



**Mission of the Cross
Lutheran Church-
LCMS**

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Mission of the Cross Lutheran Church is a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) serving people in the Brainerd Lakes area of Minnesota. We are a confessional and liturgical congregation called, gathered, and strengthened by Christ's Word and Sacraments. We are Biblical in doctrine and observe the historic liturgy of the Western Church which is notable for its dignity and reverence.



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The Omission of the Gloria Patri During Passiontide
Judica, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, is also called Passion Sunday. Passion Week extends to the eve of Palm Sunday. However, the term Passiontide refers to both Passion Week and Holy Week. Passiontide includes a shift in the Church's preparation to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. In Pre-Lent or Gesimatide, the Church hears about three aspects of God's grace. The first four weeks of Lententide emphasize catechesis and personal preparation. The beginning of Passiontide is the last stage of Lent. It intensifies everything as the Church contemplates our Lord's last hours and suffering for our sins. In Passiontide, the more commonly known ceremonies of Lent continue (e.g. omission of the alleluias and Gloria in Excelsis), but additional ceremonies are added.

One such ceremony is the omission of the Gloria Patri ("Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever."). The Gloria Patri is a standard feature for praying the psalms (e.g. the introit of the Divine Service) and it won't be heard again throughout Passiontide.

Rev. Dr. David Petersen is one the foremost liturgical scholars of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He wrote about the omission of the Gloria Patri on the Gottesdienst Blog several years ago: "The triune name that has been given to us at the end of St. Matthew's Gospel is the fullest revelation of God's name and His most personal name. It outranks the Tetragrammaton (transliterated Yahweh or translated I AM) given to Moses from the burning bush and all other names. To take away the Gloria Patri for two weeks is a bit jarring, but again it helps us remember that the use of God's triune name is a privilege not to be taken for granted."

Rev. Dr. Petersen also notes that it isn't clear from the rubrics (instructions for liturgical rites about what to say and do) whether the omission of the Gloria Patri should be applied to the Nunc Dimittis since its fixed position in the liturgy came somewhat later than the omission of the Gloria Patri. It is especially noticeable and awkward to not sing the Gloria Patri in the Nunc Dimittis and for that reason he suggests it ought to be done. It makes the omission of the Gloria Patri more noticeable, so that we might remember why it is omitted. This has been my practice and I usually ask the organist to slow down at the words "and the glory of Thy people Israel." This gives the congregation an audible reminder to not sing the Gloria Patri and helps bring the Nunc Dimittis to a comfortable conclusion. In our case, we don't have a live organist and it isn't possible to slow the music down and stop in a place besides the end, so we will substitute Luther's paraphrase of the Nunc Dimittis (LSB 938). It doesn't include the Gloria Patri and allows us to omit it without a very abrupt end to the Nunc Dimittis.

The Veiling of Crosses During Passiontide

Traditionally, crosses and crucifixes are veiled during Passiontide. It is strange, but again Rev. Dr. Petersen gives good insight into the practice:

“The ancient thought is that we do not deserve to look upon the crosses because we are not worthy of the sacrifice that Jesus has made for us there. The cross is our greatest and most cherished symbol. To partially remove it then, even if only for a short time, heightens how much we need it. This jarring ceremony also helps us to better appreciate it when it returns.

The crosses, however, are not taken away completely. They are not removed from the sanctuary. That would be inappropriate in any season, for apart from what our Lord has done for us on the cross we have no way to enter into God’s presence and not be destroyed. The crosses then are only covered. It is best to use gauzy black material, that which is actually used for veils, rather than solid woven cloth. The gauzy material allows the outlines of the crosses to still be visible, while taking away some of the details and dulling the shine of brass, gold, and silver parts. This material also calls to mind mourning, and it symbolizes that our grief prevents us from seeing clearly until the Good Friday liturgy and, of course, Easter. Faith, after all, always views the cross in the light of the empty tomb.

The veiling also reminds us of our Lord’s actions in response to the violence of the people as recorded in the Judica Gospel (St. John 8:42-59). There we read: “They picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself” (v. 59 ESV). It is ideal if the crosses and statues in the sanctuary are veiled during the service, after the reading of the Gospel, and not before. While it may not be possible for every cross in the church to be veiled during the service, having acolytes ready to veil those that can be during the Creed will help make the connection to the Gospel.”

In our case, we have a very large crucifix in our sanctuary and there isn’t a good way to veil it during the service. Thus, I suggest that when we do veil the crosses and crucifixes on Judica Sunday, that we veil the large crucifix before the service and the rest during the service.

The Passion of our Lord

Traditionally, each account of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is read on a different day at services during Holy Week. There has been some renewed interest in restoring these services in some Lutheran congregations and that has proven to be a great blessing to the Christians in them. We haven’t done so this year, but perhaps we can still read them in our homes on the days they are assigned. The Passion from St. Matthew (26:1-27:66) is assigned for Palm Sunday. The Passion from St. Mark (14:1—15:47) is assigned for Holy Tuesday. The Passion from St. Luke (22:1—23:56) is assigned for Holy Wednesday. The Passion from St. John (18:1—19:42), of course, is assigned for Good Friday.

Tenebrae Vespers

This year we will be adding Tenebrae Vespers to our observance of Good Friday. This service along with the Easter Vigil (see below) are often among the favorites of those who attend them. These services not only give us more opportunities to pray and hear God’s Word, but also give us more of the Church’s traditional observance of Holy Week. This means there will be two services in our parish on Good Friday, but you don’t have to choose which one to attend. The services are different from each other with very little overlap, except for maybe a hymn or two. If you need transportation, please let one of the elders know and we will try to accommodate you.

The Chief Service which was formerly celebrated in the evening in our parish will be celebrated at noon. The LSB Altar Book in accord with the Church’s best tradition suggests that it be held during the hours that Christ hung on the cross: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. If you are only able to attend one of the services, please come to this one since it is appropriately called the Chief Service and includes the reading of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, preaching, and the Lord’s Supper.

Tenebrae Vespers will be observed at 6:00 p.m. on Good Friday. Tenebrae is Latin for “darkness.” The liturgy is very solemn and reverent. It was originally prayed on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week, but in more recent times it has only been prayed on Good Friday. It usually has 15 candles with one being extinguished after each of 14 psalms.

Traditionally the service began with three nocturns each consisting of three psalms, a short versicle and response, the silent praying of the Lord’s Prayer, and three readings, each followed by a responsory. The second portion of the liturgy included five more psalms, a short versicle and response, the Benedictus, the silent praying of the Lord’s Prayer, and a final collect.

We might eventually pray Tenebrae Vespers in a fuller manner described above, but this year we will make some adjustments. We will omit much of the second portion described above, most notably the additional psalms and add some hymns. We will speak everything including the Lord’s Prayer, psalms, etc., except for singing the hymns. The service will conclude with the Great Litany and a final collect.

The Great Easter Vigil

The Great Vigil of Easter will be celebrated at 6:00 p.m. on the evening before Easter. It is an ancient liturgy that moves the Church from Lent and Passiontide to the celebration of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead. The Divine Service traditionally has two services: the Service of the Word and the Service of the Sacrament. In more recent times, the Service of Preparation or the Confession of Sins has been added. The Great Vigil of Easter isn’t intended to be short. It includes six services: the Service of Light, The Service of Readings, the Service of Holy Baptism, the Service of Prayer, the Service of the Word, and the Service of the Sacrament.

There isn’t space here to go into detail about each of the services, but perhaps a little explanation will whet your appetite and encourage you to attend. Whereas Tenebrae Vespers is about darkness surrounding the death of Christ, the Easter Vigil is about light on account of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead. One part of the Service of Light includes the pastor chanting three times, “The Light of Christ” and the congregation responding, “Thanks be to God.”

The Service of the Readings is the longest portion of the Vigil. It includes 12 readings recalling the Lord’s mighty works and the salvation of his people. Each reading is also followed by a collect and psalm or canticle. There is also an abridged version of this that includes only four readings. This year we will use the shorter version; we may use all the readings at some point in the future.

Next comes the Service of Holy Baptism. Traditionally, adult converts would be catechized and prepared to be baptized at the Vigil. Most congregations don’t do that today, but this portion is retained as an annual remembrance of Holy Baptism. The Service of Prayer is the Great Litany. The Service of the Word includes the first alleluias as well as the return of the Gloria in Excelsis. These are followed by the Gospel lesson and a brief sermon. Finally, the Great Easter Vigil concludes with the administration of the Lord’s Supper, and all hearts depart with great joy and anticipation for the Great Feast of Easter the next morning.

Schedule of Divine Liturgies in March

March 3rd	Oculi, the Third Sunday in Lent	9:30 a.m.	Divine Service
March 6th	Wednesday of Oculi	6:00 p.m.	Vespers
March 10th	Laetare, the Fourth Sunday in Lent	9:30 p.m.	Divine Service
March 13th	Wednesday of Laetare	6:00 p.m.	Vespers
March 17th	Judica, the Fifth Sunday in Lent	9:30 a.m.	Divine Service
March 20th	Wednesday of Judica	6:00 p.m.	Vespers
March 24th	Palmarum, the Sixth Sunday in Lent	9:30 a.m.	Divine Service
March 28th	Maundy Thursday	6:00 p.m.	Divine Service
March 29th	Good Friday	12:00 p.m.	Divine Service
March 29th	Good Friday	6:00 p.m.	Vespers
March 30th	Great Vigil of Easter	6:00 p.m.	Divine Service
March 31st	Resurrection of our Lord	9:30 a.m.	Divine Service

Birthdays, Baptisms, Confirmations, and Anniversaries

March 1st	Bobbi Blake	Baptism
March 7th	John Porter	Baptism
March 8th	Stephanie Traphagan	Baptism
March 10th	Russ and Judy Hansen	Anniversary
March 11th	Alyssa Blake	Baptism
March 17th	Tim and Patricia Berg	Anniversary
March 18th	Grace Werner	Confirmation
March 27th	Abraham Blake	Birthday
March 29th	Chloe Bosaaen	Baptism

35 for 35 Campaign

Our congregation has decided to repair the parking lot, and purchase new paraments, vestments, banners, communion vessels, a paschal candle, and processional crucifix ahead of the celebration of the 35th anniversary of Mission of the Cross Lutheran Church in September. Due to your generosity we have already received \$22,500 toward our goal of \$35,000.