world."

Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king.
For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world,
to bear witness to the truth.
Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."
Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

The seventh candle is extinguished.

8

After Pilate had said this,
he went to the religious authorities again, and told them,
"I find no crime in him.
But you have a custom
that I should release one man for you at the Passover;
will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?"
They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!"
Now Barabbas was a robber.

The eighth candle is extinguished.

Ah, Holy Jesus ELW 349, vs 1

9

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.
And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head,
and arrayed him in a purple robe;
they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
and struck him with their hands.
Pilate went out again, and said to them,
"See, I am bringing him out to you,
that you may know that I find no crime in him."
So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.
Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"
When the chief priests and the officers saw him,
they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!"
Pilate said to them,
"Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him."
The religious authorities answered him,

"We have a law, and by that law he ought to die,
because he has made himself the Son of God."
When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid;
he entered the headquarters again and said to Jesus,
"Where are you from?"
But Jesus gave no answer.
Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me?
Do you not know that I have power to release you,
and power to crucify you?"
Jesus answered him,
"You would have no power over me
unless it had been given you from above;
therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

The ninth candle is extinguished.

10

Upon this Pilate sought to release him,
but the religious authorities cried out,
"If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend;
every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar."
When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out
and sat down on the judgment seat
at a place called The Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gab' · ba · tha .
Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover;
it was about the sixth hour.
He said to the religious authorities, "Behold your King!"
They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"
Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"
The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."
They handed him over to them to be crucified.

The tenth candle is extinguished.

Ah, Holy Jesus ELW 349, vs 2

11

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross,

to the place called the place of a skull,
which is called in Hebrew, Gol' ·go·tha .
There they crucified him,
and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.
Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross;
it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."
Many of the Judeans read this title,
for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city;
and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.
The Jewish chief priests then said to Pilate,
"Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,'
but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'"
Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."
The eleventh candle is extinguished.

12

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus
they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier;
also his tunic.
But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom;
so they said to one another,
"Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be."
This was to fulfill the scripture,
"They parted my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots."

The twelfth candle is extinguished.

Ah, Holy Jesus ELW 349, vs 3

13

So the soldiers did this.
But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother,
and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
When Jesus saw his mother,
and the disciple whom he loved standing near,
he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"
Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"

And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

The thirteenth candle is extinguished.

14

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished,
said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst."

A bowl full of vinegar stood there;
so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop
and held it to his mouth.

When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished";
and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The fourteenth candle is extinguished.

Ah, Holy Jesus ELW 349, vs 4

15

Since it was the day of Preparation,
in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross
on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day),
the religious authorities asked Pilate that their legs might be broken,
and that they might be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first,
and of the other who had been crucified with him;
but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead,
they did not break his legs.

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear,
and at once there came out blood and water.

He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true,
and he knows that he tells the truth—that you also may believe.

For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled,
"Not a bone of him shall be broken."

And again another scripture says,
"They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

The Christ candle is taken away or extinguished. A loud noise is made by a cymbal or other means. The last section is read in darkness.

After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus,
 but secretly, for fear of the religious authorities,
 asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus,
 and Pilate gave him leave.
 So he came and took away his body.
 Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night,
 came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes,
 about a hundred pounds' weight.
 They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices,
 as is the burial custom of the Jews.
 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden,
 and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid.
 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation,
 as the tomb was close at hand,
 they laid Jesus there.

(JOHN 18:1–19:42)

Ah, Holy Jesus ELW 349, vs 5

Silence.

BIDDING PRAYER

Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy church throughout the world.

Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ. By your Holy Spirit guide the church and gather it throughout the world. Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your name, and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for Elizabeth and Kurt, our bishops, and for Ryan, Ted, Jenny, Alyssa, and all servants of the church, and for all the people of God.

Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold our bishops, pastors, other ministers, and lay leaders. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the church, and help each of us in our various vocations to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for those preparing for baptism.

Almighty and eternal God, you continue to bless the church. Increase the faith and understanding of those preparing for baptism. Give them new birth as your children and keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for our sisters and brothers who share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Almighty and eternal God, you give your church unity. Look with favor on all who follow Jesus your Son. Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith and keep us united in the fellowship of love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God.

Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and your teaching to Moses. Hear our prayers that the people you called and elected as your own may receive the fulfillment of the covenant's promises. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of the love made known to us in your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for those who do not believe in God.

Almighty and eternal God, you created humanity so that all may long to know you and find peace in you. Grant that we might share your love and grace with those who do not practice any faith- so all may find a place in your beloved community. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for God's creation.

Almighty and eternal God, you are the creator of a magnificent universe. Hold all the cosmos in the arms of your care and bring all things to fulfillment in you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for those who serve in public office.

Almighty and eternal God, you are the champion of the poor and oppressed. In your goodness, give wisdom to those in authority, so that all people may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Let us pray for those in need.

Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary and new courage to those who have lost heart. Heal the sick, comfort the dying, give safety to travelers, free those unjustly deprived of liberty, and deliver your world from falsehood, hunger, and disease. Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask.

**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.**

PROCESSION OF THE CROSS

Behold the life-giving cross,
on which was hung the Savior of | the whole world.

Oh, come, let us | worship him.

Behold the life-giving cross,
on which was hung the Savior of | the whole world.

Oh, come, let us | worship him.

Behold the life-giving cross,
on which was hung the Savior of | the whole world.

Oh, come, let us | worship him.

We adore you, O Christ, | and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have re- | deemed the world.

SENDING HYMN – Beneath the Cross of Jesus ELW 338

You are invited to either remain seated or come forward to reverence the cross during the final hymn or afterwards. After the hymn, we will depart in silence in anticipation of the resurrection.