

Contributors

Rev. Matthew Brackman
Peace Lutheran Church, Texas City, TX

Rev. Eric Brown
Trinity Lutheran Church, Herscher, IL

Rev. Richard Gizynski
Huntington Wood Lutheran Church
Huntington Woods, MI

Rev. Andy Guagenti
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Bardstown, KY

Rev. A. Daniel Guagenti
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Shelbyville, KY

Rev. Jonathan Mueller
Risen Lord Lutheran Church, Taylorsville, KY
Peace Lutheran Church, Louisville, KY

Rev. Jon Petering
Hope Lutheran Church, Friendswood, TX

Rev. William G. Sabol
Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Winnebago, MN
Saint Peter Lutheran Church, Easton, MN

Rev. Michael Salemink
Executive Director, Lutherans for Life

Rev. Raymond Salemink
Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Mishawaka, IN

Rev. Dr. Richard J. Serina, Jr.
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Ringwood, NJ

Rev. Charles St-Onge
LCMS Office of International Mission
Ascension Lutheran Church, Quebec, Canada

Rev. David Tannahill
Grace Lutheran Church, Vine Grove, KY

Rev. Chris Truelsen
Christ Lutheran Church, Brownsburg, IN

Illustrator

Joni Skellie

Editors

Rev. A. Daniel Guagenti

Alena Guagenti

On My Heart Imprint

Your Image



Lenten Devotions

February 26 -

March 3

On my heart imprint Your image,
Blessed Jesus, King of grace,
That life's riches, cares and pleasures
Never may Your work erase;
Let the clear inscription be:
Jesus crucified for me,
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
And my glory and salvation!

Lutheran Service Book 422

The Torn Temple Veil by Rev. David Tannahill

Palm Branches by Rev. Jon Petering

Purple Vestments by Rev. A. Daniel Guagenti

"The King of the Jews" by Rev. Jon Petering

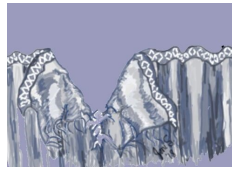
The Majesty of Jerusalem by Rev. Richard Gizynski

The Dipped Morsel by Rev. Eric Brown

February 26

The Torn Temple Veil

Read Matthew 27:51



At the moment that Jesus died on the cross, outside the city walls, something amazing took place in the Temple. It's a detail in the Passion that might easily be missed. The enormous and ornate curtain which separated the main part of the temple from the Holy of Holies—the throne room of God—was ripped open.

Remember how only the high priest could go behind this curtain, and only on the day of atonement, after he had made sacrifices on behalf of himself and the people? This came to an end when Jesus died for you and me on the cross. And here's why Jesus came in the flesh to rescue us. As the writer to the Hebrews explains, "For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people" (Heb 2:17).

On that day Jesus died He served as both priest and sacrifice. "Unlike the other high priests, He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself" (Heb 7:27).

There is no sacrifice that remains to be made. Christ has accomplished your salvation and through faith you stand forgiven. The entrance to the throne room of God now stands open. "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16).

By Rev. David Tannahill

We Pray

Thank You for opening for me the curtain to Your throne of grace. Amen.

March 3

The Dipped Morsel

Read Matthew 26:34



Meals in the ancient world were more intimate than they are now. Now we have our chairs and our napkins and our own plates. We sit apart from each other and tend to our own meals. That wasn't how a feast worked in Jesus' day. The dishes would be prepared and each placed in their own bowl, their own dish. If you wanted a bit of the dish, you would break off a piece of your bread and dip it into the bowl—sort of like chips and dip today. But that's how the whole meal went. You lay on your side by the low table and were close to one another, and you shared your dish with your closest family and friends.

We vilify Judas; Jesus knew him as a friend. A dear friend. A trusted one. Give all the money to Judas, for he is trustworthy. Come and be close to Me, Judas, be next to Me as we eat, for you are dear to Me. It was no stranger who betrayed Jesus; it was His close friend.

Betrayal was nothing new to the LORD. His friend Adam had betrayed Him over a meal long ago. So the LORD became Man, and then He sat at a dinner knowing that He would be betrayed, that this meal would give way to His death. So be it. He would make a new meal, a new testament, so that you, His friend, would be forgiven and live with Him forever. Take and eat, take and drink. Jesus draws close to you and gives you life.

By Rev. Eric Brown

We Pray

Grant us forgiveness, life, and salvation through Your Supper, O Lord. Amen.

March 2

THE MAJESTY OF JERUSALEM

Read Mark 13:1



Jerusalem had always been at the center of Jewish culture and worship. It was the symbol of Israel's belief that the Lord ruled over the earth. For them, kings David and Solomon were the vice-regents, the temporal representatives of God's domain, and even though the nation that was Israel faded away, Jerusalem remained the anchor and image of the people's imperial hopes. Alas, the people's hopes and God's plans were not in sync.

God had established His people to be a light unto the Gentiles, to carry forward the message of His grace and love. But the Old Testament reveals just how far short the Israelites fell in fulfilling their God-given mission. Jesus Himself laments Jerusalem as a symbol for a nation that had forsaken God's commands and promises in pursuit of earthly glory. Thus, the twice destruction of Jerusalem symbolizes God's rejection of the people and a city as a physical focal point for His kingdom.

Although we see the work of Christ closely connected with Jerusalem, the Lord tells us that His kingdom is not of this earth. With His death and resurrection, Jesus inaugurates the kingdom of God, which does have a worldwide imperial destiny, and through Holy Spirit-worked faith in our hearts, we become citizens of that kingdom. We are the new Israel. As the new Israel, we are to be a light unto the world, proclaiming the hope we have in the cross and the empty tomb, the hope that is offered to all people.

Where the old Israel hoped for a renewed Jerusalem, the new Israel puts its hope in a New Jerusalem. Our eternal hope is for a heavenly city, where Christ sits upon the throne. This city will outshine and transcend the glory of its earthly counterpart.

By Rev. Richard Gizynski

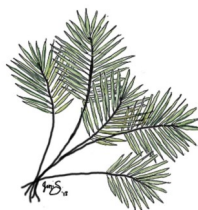
WE PRAY

Dear Lord, we give thanks that Your kingdom is not of this world, but rather is the promise of eternity living with You in heavenly splendor and glory. Amen.

February 27

PAIM BRANCHES

Read John 12:12-13



In ancient times, a path of palm branches was often laid on the road to welcome home a returning king or war hero. When the crowds did so for Jesus, they likely had this in mind. But who is Jesus? Whatever they were thinking, whether they knew it or not, they were laying palm branches for a king of Israel—the true King of Israel.

But He's no ordinary king. He didn't conquer like anyone expected. By the end of the week, He was executed as a criminal, nailed to a cross outside the city He had entered as king. Who conquers like that? The Christ, the Son of God, does! This King dies for His people. He freely gives those who don't deserve it—sinners like you and me—life and forgiveness and salvation through His death and resurrection from the dead. His death gives you the victory.

John, the one who wrote those words in his Gospel account, saw a vision of what that victory will ultimately look like, palm branches included: "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!'" (Rv 7:9-10).

The palms of victory are already yours in your conquering Savior, Jesus Christ.

By Rev. Jon Petering

WE PRAY

Heavenly Father, we can thank and praise You because of our King and conqueror, Jesus. Give us a greater trust in Him. Amen.

February 28

PURPLE VESTMENT

Read Luke 16:19



March 1

"The King of The Jews"

Read John 19:19

Invaluable things find humble uses all the time. A child leaves his napkin folded at the table and wipes his mouth with the sleeve of his Easter jacket. Usually we don't realize the indignity we've given to the treasure.

The church, however, has long appreciated the irony of the King of Kings born in a stable. It happens again and again. The high priest thinks he is politically wise, but is actually doing his true job by sacrificing the Messiah (Jn 11:49-51). Pilate thinks he is putting down the Jews by inscribing "King of the Jews" on the sign that declares the crucified's crime, yet he has declared the truth that the Lord of Lords has a kingdom that transcends earthly law (Jn 18:33-36).

The irony inscribed in the Bible carries on in our liturgy. We burn the palm branches, our political aspirations, to make ashes to remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. To mark a season of humble self-denial, we dress our altar and pulpit in the color of royalty.

It is no accident. Purple was the most expensive hue in the ancient world. It was the color of wealth. We didn't forget. It is as inappropriate for a season of self-denial as the silken sleeve is for cleaning a mouth.

Except that our King Jesus shows the path to His eternal throne was in humbling Himself. Follow me, He says. We follow humbly, but at the end of the path is a crown.

We believe that God lifts up the humbled. We dress the church in purple for Lent to remind ourselves that the humbling is but for a season. God's raising is for eternal life.

By Rev. A. Daniel Guagenti

The Romans would often post a sign on a cross. It would state the crime for which the criminal was crucified—a deterrent for anyone thinking of committing the same crime. According to the Jewish leaders, Jesus' crime was His claim as king. And those leaders didn't like what Pilate wrote. Pilate called Jesus the "King of the Jews" during His trial and let that title stand on the cross. The Jews complained, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said I am the King of the Jews'" (Jn 19:21).

Little did Pilate know the truth he wrote that day. Jesus is the King of the Jews, a son of David. Jesus is also Lord over all creation, sovereign over all things. Whether the Jews liked it or not, whether we like it or not, Jesus is king. But He is a different kind of king. Kings usually don't give up anything for their people. Jesus, the King of the Jews and of creation, gave up everything—even His life—for the sake of His people. He did so to buy His people, you, back from your sin and bring you into His kingdom of everlasting righteousness and life.

Pilate told those who complained, "What I have written I have written" (Jn 19:22). God used a pagan to be His instrument of truth. Pilate's sign proclaimed to the truth to the world. Our task is the same: to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ to the world. How incredible that God would use us sinners to be His instruments of truth!

By Rev. Jon Petering

WE PRAY

Lord Jesus, give us courage to bear our crosses as we follow You. May we ever look in hope to the Resurrection You have promised, that we will also follow You to the crown of life. Amen.

WE PRAY

Jesus Christ, King of Creation, thank you for your sacrifice on the cross. Help us to proclaim your Gospel truth to a world that so needs to hear it. Amen.