

# WITNESSES TO CHRIST



Lenten Vespers

April 23, 2022

St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
Pastor Kirk Peters

## Pontius Pilate

Pontius Pilate, a witness to Christ, consented to order Jesus' execution. Pilate may wash his hands and proclaim his own innocence in the death of Jesus, but Pilate is guilty. Pilate is caught between a rock and a hard place. Instead of doing what is right, Pilate has Jesus' flesh ripped, shredded, dressed in purple, and crowned with thorns. His hard heart is complicit in the death of Christ. While it may be an uncomfortable thought, Pilate's failures make us examine our own complicity in the evil of others. How have we deceived ourselves in proclaiming innocence? How have we been pressured into allowing evil to occur? Thanks be to God that our journey to the cross shows us Jesus' forgiveness.

### Opening Sentences

**P** O Lord, open my lips,

**C** and my mouth will declare Your praise.

**P** Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

**C** make haste to help me, O Lord.

**C** **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. Amen.**

**Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.**

## Psalmody

- P** Help me, O LORD my God!
- C** **Save me according to Your steadfast love!**
- P** Be not silent, O God of my praise!
- C** **For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues.**
- P** They encircle me with words of hate,
- C** **and attack me without cause.**
- P** In return for my love they accuse me,
- C** **but I give myself to prayer.**
- P** So they reward me evil for good,
- C** **and hatred for my love.**
- P** Appoint a wicked man against him;
- C** **let an accuser stand at his right hand.**
- P** When he is tried, let him come forth guilty;
- C** **let his prayer be counted as sin!**
- P** May this be the reward of my accusers from the LORD,
- C** **of those who speak evil against my life!**
- P** But You, O GOD my Lord, deal on my behalf for Your name's sake;
- C** **because Your steadfast love is good, deliver me!**
- P** For I am poor and needy,
- C** **and my heart is stricken within me.**
- P** I am gone like a shadow at evening;
- C** **I am shaken off like a locust.**
- P** My knees are weak through fasting;
- C** **my body has become gaunt, with no fat.**
- P** I am an object of scorn to my accusers;
- C** **when they see me, they wag their heads.**
- P** Help me, O LORD my God!

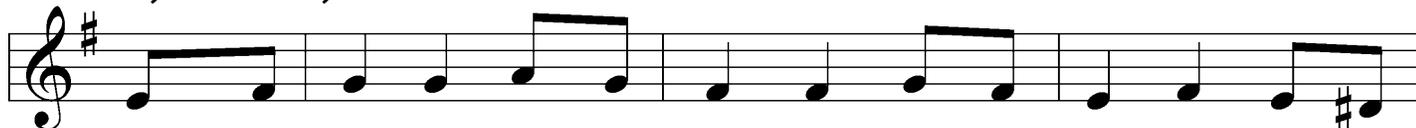
- C** Save me according to Your steadfast love!
- P** Let them know that this is Your hand;
- C** You, O LORD, have done it!
- P** Let them curse, but You will bless!
- C** They arise and are put to shame, but Your servant will be glad!
- P** May my accusers be clothed with dishonor;
- C** may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a cloak!
- P** With my mouth I will give great thanks to the Lord;
- C** I will praise Him in the midst of the throng.
- P** For He stands at the right hand of the needy,
- C** to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.
- 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. Amen.**
- P** Help me, O LORD my God!
- C** Save me according to Your steadfast love!

*Silence for reflection*

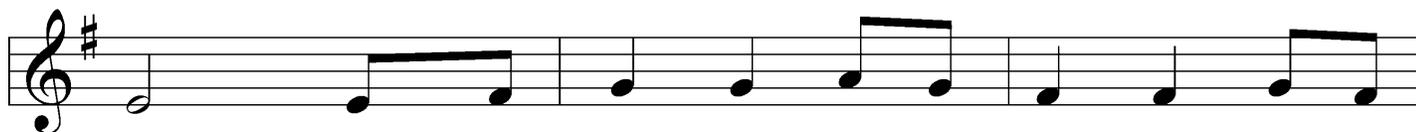
#### Psalm Prayer

- P** O God of steadfast love and mercy, on the cross Your Son forgave His enemies. Turn our hearts from hatred and evil that we may forgive the offenses of those who seek our harm and forgive as we have been forgiven. Rescue us in our time of peril and deliver us from bitterness and resentment; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
- C** Amen.

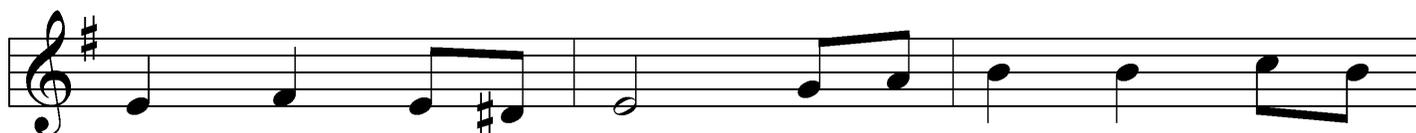
# 451 Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted



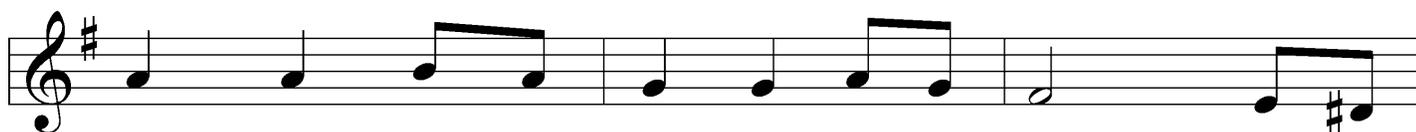
1 Strick-en, smit-ten, and af - flict - ed, See Him dy - ing on the  
 2 Tell me, ye who hear Him groan-ing, Was there ev - er grief like  
 3 Ye who think of sin but light - ly Nor sup - pose the e - vil  
 4 Here we have a firm foun - da - tion, Here the ref - uge of the



tree! 'Tis the Christ, by man re - ject - ed; Yes, my  
 His? Friends through fear His cause dis - own - ing, Foes in -  
 great Here may view its na - ture right - ly, Here its  
 lost: Christ, the Rock of our sal - va - tion, Is the



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 -  
 name of which we boast; Lamb of God, for sin - ners



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  
 wound - ed, Sac - ri - fice to can - cel guilt! None shall



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.  
 ev - er be con - found - ed Who on Him their hope have built.

## Readings

Reading

*Ezekiel 11:17–21*

**P** A reading from Ezekiel, the eleventh chapter.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.’ <sup>18</sup>And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. <sup>19</sup>And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, <sup>20</sup>that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. <sup>21</sup>But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord GOD.”

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

Reading

*2 Corinthians 4:1–6*

**P** A reading from Second Corinthians, the fourth chapter.

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. <sup>3</sup>And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the

gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

## Reading

*John 19:1–16*

**P** A reading from St. John, the nineteenth chapter.

<sup>1</sup>Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. <sup>2</sup>And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup>They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. <sup>4</sup>Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." <sup>5</sup>So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" <sup>6</sup>When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." <sup>7</sup>The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." <sup>8</sup>When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. <sup>9</sup>He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" <sup>11</sup>Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it

had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

<sup>12</sup>From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” <sup>13</sup>So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha.

<sup>14</sup>Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” <sup>15</sup>They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” <sup>16</sup>So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus,

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

#### Lent Responsory

**P** Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

**C** **Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

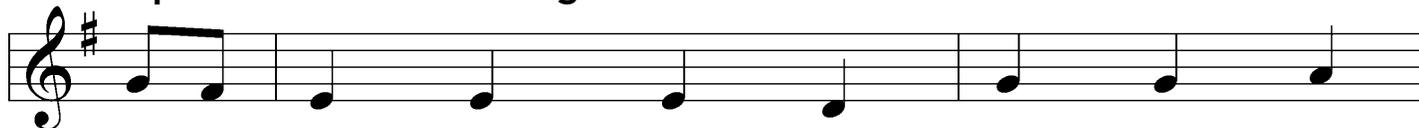
**P** In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O Lord, my God.

**C** **Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

**P** Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

**C** **Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

# 444 No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet



1 No tramp of soldiers' march - ing feet  
 2 And yet He comes. The chil - dren cheer;  
 3 What fad - ing flow'rs His road a - dorn;  
 4 Now He who bore for mor - tals' sake



With ban - ners and with drums, No sound of mu - sic's  
 With palms His path is strown. With ev - 'ry step the  
 The palms, how soon laid down! No bloom or leaf but  
 The cross and all its pains And chose a ser - vant's



mar - tial beat: "The King of glo - ry comes!"  
 cross draws near: The King of glo - ry's throne.  
 on - ly thorn The King of glo - ry's crown.  
 form to take, The King of glo - ry reigns.



To greet what pomp of king - ly pride  
 A - stride a colt He pass - es by  
 The sol - diers mock, the rab - ble cries,  
 Ho - san - na to the Sav - ior's name



No bells in tri - umph ring, No cit - y gates swing  
 As loud ho - san - nas ring, Or else the ver - y  
 The streets with tu - mult ring, As Pi - late to the  
 Till heav - en's raf - ters ring, And all the ran - somed



o - pen wide: "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"  
 stones would cry "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"  
 mob re - plies, "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"  
 host pro - claim "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"

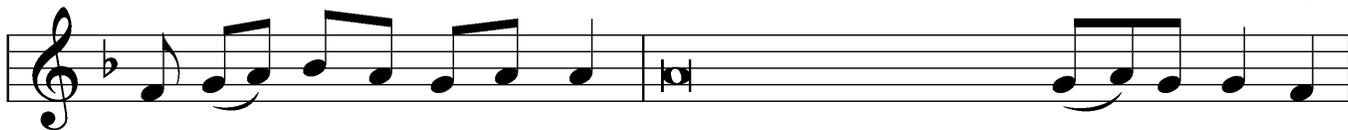
# Canticle

## Antiphon

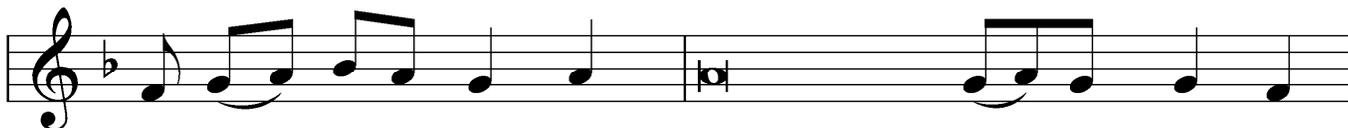
**P** Let my prayer rise before You as incense,  
**C** and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

## Magnificat

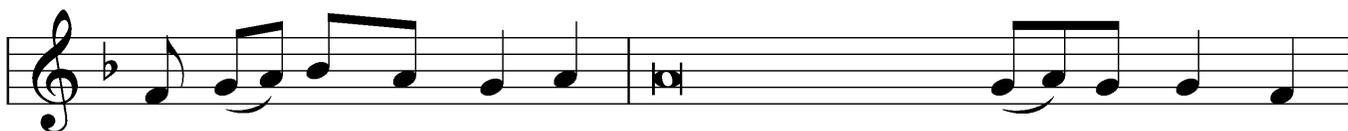
LSB 231



**C** My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Sav-ior;



**I** for He has re-gard - ed the lowliness of His hand-maid - en.



**II** For be-hold, from this day all generations will call me bless - ed.



**I** For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;



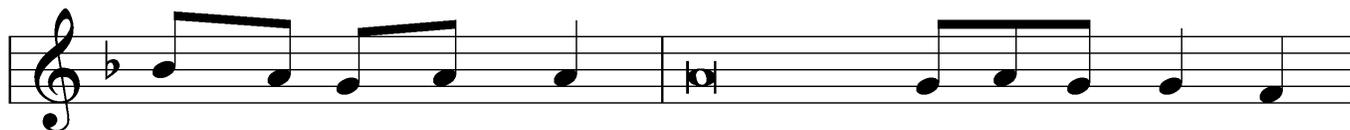
**II** and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to gen - er - a - tion.



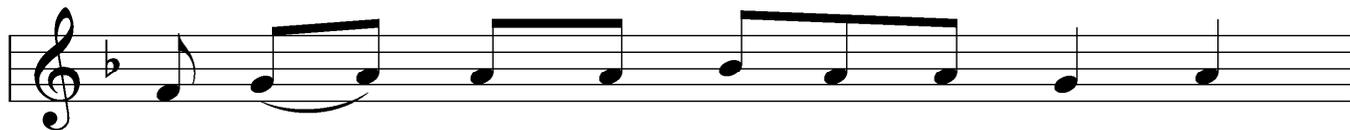
**I** He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the



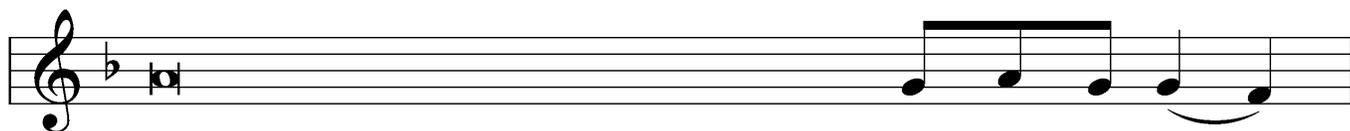
imagination of their hearts. **II** He has cast down the



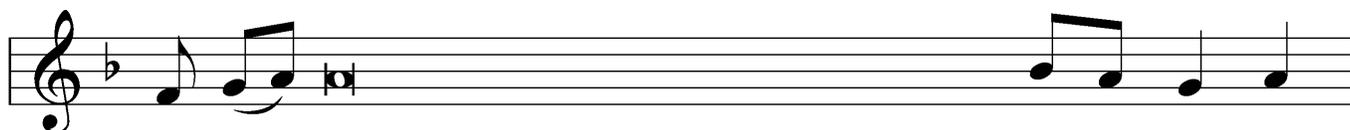
might-y from their thrones and has ex - alt - ed the low - ly.



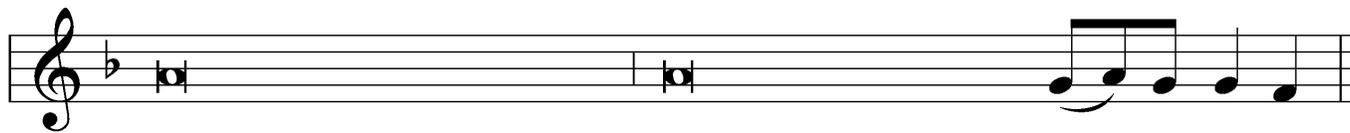
**I** He has filled the hun - gry with good things,



and the rich He has sent emp - ty a - way.



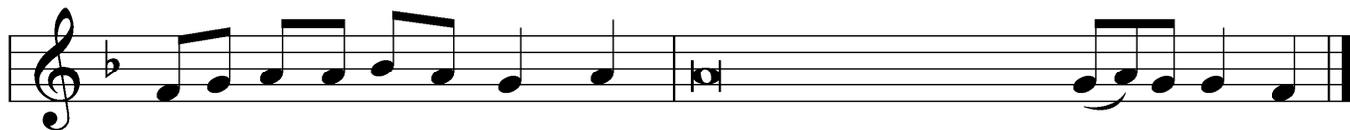
**II** He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mer - cy



as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for - ev - er.



**C** Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther and to the Son and to the Ho - ly Spir - it;



as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men.

## Offering

~ ~ drop your offering in the box in the narthex, mail it, use the link on the church website or the GivePlus app. ~ ~

## 704 Renew Me, O Eternal Light



1 Re - new me, O e - ter - nal Light, And let my  
2 Re - move the pow'r of sin from me And cleanse all  
3 Cre - ate in me a new heart, Lord, That glad - ly  
4 Grant that I on - ly You may love And seek those



heart and soul be bright, Il - lu - mined with the  
my im - pu - ri - ty That I may have the  
I o - bey Your Word. Let what You will be  
things which are a - bove Till I be - hold You



light of grace That is - sues from Your ho - ly face.  
strength and will Temp - ta - tions of the flesh to still.  
my de - sire, And with new life my soul in - spire.  
face to face, O Light e - ter - nal, through Your grace.

Text: Johann Friedrich Ruopp, 1672-1708; tr. August Cruik, 1845-1923, alt.  
Tune: As hymnodus sacer, 1625, Leipzig  
Text and tune: Public domain

## Prayer

Kyrie

LSB 233



**C** Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.

Lord's Prayer

**C** 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.

## Collects

**P** O Lord, hear my prayer.

**C** **And let my cry come to You.**

**P** O Lord God, by the example of Your blessed Son, grant us grace to accept patiently the suffering of this present time. Until we receive the full revelation of Your glory and full relief from all our afflictions, sustain us by Your healing grace through every trial. Hear us [*especially for . . . and*] for all in need; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

**P** Lord Jesus, though ruthless Pontius Pilate declared Your innocence before the crowds, You who knew no sin became sin for us. Grant that the shame You bore for us on the cross give us the greatest honor so that we might always see that only in suffering can we behold who You truly are, our glorious King and Savior; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

**P** O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

Benedicamus

**P** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

Benediction

**P** The grace of our Lord ✠ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C** Amen.

956 Create in Me

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new  
a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way  
from Thy pres - ence; and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it  
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va - tion;  
and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new". The second staff continues: "a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way". The third staff: "from Thy pres - ence; and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it". The fourth staff: "from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va - tion;". The fifth staff: "and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men." The score ends with a double bar line.

Text: Psalm 51:10-12  
Tune: Johann Georg Winer, 1583-1651, adapt.  
Text and tune: Public domain

**Acknowledgments**

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