

CrossWords: Righteous

March 25, 2026

ETERNAL LOVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

a member congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

FOR OUR GUESTS

Thank you for being here. During your visit today, you will see and hear what we're all about: God's *eternal love* for us through his Son, Jesus Christ! Any directions for speaking or singing, standing or sitting, will be indicated in this folder or projected on the wall in front of you.

Restrooms: are available just outside the chapel doors down the hallway to the left.

Nursery: We encourage families to worship together. If an adult needs to step out of the chapel briefly with a child, the nursery is provided just outside the chapel near the restrooms.

For Kids: Activity sheets for young children are available on the bulletin table. Small bags with quiet activity items hang near the table.

ABOUT OUR LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICES SERIES: CROSSWORDS

These Wednesdays during Lent we will be selecting one word associated with Jesus' saving work for us as he endured the cross for us. We will learn and refresh powerful truths rooted in the good news of our Savior. Tonight, we reflect on *Faith*.

Our catechism explains *Righteousness*: "Sinlessness; moral perfection. God has righteousness and demands righteousness from us. Through faith in Christ, his righteousness is given to us." (p. 384)

ABOUT TONIGHT'S SERVICE

Our worship outline follows a Service of Meditation on Our Christian Calling. We will read and take to heart the Passion History of our Lord, as recorded by Matthew, concluding at the end of chapter 27, tracing our Savior's final steps to the cross and final words from the cross for us. We will share the reading of a penitential psalm, Psalm 143. We will consider a quote from our Lutheran confessions that helps us to appreciate God's gift of righteousness for us.

Pastor Robert Balza serves us as our guest preacher to encourage us in our walk of faith as we consider this CrossWord: Righteousness. Jesus bless your worship this evening!

HYMN

430 Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted sts. 1-3



1 Strick-en, smit-ten, and af-flict-ed, see him dy-ing on the
 2 Tell me, as you hear him groan-ing, was there ev-er grief like
 3 If you think of sin but light-ly nor sup-pose the e-vil



tree! 'Tis the Christ, by man re-ject-ed; yes, my
 his, friends through fear his cause dis-own-ing, foes in-
 great, here you see its na-ture right-ly, here its



soul, 'tis he, 'tis he. 'Tis the long-ex-pect-ed
 sult-ing his dis-tress? Man-y hands were raised to
 guilt may es-ti-mate. Mark the sac-ri-fice ap-



Proph-et, Da-vid's son, yet Da-vid's Lord; proofs I
 wound him, none would in-ter-vene to save; but the
 point-ed, see who bears the aw-ful load; 'tis the



see suf-fi-cient of it: 'tis the true and faith-ful Word.
 deep-est stroke that pierced him was the stroke that jus-tice gave.
 Word, the Lord's a-noint-ed, Son of Man and Son of God.

SERVICE OF MEDITATION ON OUR CHRISTIAN CALLING

In the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

OPENING RESPONSES

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,
for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Galatians 3:26,27

There is one body and one Spirit—
just as you were called to one hope when you were called—

one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4-6

You are the salt of the earth;
you are the light of the world.

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds
and praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16

As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,
especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:10

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17

A PENITENTIAL* PSALM

Psalm 143[†]

A psalm by David.

Prayer for Forgiveness

¹LORD, hear my prayer.

Give ear to my cry for mercy.

In your faithfulness, answer me in your righteousness.

²Do not bring charges against your servant,

because no one living can be righteous before you.

The Problem

³For the enemy pursues my soul.

He crushes my life to the ground.

He makes me dwell in dark places like those long dead,

⁴so my spirit grows faint inside me.

Within me my heart is devastated.

The Reason for Hope

⁵I remember the days of long ago.

I meditate on all your works,

and I consider what your hands have done.

⁶I spread out my hands to you.

My soul thirsts for you like a weary land.

Interlude

The Prayer

⁷Hurry! Answer me, LORD.

My spirit fails.

Do not hide your face from me,

* Each Wednesday evening service in Lent we have been reading one of the seven traditionally categorized *penitential* psalms. They are Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143.

[†] “The penitential portion of this psalm forms only a small part of the whole. Most of the psalm is an appeal for relief from the oppression of enemies.” (EHV Study Bible)

or I will be like those who go down to the pit.

⁸Let me hear about your mercy in the morning,
for I trust in you.

**Teach me the way that I should go,
for I lift up my soul to you.**

⁹Rescue me from my enemies, O LORD,
for I hide myself in you.

¹⁰Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.

May your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

¹¹For the sake of your name, O LORD, preserve my life.
In your righteousness, bring me out of trouble.

¹²In your mercy, wipe out my enemies,
and destroy all who threaten my life,
for I am your servant.

PSALM 143 PRAYER

Merciful God, with souls parched by sin and spirits withered by enemies within and without, we lift our hands to you. Lead us by your Spirit on the path of truth, and guard us from all harm,

trusting in Jesus Christ, our refuge and our righteousness. Amen.

HYMN

430 Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted st. 4



4 Here we have a firm foun - da - tion, here the ref - uge of the



lost: Christ, the rock of our sal - va - tion, is the

name of which we boast; Lamb of God, for sin - ners
wound - ed, sac - ri - fice to can - cel guilt! None shall
ev - er be con - found - ed who on him their hope have built.

PASSION HISTORY READING

Matthew 27:27–66

Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole cohort[‡] of soldiers around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. ²⁹They twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand, knelt in front of him, and mocked him by saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰They spit on him, took the staff, and hit him repeatedly on his head.

The Crucifixion

³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

³²As they were going out of the city, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon. They forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. ³³They came to a place called Golgotha, which means “The place of the skull.” ³⁴They offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵After they had crucified him, they divided his clothing among themselves by casting lots. ³⁶Then they sat down and were keeping watch over him there. ³⁷Above

[‡] A Roman *cohort* was about six hundred soldiers.

his head they posted the written charge against him: “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

³⁸At the same time two criminals were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹People who passed by kept insulting him, shaking their heads, ⁴⁰and saying, “You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, experts in the law, and elders kept mocking him. They said, ⁴²“He saved others, but he cannot save himself. If he’s the King of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now, if he wants him, because he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” ⁴⁴In the same way even the criminals who were crucified with him kept insulting him.

Jesus’ Death

⁴⁵From the sixth hour until the ninth hour,[§] there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**

⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “This fellow is calling for Elijah.”

⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, and soaked it with sour wine. Then he put it on a stick and gave him a drink. ⁴⁹The rest said, “Leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰After Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹Suddenly, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and rocks were split. ⁵²Tombs were opened, and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised to life. ⁵³Those who came out of the tombs went into the holy city after Jesus’ resurrection and appeared to many people. ⁵⁴When the centurion and those who were guarding Jesus with him saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they were terrified and said, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

[§] From noon to 3 pm

** Psalm 22:1

⁵⁵Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and who had served him were there, watching from a distance. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Jesus' Burial

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb that he had cut in the rock. He rolled a large stone over the tomb's entrance and left. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard

⁶²On the next day, which was the day after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered in the presence of Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remembered what that deceiver said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴So give a command that the tomb be made secure until the third day. Otherwise his disciples might steal his body and tell the people, 'He is risen from the dead.' And this last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go, make it as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and posting a guard.



1 Oh, to see the dawn of the dark - est day: Christ on the
 2 Oh, to see the pain writ - ten on your face, bear - ing the
 3 Now the day - light flees; now the ground be - neath quakes as its



road to Cal - va - ry. Tried by sin - ful men,
 awe - some weight of sin. Ev - 'ry bit - ter thought,
 mak - er bows his head. Cur - tain torn in two,



torn and beat - en, then nailed to a cross of wood.
 ev - 'ry e - vil deed crown - ing your blood - stained brow.
 dead are raised to life; "Fin - ished!" the vic - t'ry cry.

Refrain



1-3 This the pow'r of the cross: Christ be -



came sin for us. Took the blame,



bore the wrath; we stand for - giv - en at the cross.

4 Oh, to see my name
 written in the wounds,
 for through your suff'ring I am free.
 Death is crushed to death;
 life is mine to live,
 won through your selfless love!

(Final Refrain)

Final Refrain

This the pow'r of the cross:
 Son of God—slain for us.
 What a love, what a cost!
 We stand forgiven at the cross.

²⁰Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

²¹But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²²This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

CROSSWORD: RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. *We Are Unable to Produce What God Demands*
2. *Jesus Gave to Us What God Required*

STAND

READING FROM OUR LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS^{††}

The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, III, paragraphs 9, 11

We unanimously believe, teach, and confess the following about the righteousness of faith before God... A poor sinful person is justified before God, that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and is adopted into sonship and inheritance of eternal life, without any merit or worth of his own. This happens without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone. His obedience is credited to us for righteousness...

We trust that for the sake of His obedience alone we have the forgiveness of sins by grace, are regarded as godly and righteous by God the Father, and are eternally saved.

BE SEATED

^{††} Read our Lutheran confessions in the Book of Concord, found in our church library or available online here: bookofconcord.cph.org/.

OFFERING

The members of Eternal Love congregation have joined together to do the Lord's work in this city and around the world. Guests need not feel obligated to participate in this offering which supports our church's ministry. If being here today was a blessing to you and you would like to support our ministry, you can scan here and enter your phone number or email address to donate. (Members, please use a phone number or email address that is currently on file with the church).



During this time, we ask that everyone take part in completing the worship register. Please fill in the requested information and pass the booklet to the end of the row. Thank you!

HYMN

568 His Robes for Mine



1 His robes for mine: O won - der - ful ex - change!
2 His robes for mine: what cause have I for dread?
3 His robes for mine: God's jus - tice is ap - peased.
4 His robes for mine: such an - guish none can know.



Clothed in my sin, Christ suf - fered 'neath God's rage.
God's daunt - ing law Christ mas - tered in my stead.
Je - sus is crushed, and thus the Fa - ther's pleased.
Christ, God's be - loved, con - demned as though his foe.

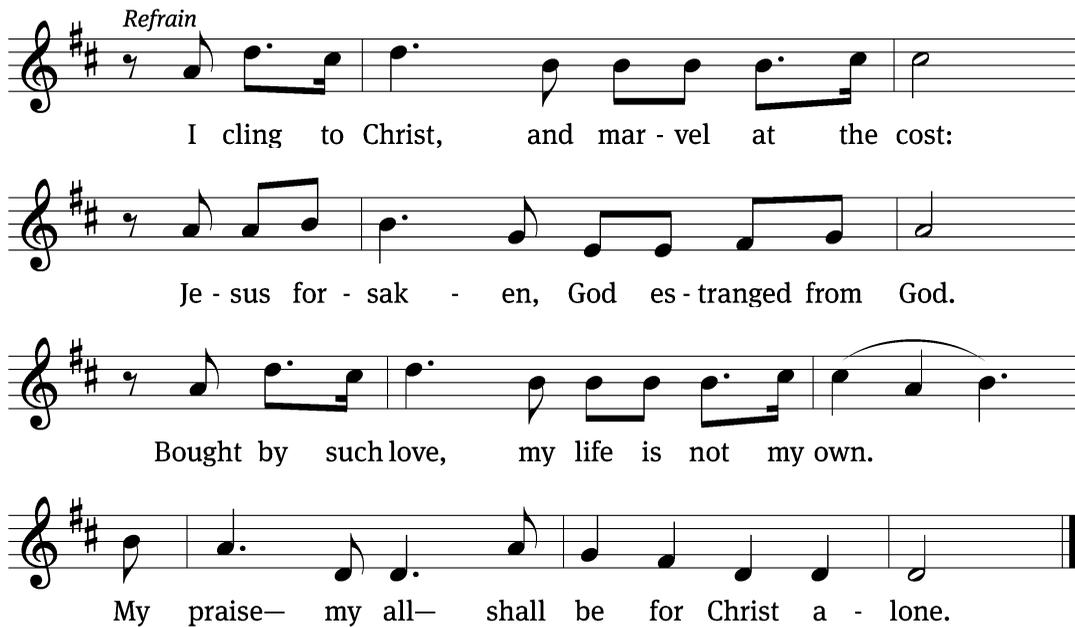


Draped in his right - eous - ness, I'm jus - ti - fied.
Fault - less I stand with right - eous works not mine,
Christ drank God's wrath on sin, then cried, "Tis done!"
He, as though I, ac - cursed and left a - lone;



In Christ I live, for in my place he died.
saved by my Lord's vi - car - ious death and life.
Sin's wage is paid, pro - pi - ti - a - tion won.
I, as though he, em - braced and wel - comed home!

Refrain



I cling to Christ, and mar - vel at the cost:
 Je - sus for - sak - en, God es - tranged from God.
 Bought by such love, my life is not my own.
 My praise— my all— shall be for Christ a - lone.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

2 Corinthians 13:14

And may God, the source of patient endurance and encouragement, grant that you agree with one another in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that with one mind, in one voice, you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Romans 15:5-6)

Amen.

The lights are dimmed for the evening hymn.

HYMN

783 Abide with Me sts. 1, 5, 7



1 A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.
5 I need thy pres - ence ev - 'ry pass - ing hour;
7 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes;



The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.
what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's pow'r?
shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
Who like thy - self my guide and stay can be?
Heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;



help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.
Through cloud and sun - shine, O a - bide with me!
in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Usher: Neil Jeske

Accompanist: Linda Nottling

430 Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted sts. 1–4

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423 The Power of the Cross

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READING FROM OUR LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS- The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, III, paragraphs 9, 11
McCain, P. T., ed. (2005). *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (pp. 537–538). Concordia Publishing House.

568 His Robes for Mine

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783 Abide with Me sts. 1, 5, 7

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Holy Bible

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