**St. Luke’s Episcopal Church**

North Main & 4th Streets, Jamestown NY

The Rev. Luke Fodor, *Rector*

The Rev. Cathy Smith, *Deacon*

The Rev. Jessica Frederick*, Curate*

Mr Loren Masánqué, *Minister of Music*

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***The Seven Shadows of***

***Tenebrae***

***Wednesday, March 27, 2024***

***7:00 PM***



*St. Luke’s Episcopal Church*

*North Main at Fourth Street*

*Jamestown, New York*

*The Rev. Luke Fodor, Rector*

**THE DARKNESS BEFORE THE DAWN**

*From the gates of hell, O Lord, deliver my soul.*

*During the final reading the seventh candle is processed back into the church and returned to its place.*

A reading from Isaiah, chapter 38, verses10-14

*The Song of Hezekiah*

In the very prime of life I have to leave. Whatever time I have left is spent in death’s waiting room. No more glimpses of God in the land of the living. No more meetings with my neighbors. This body I inhabit is taken down and packed away like a camper’s tent. Like a weaver, I’ve rolled up the carpet of my life as God cuts me free of the loom and at day’s end sweeps up the scraps and pieces. I cry for help until morning. Like a lion, God pummels and pounds me, relentlessly finishing me off. I squawk like a doomed hen, moan like a dove. My eyes ache from looking up for help; “Master, I’m in trouble! Get me out of this!” But what’s the use? God himself gave me the word. He’s done this to me. I can’t sleep – I’m that upset, that troubled

O Master, these are the conditions in which people live, and yes, in these very conditions my spirit is still alive – fully recovered with a fresh infusion of life! It seems it was good for me to go through all these troubles. Throughout them all you held tight to my lifeline. You never let me tumble over the edge into nothing. But my sins you let go of, threw them over your shoulder – good riddance! The dead don’t thank you, and choirs don’t sing praises from the morgue. Those buried six feet under don’t witness to your faithful ways. It’s the living – live men and women – who thank you, just as I am doing right now… God saves and will save me. As fiddles and mandolins strike up the tunes, we’ll sing – oh we will sing for the rest of our lives in the sanctuary of our God.

*A brief silence is observed.*

*The people depart in silence.*

**THE SEVENTH SHADOW: THE SHADOW OF DEATH**

*I was like a trusting lamb led to the slaughter.*

A reading fromLuke, chapter 23, verses 33-46

When they got to the place called Skull Hill, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing.” Dividing up his clothes, they threw dice for them. The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting, “He saved others. Let’s see him save himself! The Messiah of God—ha! The Chosen—ha!” The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him, making a game of it. They toasted him with sour wine: “So you’re King of the Jews! Save yourself!” Printed over him was a sign: this is the king of the Jews. One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him: “Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!” But the other one made him shut up: “Have you no fear of God? You’re getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him—he did nothing to deserve this.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom.” He said, “Don’t worry, I will. Today you will join me in paradise.” By now it was noon. The whole earth became dark, the darkness lasting three hours—a total blackout. The Temple curtain split right down the middle. Jesus called loudly, “Father, I place my life in your hands!” Then he breathed his last.

V. God did not spare his own Son.

R. **But delivered him up for us all.**

*The seventh candle is taken down and processed out of the church.*

*A period of silent meditation follows the reading. During this time we offer up to God our own experiences of betraying, causing anguish, leaving, abandoning, accusing and mocking others.*

**Psalm 51: 1-18** *said in unison* BCP page 656

***Song # 4***

**THE SEVEN SHADOWS OF TENEBRAE**

*The service begins in silence so all may participate in*

*a time of reflection*

Peace to you, and may the abiding love of God be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Dear people of God, there are times in our lives when the sun seems to always be shining, but there are also times when we live in the shadows. These are times when it seems the whole world is against us, when those closest to us have become our enemies. When our prayers are answered with silence and everywhere we look we see only the shadow of death. God is no stranger to these times. God knows our pain, for in Jesus God carried our grief and God bore our sorrows. So let us walk into the shadows and place our cares on God.

V. Lo, we have seen God without beauty or majesty, with no looks to attract our eyes.

**R. God bore our sins and grieved for us, God was wounded for our transgressions, and by God’s scourging we are healed.**

Let us pray: God, if the wind could blow away our problems we would stand in a hurricane. If washing away the stress and chaos of our lives were merely a matter of standing in the rain, we would stand in a downpour and get drenched. If the wind could blow away our sadness we would face a storm. Oh God, renew us like the Spring, pour down your love and mercy upon us that the seeds of sorrow may bloom into new life. **Amen.**

***Song # 1***

**THE FIRST SHADOW:**

**THE SHADOW OF BETRAYAL**

*False witnesses have risen up against me, and also those who speak malice.*

 A reading from Matthew, chapter 26, verses 20-25

After sunset, Jesus and the Twelve were sitting around the table. During the meal, he said, “I have something hard but important to say to you: One of you is going to hand me over to the conspirators.” They were stunned, and then began to ask, one after another, “It isn’t me, is it, Master?” Jesus answered, “The one who hands me over is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table. In one sense the Son of Man is entering into a way of treachery well-marked by the Scriptures—no surprises here. In another sense that man who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man—better never to have been born than do this!” Then Judas, already turned traitor, said, “It isn’t me, is it, Rabbi?” Jesus said, “Don’t play games with me, Judas.”

V. Deliver me, my God from the hand of the wicked

R. **From the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.**

A candle is extinguished.

*A period of silent meditation follows. During this time we offer up our own experiences of betrayal to God.*

**Psalm 55 vss. 1-9,** *said in unison* BCP page 660

**THE SIXTH SHADOW:**

**THE SHADOW OF MOCKERY**

*How many there are who say of me, “There is no help for him in his God.”*

A reading from Mark, chapter 15, verses 12-20

Pilate came back, “So what do I do with this man you call King of the Jews?” They yelled, “Nail him to a cross!” Pilate objected, “But for what crime?” But they yelled all the louder, “Nail him to a cross!” Pilate gave the crowd what it wanted, set Barabbas free and turned Jesus over for whipping and crucifixion. The soldiers took Jesus into the palace (called Praetorium) and called together the entire brigade. They dressed him up in purple and put a crown plaited from a thorn bush on his head. Then they began their mockery: “Bravo, King of the Jews!” They banged on his head with a club, spit on him, and knelt down in mock worship. After they had had their fun, they took off the purple cape and put his own clothes back on him. Then they marched out to nail him to the cross.

V. See how the righteous one perishes, and no one takes heart.

R. **The righteous are taken away and no one understands.**

A candle is extinguished.

*A period of silent meditation follows the reading.*

*During this time we offer up our own experiences of being misunderstood and mocked to God.*

**Psalm 25, vss. 15-21,** *said in unison* BCP page 615

***Song # 3***

**THE FIFTH SHADOW:**

**THE SHADOW OF ACCUSATION**

*By oppression and judgment, he was taken away.*

A reading from Matthew, chapter 26, verses 59-67

The high priests, conspiring with the Jewish Council, tried to cook up charges against Jesus in order to sentence him to death. But even though many stepped up, making up one false accusation after another, nothing was believable. Finally two men came forward with this: “He said, ‘I can tear down this Temple of God and after three days rebuild it.’ The Chief Priest stood up and said, “What do you have to say to the accusation?” Jesus kept silent. Then the Chief Priest said, “I command you by the authority of the living God to say if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus was curt: “You yourself said it. And that’s not all. Soon you’ll see it for yourself: The Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Mighty One, Arriving on the clouds of heaven.” At that, the Chief Priest lost his temper, ripping his robes, yelling, “He blasphemed! Why do we need witnesses to accuse him? You all heard him blaspheme! Are you going to stand for such blasphemy?” They all said, “Death! That seals his death sentence.” Then they were spitting in his face and banging him around.

V. False witnesses have risen up against me.

R. **and also those who speak malice.**

A candle is extinguished.

*A period of silent meditation follows the reading. During this time we offer up our own experiences of being falsely accused to God.*

**Psalm 5** *said in unison* BCP page 588

**THE SECOND SHADOW:**

 **THE SHADOW OF INNER AGONY**

*My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death.*

A reading from Luke, chapter 22, verses 40-44

Leaving there, Jesus went, as he so often did, to Mount Olives. The disciples followed him. When they arrived at the place, he said, “Pray that you don’t give in to temptation.” He pulled away from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, “Father, remove this cup from me. But please, not what I want. What do *you* want?” At once an angel from heaven was at his side, strengthening him. He prayed on all the harder. Sweat, wrung from him like drops of blood, poured off his face.

V. On the Mount of Olives Jesus prayed to the Father:

R. **Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**

A candle is extinguished.

*A period of silent meditation follows the reading. During this time we offer up our own inner agony to God.*

**Psalm 69, vss. 19-23,** *said in unison*  BCP page 680

***Song # 2***

**THE THIRD SHADOW:**

**THE SHADOW OF LONELINESS**

*Even my parents have forsaken me.*

 A reading from Matthew, chapter 26, verses 40-45

When Jesus came back to his disciples, he found them sound asleep. He said to Peter, “Can’t you stick it out with me a single hour? Stay alert; be in prayer so you don’t wander into temptation without even knowing you’re in danger. There is a part of you that is eager, ready for anything in God. But there’s another part that’s as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire.” He then left them a second time. Again he prayed, “My Father, if there is no other way than this, drinking this cup to the dregs, I’m ready. Do it your way.” When he came back, he again found them sound asleep. They simply couldn’t keep their eyes open. This time he let them sleep on, and went back a third time to pray, going over the same ground one last time. When he came back the next time, he said, “Are you going to sleep on and make a night of it? My time is up, the Son of Man is about to be handed over to the hands of sinners.

V. Turn to me, O Lord, and have pity on me.

R. **For I am left alone and in misery.**

A candle is extinguished.

*A period of silent meditation follows the reading. During this time we offer up our feelings of loneliness to God.*

**Psalm 88,** *said in unison* BCP page 712

**THE FOURTH SHADOW:**

**THE SHADOW OF DESERTION**

*Do you also want to leave?*

A reading from Matthew, chapter 26, verses 47-56

The words were barely out of his mouth when Judas (the one from the Twelve) showed up, and with him a gang from the high priests and religious leaders brandishing swords and clubs. The betrayer had worked out a sign with them: “The one I kiss, that’s the one—seize him.” He went straight to Jesus, greeted him, “How are you, Rabbi?” and kissed him. Jesus said, “Friend, why this charade?” Then Jesus addressed the mob: “What is this—coming out after me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I have been sitting in the Temple teaching, and you never so much as lifted a hand against me. You’ve done it this way to confirm and fulfill the prophetic writings.” Then all the disciples cut and ran.

V. Behold, the hour is at hand,

R**. You will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you.**

A candle is extinguished.

*A period of silent meditation follows the reading.*

*During this time we offer up our own experiences of desertion to God.*

**Psalm 77, vss. 1-13,** *said in unison* BCP page 693