

The Lutheran Church of The Redeemer

1515 Boundary Street • Newberry, SC 29108

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Good Friday

April 3, 2026 – 7:00 pm

A warm welcome to The Lutheran Church of The Redeemer!

“Godforsaken.” From a Biblical point of view, the very word should be impossible – oxymoronic even. If God is omnipresent, everywhere, how can any place or any person be Godforsaken? King David, when he considers fleeing from the presence of God in Psalm 139, cries out “If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost part of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand hold me fast.” But then...Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? Saint Matthew and Saint Mark tell us that Jesus of Nazareth dies with those words on his lips. The words are not Hebrew but Aramaic, the language spoken daily by ordinary people in first-century Palestine. They are taken from the beginning of Psalm 22, and they are traditionally rendered “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” How can this be? On the Cross, the Incarnate Son of God enters a place that was truly Godforsaken. As he hangs upon the tree, the Everlasting Word of the Father speaks a cry of dereliction. Jesus does the very thing that should have been impossible: he flees from the presence of the Father. He becomes Godforsaken. Language struggles adequately to express the awful truth. Saint Paul gets closest when he tells the Corinthian Christians that, in Christ’s death on the Cross, “For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” In obedience to the will of the Father, the sinless Son enters that place we dread to contemplate: the eternal Godforsakenness of Sin. The Author of Life meekly accepts Sin’s due penalty, which is Death. The Lord of Love boldly crosses the threshold into the only truly Godforsaken place, which is the soul that has become Sin, utterly turned in on itself. And there, in that terrible cell properly called Hell, where the door is locked fast from the inside, Jesus endures absolute Godforsakenness. “For our sake.” All this he does for my sake, and for yours. All this he does so that no place in all the cosmos – even the hardened hearts of sinful human beings – can ever be truly Godforsaken. He does this so that the places we attempt to make Godforsaken through our pride, our sloth, our wrath, our envy, our greed, our lust, our gluttony will yet be touched by his presence and transformed by his love. He becomes Godforsaken for our sake, and declares over the shattered gates of hell that the reign of Godforsakenness is defeated eternally. May we today kneel in awe and wonder before that Godforsaken instrument, the Cross, and revere the One who became weak enough, and therefore strong enough, to bear it – for our sake!

The Lutheran Church of The Redeemer is a Christian community of diverse people called and guided by the Holy Spirit to nurture with God’s love those within and beyond our congregation.

A place where God is at work! All are welcome. No exceptions.

..... † **GATHERING** †

The assembly gathers in silence.

<We stand.>

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Jesus our Passover Lamb,

We give thanks for the unswerving love you showed in your death and burial. Forgive and strengthen us so that we can rise with you, restored by your grace. Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

..... † **WORD** †

<We sit.>

READING

Psalm 31:9-18

Pew Bible page 439

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away. I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. For I hear the whispering of many – terror all around! – as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. Do not let me be put to shame, O Lord, for I call on you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go dumbfounded to Sheol. Let the lying lips be stilled that speak insolently against the righteous with pride and contempt.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

<We stand.>

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John 19:31-42

Pew Bible page 882

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then 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. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth, so that you also may continue to believe.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.” And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

<At the conclusion of the reading>

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

<We sit.>

SERMON

Rev. Matthew Titus

<We stand.>

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

ELW Hymn 351

BIDDING PRAYER

This is a more formal prayer that we participate in as a community on Good Friday.

<We kneel.>

Each prayer petition will end with "We ask this through Christ our Lord," and the response is "Amen."

Pastor Matt will conclude the prayers with "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.

<We sit.>

SPECIAL MUSIC

God So Loved the World

John Stainer

The Crucifixion

<We stand.>

PROCESSION OF THE CROSS

The assembly stands and faces the cross as it is brought forward.

The following is repeated three times:

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

Oh, come, let us worship him.

During this time, or at the end of the service, worshipers may come to the large cross to make a sign of reverence. Reverencing the cross may include actions such as pausing before the cross, bowing, kneeling before it for prayer, or touching it.

<We kneel.>

SOLEMN REPROACHES

A litany of Jesus' lament for Good Friday.

Each reproach will end with "but you have prepared a cross for your Savior."

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

The Solemn Reproaches conclude as Pastor Matt says "We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you."

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

<We stand.>

WE GLORY IN YOUR CROSS

**We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.**

May God be merciful and bless us; may the light of God's face shine upon us.
Let your way be known upon the earth, your saving health among all nations.

**We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.**

Let the people praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

May God give us blessing, and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

**We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.**

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Christ We Do All Adore Thee
The Seven Last Words

Théodore Dubois

*All depart in silence.
If you have not done so,
you may reverence the cross before departing*

You are invited to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord this
Sunday, April 5 at 7:00 am or 10:30 am

The Rev. Matthew Titus, Pastor · Haley McBride-Stuhr, Office Assistant & Bookkeeper
Dr. Huger Caughman, Jr., Organist · Nicholas Todd Shumate, Choir Director
A/V Team: Annette Belcher, Wayden Caughman, Nikki Chapman, and Matt Bowers

We're grateful you've joined us in worship during this holy season. If you would like to support the ongoing ministry and life of this congregation, you can do so by scanning the QR code below. May God's blessings be with you today and always.



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Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

