

# **King of Kings Lutheran Church and Preschool**

*Following Christ, Living Faithfully, Serving Others*

## **Good Friday**

March 29, 2024

*This creative liturgy invites you to walk “the way of sorrows”,  
but through the eyes and experiences of one of Jesus’ closest followers.*

*As a nod to the Stations of the Cross, we will journey through Jesus’ final moments  
through the eyes of his disciple, Peter.*

*In Peter, we see a little of all of us—he is devout and resolute, zealous and rash, and even fearful and flawed.  
If any of us can locate ourselves in the crucifixion story, it is likely we can see ourselves in Peter.  
This is a service of confession, lament, and repentance.  
Through Peter’s experience, we will consider our own.*

*We will look closely at the events of Good Friday to help us honestly assess who we are.  
As Jesus tells Peter the truth about himself, we will consider the truth about ourselves.  
James Baldwin once said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed,  
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”*

***For those worshiping with us online***, you are invited to share in our time of reflection –  
gather a pen and some paper so that you may participate from home.

### **\*Invocation**

Holy God, as we journey through this familiar story, help us to understand it anew.  
Show us, O God, where we find ourselves in the narrative,  
and move us toward a more just and compassionate future. **Amen.**

### **\*Hymn of the Day**

*ELW #807*

*Sing just the first verse; we will sing the other verses progressively throughout the service.*

## Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";  
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.  
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.  
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,  
Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;  
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.  
he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter - posed his pre-cious blood.  
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–1790, alt.

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

**Leader 1:** With the hope of endless glory in our hearts, let us journey together through this difficult day. We will begin with the words we heard last night, the washing of Peter's feet, as we trust in God's power and willingness to bind our wandering hearts to God's own self.

### Station 1: Peter resists then receives the foot washing

#### Scripture Reading JOHN 13:1-20

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him.

And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him,

"Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord — and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

*Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God.*

*Leader 1:* We have heard the words of scripture. Let us now use our holy imaginations to read between the words and consider how Peter might have felt in these moments.  
Hear now a dramatic reading inspired by John 13:1-20.

*Leader 2 (Peter):* This feels . . . strange. What does Jesus mean by all this? What does it mean - saying that not all of us are clean? He washed our feet, which was . . . strange. But I trust my teacher. I've given up everything to follow him. Is that not love? His words seem...strange. What does he know? What is he not saying?

**Congregational Response** (*Naming who we are called to serve*)

Look closely at the artwork, "Golden Hour" by Nicolette Peñaranda.  
As you gaze upon the art, what do you see: How do you feel?

*From the artist's statement...*There is a particular time of day we refer to as the "golden hour." This is when photographers love to take photos as the sun sits at a particular point, either after sunrise or before sunset, when daylight is redder and softer than when the sun is higher in the sky...When I reflect on the entire Passion story, this might just be the golden hour for the disciples. Jesus and his crew are tucked away, having their Passover meal...Sharing a meal with the people you love is one of the most glorious moments anyone could have—before what will end as a night of torture and betrayal. While Peter is tearful in this image, the overall vibe of Golden Hour is soft, rich. It feels like it is captured in marble as if nothing can destroy it.

What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?  
Like Peter does it seem strange that Jesus washed his disciples' feet? Consider Jesus' commandment to "wash one another's feet." Whose feet are you being called to wash?

Take a slip of dissolvable paper and write the names of people and/or communities you feel called to serve. (If you are with us online, we invite you to use your own paper to write on.) When you are finished, hold onto your paper slip, as you will use it later.

## Station 2: Jesus foretells Peter's denials

### Scripture Reading JOHN 13:31-38

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times. *Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God.*

### Congregational Response (*Naming those we love profoundly*)

Look closely at the artwork, "Really?" by Hannah Garrity.

As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

*From the artist's statement...*In this pulpit parament, drawn with ink on paper, Jesus looks up at the congregation asking, "Really?" In my unique first glance at this story, looking through the eyes of Peter, I was floored by Jesus' judgment of Peter in this text. Jesus's response to Peter sounds harsh coming from a loving God. I think that that is why I was so surprised as I studied the scripture. So I looked deeper to see what Jesus is actually going through, to see where his perspective may be coming from. Trauma. With this lens, my fragile frustration with Jesus is really me centering myself. Jesus is constantly putting himself in harm's way and now he's heading toward the cross. Yet, I am still demanding him to be polite to me, not to call my bluff.

What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?

Consider Jesus' charge: "Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another."

Take a slip of dissolvable paper and write the names of people you profoundly love.

(Once again, if you are with us online, we invite you to use your own paper to write on.)

When you are finished, hold onto your paper slip, as you will use later.

## Station 3: Peter draws his sword

### Scripture Reading JOHN 18:1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."

This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, 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 back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" *Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God.*

*Leader 2:* Violence in all its forms is a public health issue. March for Our Lives, a movement started by youth impacted by a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, notes that gun violence is the leading cause of death for children in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 41% of women and 26% of men have experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetimes. According to the American Public Health Association, violence “disproportionately impacts people of color and other oppressed groups such as the LGBTQIA+ community, Indigenous peoples, and those living below the poverty line. Communities living without adequate resources and those facing unfair treatment are more susceptible to all health issues. Exposure to violence is the greatest predictor of future violence.”

### **Congregational Response** (*Prayer of confession*)

Look closely at the artwork, “Disarming Peter” by Lauren Wright Pittman.  
As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

*From the artist's statement...* “In disarming Peter, Christ disarms all Christians.” —Tertullian (160-220 CE)  
...Peter had a choice. He could continue down the path of violence, fight the soldiers and religious leaders and protect Jesus from the inevitable, or he could yield, dropping his sword and surrendering to the cup that God has placed before his friend....

Which way will we choose?

Please join me in a unison prayer of confession:

**Holy One, we are convicted of our addiction to violence. We lament the proliferation and use of firearms. We bemoan the staggering statistics of intimate partner violence. Yet, we confess our own complicity in the pain of our neighbors.**

**Whether we have picked up a sword, uttered harmful words about each other, or simply refused to acknowledge another's pain, we have betrayed the peace you left with us.**

**We have built war economies that make conflict profitable.**

**We have created societies that justify the violence of food and housing insecurity, racism, discrimination, and marginalization. God of grace, have mercy upon us, and save us from weak resignation to these evils. Amen.**

## **Station 4: Jesus is arrested, and Peter denies Christ**

### **Scripture Reading** JOHN 18:12-18

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

*Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God.*

### **Congregational Response**

Look closely at a portion of the artwork, "The Descent," a closeup by T. Denise Anderson. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?

*From the artist's statement...* "Here, I try to capture Peter's initial paralysis when he's first asked if he's one of Jesus' disciples. When Jesus was arrested, Peter had only begun to see the full extent of the empire's cruelty. 'Would they do to me what they've done to him?' he must have asked himself. Maybe he could be so zealous for Jesus in the past because it was all an abstraction. Now, things have gotten frighteningly real."

What new meaning do you glean from the artist's perspective?

When we think of violence, we think of calculated, deliberate, or impassioned action. In this station, we are confronted with the violence of inaction. Peter has now seen the lengths that power would go to silence Jesus. When asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples, Peter freezes. He must suspect that, if his association to Jesus were made known, he might be met with the same violence.

Please join me in prayer:

**Merciful God, we confess that, too often, we've been inactive bystanders in the face of someone else's victimization. Forgive us for choosing self-preservation over justice. Amen.**

**\*Hymn**      "Come Thou Fount"    *Sing just the second verse.*

## **Station 5: Peter denies Christ again and again**

### **Scripture Reading**    JOHN 18:19-27

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed. *Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God.*

*Leader 2 (Peter): (Lamentfully)* Jesus was right. My Lord, what have I done?

*Leader 1:* I invite you to now gaze upon the complete artwork titled *The Descent* by Rev. T. Denise Anderson, which is projected on the screen. This is a piece created entirely out of fabric.

Anderson shares these words about the artwork as a whole:

"From [the top], Peter descends into more fear—the kind that does not help us to be our best selves. I depict him going from stunned to defensive and then to belligerent, navigating the full spectrum of the fight, flight, or freeze responses to perceived threat. By the time the cock crows as Jesus predicted (see if you can make out the bird's faint silhouette in the lower right-hand corner), Peter probably no longer recognizes himself. He must feel deflated and ashamed. At the end of his descent he is different, so I depict him differently from his three prior denials. He has much less fire in his countenance and can't even open his eyes to face what he's done.

The flames recall the fire where Peter warmed himself, but they also represent purification and illumination. Peter is forced to see himself as he truly is—as Jesus had already shown him.

Who will he choose to be after this?

When we are confronted with who we truly are, who will we choose to be after that confrontation? As we look at Peter's journey, it's my prayer that we will consider and meditate on our own."

### **Congregational Response**

At this time, you are invited to take your two slips of dissolvable paper (from Stations 1 & 2) and walk to the back of the sanctuary. There you will place them into the water basin, watching them dissolve into the water. (If you are online with us, we invite you to tear your papers into several pieces.) In this act, we symbolically participate in Peter's denial. We recognize the times we have turned away from those we love and from those whom God has called us to serve. We feel the pain of facing the worst part of ourselves.

## **Station 6: Jesus is Crucified**

### **Scripture Reading** JOHN 19:1-30

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to 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 the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

Then the chief priests of the Jews 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." When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near 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 beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

*Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God.*

*Leader 2 (Peter):* When you know the world is grieving and you are partly responsible, what words of solace can you offer? When you could have done something—anything—and you did nothing, what then can you do? The earth is shaken, and so am I. But do I deserve to grieve? Have I brought this on myself? Have I brought this on him? On us? I have not earned these tears. I do not deserve this catharsis. But what else can I do?

### **Congregational Response**

Look closely at the artwork, "Were You There?" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel?



*From the artist's statement...* In this image, God's river of grace flows out from the cross and spills out before a bereaved Peter. Even in this moment of deep despair, God's abundance rushes to greet him. Peter's nets may feel as empty as the day Jesus crawled into his boat, but we know that an abundant feast—around another charcoal fire—shall soon come.

As the music is played and you contemplate the cross, consider the mercy that was given to us through our Lord, Jesus. We invite you to take the stone that you were given and while holding it, offer silent prayers to God. (If you are online, we invite you to use this time to reflect, meditate, and pray silently.) As each of us departs, we may lay our rocks along with our prayers at the foot of the cross.

*A musical offering will be presented here as people pray.*

**Special Music**

“The Wondrous Cross” (*Helman*)

The King's Ringers

**\*Hymn** “Come Thou Fount” *Sing just the third verse.*

**\*Dismissal**

*Leader 1:* “Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it, prone to leave the God we love.”

Friends, we are more like Peter than we may like to admit. Our Lord has died and we were not there. And so, tonight we grieve with Peter. Our wandering hearts are heavy.

But as you leave this place, remember: your wandering heart is always tethered to the love of God. God's abundant grace existed for Peter and it exists for you. God's love will never run out. So go now in peace, trusting that streams of mercy shall find us all. **Amen.**

*All worshipers depart in silence.*

Liturgy by T. Denise Anderson | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)