



# GOD ON TRIAL

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*Testimony*



Salem Lutheran

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**Welcome!** Thank you for joining us for worship today. In our services we gather before our almighty God to receive his gifts and to offer him our worship and praise. Through God's powerful Word and sacraments he renews our faith and strengthens us to serve in joy.

**SERIES THEME:** Our midweek Lent series theme is ***God on Trial***. The unbelieving world has always insisted on putting God on trial. As our society becomes more secular, we Christians are increasingly aware of the many ways in which God—and his people—are judged. Temptations are many in this environment: treating unbelievers as enemies, retreating from the world, even questioning God ourselves. How do we live as people of God in this hostile world? We find our model—and our motivation—in Jesus. This series takes us back to the moments when God was literally on trial before men in the person of Christ. In these inspired episodes, we find forgiveness for us and all people, love for our enemies, strength for our faith, and courage to testify to the truth.

**TONIGHT'S FOCUS:** Contrast Jesus inside and Peter outside. Jesus was respectful, yet he boldly confessed the truth about who he is; Peter fell all over himself to avoid having to make such a confession. We weep at our failures yet rejoice in Jesus' perfect witness in our place.

Tonight we welcome retired Pastor Bob Edwards as our guest preacher. Pastor Edwards is assisting with the vacancy at our sister church, Christ Lutheran, in North St. Paul and Hugo.

***SERVING GOD, SERVING US:***

Preacher: Pastor Bob Edwards

Organ: Robyn Stoller

# Order of Worship



## **Preservice Music & Words of Welcome**

*Please remain seated.*

M: The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night, and peace at the last.

**C: Amen.**

M: It is good to give thanks to the Lord,

**C: To sing praise to your name, O Most High;**

M: To herald your love in the morning,

**C: Your truth at the close of day.**

M: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

**C: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.**

## **CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS OF SINS**

M: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C: Who made heaven and earth.**

M: Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**C: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven,  
And to you, my brothers and sisters,  
That I have sinned in thought, word, and deed.**

**By my fault,**

**By my own fault,**

**By my own grievous fault.**

**For this I pray to God Almighty to have mercy on me.**

**Forgive all my sins,**

**And bring me to everlasting life.**

M: By the mercy of God we are redeemed by Jesus Christ, and in him we are forgiven. Let us rest in his peace until the rising of the sun when we shall serve him in newness of life.

**C: Amen.**



1 Be - fore you, God, the judge of all, with grief and shame I  
 2 O Lord, my God, to you I pray: O cast me not in  
 3 O Je - sus, let your pre - cious blood be to my soul a



hum - bly fall. I see my sins a - gainst you, Lord,  
 wrath a - way! Let your good Spir - it ne'er de - part,  
 cleans - ing flood. Turn not, O Lord, your guest a - way,



my sins of thought and deed and word. They press me  
 but let him draw to you my heart that tru - ly  
 but grant that jus - ti - fied I may go to my



sore; to you I flee: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!  
 pen - i - tent I be: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!  
 house at peace to be: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!

## THE PASSION HISTORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

### Part #4— *On Trial Before Pilate*

**PASTOR:** The Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace. They wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" They replied,

**CONGREGATION:** "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

**PASTOR:** Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews objected,

**CONGREGATION:** "But we have no right to execute anyone."

**PASTOR:** This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled. Then the chief priests and elders began to accuse him, saying,

**CONGREGATION:** "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."

**PASTOR:** Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus asked, "Is that your idea, or did others talk to you about me?"

Pilate replied, "Am I a Jew? It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out to the Jews, and announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." The Jews insisted,

**CONGREGATION:** "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

**PASTOR:** When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

**PASTOR:** From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free. But the Jews insisted,

**CONGREGATION:** "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

**PASTOR:** On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him perform some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate.

**CONGREGATION: That day Herod and Pilate became friends - before this they had been enemies.**

**PASTOR:** Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. As you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."

**MEN: Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas.**

**PASTOR:** So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "It is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Which one do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message:

**WOMEN: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."**

**PASTOR:** But the chief priests and the elders stirred up the crowd and persuaded them to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

(Verses compiled from the New International Version)

*After the reading, the congregation joins in the seasonal response...*

**C: All we, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. By his wounds, we are healed.**

## Hymn of the Day: In the Hour of Trial

CW 406



1 In the hour of tri - al, Je - sus, plead for me  
2 With for - bid - den plea - sures should this vain world charm  
3 Should your mer - cy send me sor - row, toil, and woe,  
4 When my life is end - ing, though in grief or pain,



lest by base de - ni - al I un - wor - thy be.  
or its tempt - ing trea - sures spread to work me harm,  
or should pain at - tend me on my path be - low,  
when my bod - y chang - es back to dust a - gain,



When you see me wa - ver, with a look re - call,  
bring to my re - mem - brance sad Geth - sem - a - ne  
grant that I may nev - er fail your cross to view;  
on your truth re - ly - ing, through that mor - tal strife,



nor for fear or fa - vor ev - er let me fall.  
or, in dark - er sem - blance, cross - crowned Cal - va - ry.  
grant that I may ev - er cast my care on you.  
Je - sus, take me, dy - ing, to e - ter - nal life.

## Sermon Text

Matthew 26:57-75

<sup>57</sup>Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. <sup>58</sup>But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

<sup>59</sup>The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. <sup>60</sup>But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward <sup>61</sup>and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' "

<sup>62</sup>Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?"

<sup>63</sup>But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

<sup>64</sup>“You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

<sup>65</sup>Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. <sup>66</sup>What do you think?”

“He is worthy of death,” they answered. <sup>67</sup>Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him <sup>68</sup>and said, “Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?”

<sup>69</sup>Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said. <sup>70</sup>But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.

<sup>71</sup>Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

<sup>72</sup>He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”

<sup>73</sup>After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.”

<sup>74</sup>Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. <sup>75</sup>Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

### *“God on Trial: Testimony”*

*Please remain seated after the sermon.*

## Offering



Our members give offerings to support God’s work in our church. Offerings can be put in the basket or made online by scanning the code. Visitors may give, but aren’t expected to.



We ask members and visitors alike to fill out the connection card and place it in the basket now or as you leave. Please share your prayer requests that we can pray for you.



## Prayer of the Church

### 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

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

C: Amen.

## Closing Hymn: Let Me Be Yours Forever

CW 715



1 Let me be yours for - ev - er, my faith - ful God and Lord;  
2 Lord Je - sus, my sal - va - tion, my light, my life di - vine,  
3 O gra - cious Ho - ly Spir - it, my com - fort - er and guide,



let me for-sake you nev - er nor wan - der from your Word.  
my on - ly con - so - la - tion, to you I all re - sign,  
grant that in Je - sus' mer - it I al - ways may con - fide,



Lord, do not let me wa - ver but give me stead-fast-ness, and  
for you have dear-ly bought me with blood and bit - ter pain. Let  
him to the end con - fess - ing whom I have known by faith. Give



for such grace and fa - vor your ho - ly name I'll bless.  
me, since you have sought me, e - ter - nal life ob - tain.  
me your con - stant bless - ing and grant a Chris - tian death.

## Silent Prayer and Announcements

### Acknowledgments

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# LENTEN WORSHIP AT SALEM



**Midweek Lenten Service** 4:00 pm and 6:30 pm, meal between  
March 20 Pastor Mark Wessel—Christ, North St. Paul  
(Call meeting for associate pastor at 5pm.)

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## HOLY WEEK



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Palm Sunday Weekend (March 23/24)** Regular Worship schedule

**Maundy Thursday (March 28)** 6:30 pm Worship with Communion

### **Good Friday (March 29)**

10:00 am Good Friday Worship  
6:30 pm Good Friday Tenebrae

### **Easter Sunday (March 31)**

NO SATURDAY SERVICE on March 30th.  
7:00 am Easter Dawn Worship with Communion  
8:00 - 10:30 am Easter Breakfast  
9:00 am Easter Festival Worship  
10:45 am Easter Festival Worship

# PREPARING FOR Easter

## Easter for Kids

Salem's Easter for Kids program will be held the Saturday before Easter weekend (March 23rd) from 10am–12pm. Parents are invited to stay and “travel” with their kids to different stations as Salem members share the joy of Easter with adults and kids alike. Easter for Kids is open to all children up to 5th grade. Easter for Kids is a great chance for the unchurched to learn about our Savior too. Invite a friend! Register to attend on our website at [www.salemlutheran.org](http://www.salemlutheran.org).



## Easter Breakfast

Each year Salem members enjoy an Easter breakfast together as part of our Easter celebration. We will continue this tradition this year! Please find the signup poster on the board in the church entry to see what items we need this year and ways to help. Thank you for serving and making our Easter joy a little brighter!

## Easter Worship

Salem will celebrate Easter victory with three services on Easter Sunday morning. A sunrise service at 7am will be different from the other services, with readings and hymns reminding us of the wonder of the women's discovery of the empty tomb early Easter morning. Holy Communion will be offered in this quieter celebration of Easter victory.

Festival services at 9am & 10:45am will bring out our full-throated exultation as we celebrate loudly the meaning of Jesus' resurrection for every believer. Choirs will sing, trumpets will play, and handbells will ring as the church rejoices in Easter triumph. Join us for one or more services Easter Sunday, and invite a friend to celebrate with you.

# WELCOME TO WORSHIP

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*For our guests*

We are glad that you joined us to worship our Savior today. If you have questions about our church or service simply ask an usher or someone near you. We're happy to help!

Please take note of a few helpful things:

- ✦ Restrooms with diaper-changing tables are located straight down the hall opposite the sanctuary entrance.
- ✦ Our sanctuary is equipped with a "loop" system for hearing assistance. Please set hearing aids to the "T" position or ask an usher for a headset.
- ✦ You will find a connection card in your pew. Please share names, contact information, and prayer requests.
- ✦ Salem members give an offering to support the work we do for the Lord. Guests are not expected to give anything, but if you wish to donate you can place it in a basket as it's passed during the service or give online.
- ✦ Our services are streamed live on our YouTube channel. If you would prefer not to be on camera, please sit in the seats located beneath the balcony.

*For those with young children*

We love to see families worship together, and we welcome children to sing, pray, and grow with us in our services.

We provide a few special worship aids and helps for families:

- ✦ Children's bulletins & activity bags are available in the entry, on the wall opposite the sanctuary entrance. Ask an usher if you need help finding them.
- ✦ If you or your child needs a quiet space, you can use the fireside room down the hallway across from the restrooms. The service is streamed live on a TV in the room.
- ✦ On Sunday mornings, children of all ages are invited to come to the front of church for the children's message. Parents are welcome, too!

**Salem Lutheran Church exists to glorify God  
by teaching his timeless Truth, that all may  
grow in grace and faith to share tomorrow's eternity.**

