

Tenebrae
St. John's Episcopal Church, Ithaca NY
April 5, 2023 Year A
7:00 PM

The name Tenebrae (the Latin word for “darkness” or “shadow”) has for centuries been applied to the ancient monastic night and early morning services (Matins and Lauds) of the last three days of Holy Week, which in medieval times came to be celebrated on the preceding evenings. Apart from the chant of the Lamentations (in which each verse is introduced by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet), the most conspicuous feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights in the church until only a single candle, considered a symbol of our Lord, remains. Towards the end of the service this candle is hidden, typifying the apparent victory of the forces of evil. At the very end, a loud noise is made, symbolizing the earthquake at the time of the resurrection (Matthew 28:2), the hidden candle is restored to its place, and by its light all depart in silence.

Prelude O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß BWV 622

J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

Please stand

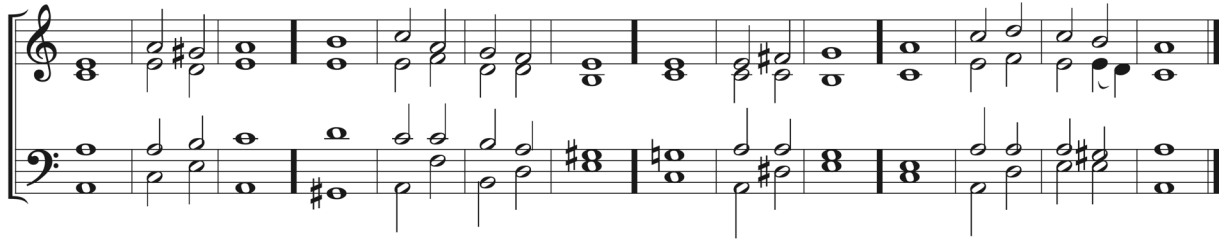
Silent Processional

Officiant: As we prepare to recall the last days of our Lord's life on earth, let us remember before God this night this world for which our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died. Let us call to mind all those who suffer, all those who are oppressed and all those who are forgotten, and most of all, let us remember what God calls us to do, as people of faith.

Please be seated

Lamentations

Richard Thiele
(1847–1903)



Is it nothing to you, all you | who pass | by?
Look and see
if there is any | sorrow | like my | sorrow,
which was | brought u- | pon me,
which the Lord inflicted on the | day of | his fierce | anger.

My eyes are | spent with | weeping;
my stomach churns;
my bile is | poured out | on the | ground
because of the destruction | of my | people,
because infants and babes faint | in the | streets of · the | city.

They cry | to their | mothers,
- | “Where is | bread and | wine?”
as they faint like the wounded in the streets | of the | city,
as their life is poured out | on their | mothers’ | bosom.

What can I say for you, to | what com- | pare you,
O | daugh- | ter Je- | rusalem?
To what can I liken you, that | I may | comfort you,
O | virgin | daughter | Zion?

For vast as the sea is your ruin;
| who can | heal you?
Your prophets have seen for you | false and · de- | ceptive | visions;
they have not exposed your iniquity to re- | store your | fortunes,
but have seen oracles for you that are | false and | mis- | leading.

All who pass along the way clap their | hands at | you;
they hiss and wag their heads at | daugh- | ter Je- | rusalem;
“Is this the city that was called the per- | fection · of | beauty,
the | joy of | all the | earth?”

Officiant: Let us pray,

Oh God, it is your will to hold both heaven and earth in a single peace. Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows, that we may be strengthened to follow where you would have us go, so that may we have peace in your Church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts. *Amen*

First candle is extinguished

A reading from the Washington Post.

Emma Riddle had felt this fear before.

It was just past 8:30 Monday night, and the freshman at Michigan State University was in her dorm room, staring at an email on her phone. Shots had been fired on campus.

“Secure-in-Place immediately,” it read. “Run, Hide, Fight.”

Emma, 18, took a screenshot and texted it to her parents.

“I’m sorry babe,” her dad, Matt Riddle, wrote back. “Let’s hope it is nothing.”

His daughter called a few minutes later. It wasn’t nothing.

“There’s an active shooter,” she whispered, hiding beneath her desk, the lights off and the windows covered. “I can’t believe this is happening again.”

On a winter afternoon a little more than a year ago, Emma had been 80 miles east, in the band room at Oxford High School, when someone rushed in, panicked. Something bad was happening. Then an emergency alert blared through the intercom. They had drilled on what to do next for years.

Run. Hide. Fight.

Emma, who played clarinet, waited in terror behind barricaded doors until the students decided to try escaping. A door at the back of the room led out to a field where the marching band practiced. They peeked out into the daylight, then fled.

Dozens of police cars sped by, and helicopters circled overhead. Sprinting through a neighborhood, Emma called her father.

“Dad, there’s an active shooter,” she said, weeping and out of breath. “I’m scared.”

Emma, then a senior, didn’t know that in the building behind her, in the town she’d spent all her life, a 15-year-old sophomore had opened fire, wounding 11 people. Four of them — all teenagers — died, including Justin Shilling, who was a friend.

The weeks that followed were a haze of funerals and memorials and community gatherings. It was hard to say no to anything, but all the trauma and grief exhausted her, as it did many of her classmates.

The sounds of police sirens and helicopters overwhelmed Emma, yanking her back to that frantic sprint through the neighborhood.

She refused to let any of it derail her senior year, though. Emma attended therapy sessions at school and learned to manage her flashbacks. An excellent student, she decided on Michigan State because of its history program. She liked that it was close to home, too.

As a freshman, Emma thrived. She made good grades and lots of friends. She joined a history club and a book club and a Taylor Swift club, where members discussed lyrics and favorite songs (she was torn between “Willow” and “August”).

Emma, one of about 20 Oxford survivors at the university, decided to minor in women's studies, hoping to one day get a doctorate, maybe become a professor and teach students like her.

And then came Monday night...

She and her roommate hid in the darkness for hours, and at 12:31 a.m., in a moment of fury and frustration, Emma composed a tweet: "14 months ago I had to evacuate from Oxford High School when a fifteen year old opened fire and killed four of my classmates and injured seven more. Tonight, I am sitting under my desk at Michigan State University, once again texting everyone 'I love you. 'When will this end?'"

Around 1:30 a.m., they learned that the school would allow students to leave campus. [The gunman](#), who [killed three students](#) and wounded five others, had taken his own life.

Her dad sped to East Lansing, pulling up outside his daughter's building at 2:30 a.m. Emma wrapped her arms around him, then she and her roommate got in the car.

"For me, as a parent, you're so focused on supporting and loving and just making sure that she has the means to deal with everything she has to deal with," Riddle said. "Every now and then, you get a little mad, you get a little angry, and you're like, 'Why are we doing this again?'"

"Nothing," he said, "has changed."

A Reading from Isaiah 65: 17-25

For I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;

the former things shall not be remembered
or come to mind.

But be glad and rejoice for ever
in what I am creating;

for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,
and its people as a delight.

I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;

no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,
or the cry of distress.

No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;

for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.

They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;

for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They shall not labour in vain,

or bear children for calamity;
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—
and their descendants as well.
Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
says the Lord.

Second Candle Extinguished

Hymn: All who live and serve your city (*Charlestown*) **Hymnal # 571**

Officiant: Let us pray:

Gracious God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of peace, and no power known but the power of love; turn the hearts of the people of this land, that the false promises of idols may ring hollow, and we may build a safe world for all your children, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A reading from CBS News:

A "hunger cliff" is looming for millions of Americans, with 32 states set to slash food-stamp benefits beginning on Wednesday.

The cuts will impact more than 30 million people who are enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, in those states, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Among the states where recipients are facing cuts are California and Texas, which have greatest number of people on SNAP, at 5.1 million and 3.6 million, respectively.

The reductions, set to begin in March, are due to the end of so-called emergency allotments, which bolstered food-stamp benefits at the start of the pandemic as Americans grappled with the massive disruption to the economy. While the U.S. is certainly on more stable footing than in 2020, households are now struggling with high food costs. Groceries were about 11.3% higher in January than a year earlier — making the timing of the SNAP cuts particularly challenging, experts say.

"This hunger cliff is coming to the vast majority of states, and people will on average lose about \$82 of SNAP benefits a month," said Ellen Vollinger, SNAP director at the Food Research & Action Center, an anti-hunger advocacy group. "That is a stunning number." That means a family of four could see their monthly benefit cut by about \$328 a month. The worst-hit could be elderly Americans who receive the minimum monthly benefit, Vollinger said. They could see their SNAP payments tumble from \$281 to as little as \$23 per month. Meanwhile, 18 states had already ended their emergency allotments early, with some citing the strengthening economy as the reason. In states like Georgia that have cut nutritional aid, however, food banks have seen a surge in demand as a result, according to Pew Stateline.

"Like many food banks across the country, we are experiencing that lines are getting longer," Kyle Waide, the president and CEO of the Atlanta Community Food Bank, told CBS News. "We've seen a 40% increase to our network over the last 15 months."

Despite the rebounding economy, many Americans continue to struggle with food insecurity, experts say. Food-stamp enrollment remains high, with 42 million people receiving the benefit in November 2022, the most recent data available, or about 6% higher than in 2020, according to USDA data. It may seem like an oddity that SNAP enrollment has increased given that the nation's unemployment rate is at its lowest since 1969, but many workers still can't find full-time work or line up enough hours to pay the bills, Vollinger noted. Most working-age people who receive food stamps are employed, research has found.

"What sometimes gets missed in that conversation is the part that so many SNAP households are employed, but often employed at low-wage levels — they aren't in jobs that are family-sustaining so they still qualify for SNAP," she added.

"People are having to choose between putting food on the table and paying rent," Erin Pulling, CEO of Food Bank of the Rockies, told CBS Colorado. "We are seeing more people than ever needing help with food assistance." Of the food stamp cuts, Pulling said, "We're bracing for it."

A Reading from Deuteronomy 24:14-15, 17-22

You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns. You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry out to the LORD against you, and you would incur guilt. You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of the vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

Third Candle is extinguished

Hymn: Hope of the world (*Donne secours*)

Hymnal #472

Officiant: Let us pray:

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon those who live with injustice, terror, disease and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us, and help us to eliminate cruelty and injustice wherever it is found. Strengthen those who seek equality for all. Grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the abundance of this land; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

A reading from Ha'aretz (an Israeli newspaper)

Here's Reem, being fed milk from a baby bottle by Sameh. Reem is a gazelle that Sameh Aqtash found in the wild and adopted. Reem is the Arabic word for that delicate creature, and it is also the

name of Sameh's 8-month-old daughter. Now he will no longer be able to care for either of them: An armed Israeli – perhaps a settler, but possibly a soldier – shot 37-year-old Sameh to death last week.

It was the night settlers ran amok in the town of Hawara, February 26, a day after two Israeli settlers were killed nearby by Palestinians. Some of those in the rampaging crowd, prevented from joining the pogrom by army roadblocks erected after some delay, decided to vent their rage on the inhabitants of the neighboring, tiny and tranquil village of Za'atara.

When the villagers tried to protect themselves and their property against the rioters who were about to invade Za'atara, under the auspices of the Israel Defense Forces – someone shot and killed Sameh. He was a singular individual, a pious Muslim who traveled the world and volunteered to help those in need. Four days before he was murdered, he had returned from a 10-day stay in Turkey, where he aided survivors of the recent earthquake.

A few years ago, he traveled through Asia and Africa, helping to build mosques and dig wells in Bangladesh and Uganda. Now he's dead. And his death is likely to go unpunished. Za'atara is home to 80 souls, all from the same family, who live in a dense cluster of homes on a hill north of the Za'atara Junction, also known as the Tapuah Junction. Highway 60 passes through there on the way to Hawara, leading to Nablus. Israel does not permit construction in the tiny hamlet, so most of the community's younger generation are compelled to move to the nearby town of Beita.

A fence encircles Za'atara; a tiny industrial zone is located near its entrance. There's the metalworking shop of Sameh's brothers, his cousin's hardware store and the factory owned by Sameh himself, Abu Yusuf Stoves, which manufactures some 2,000 iron, wood-burning stoves every year and also imports models from Turkey.

A stove made by Sameh costs 500 shekels (\$140), an imported one goes for 2,000 shekels. The locally made stoves are the pride of Za'atara. They're also sold in Israel – there's a business card, complete with logo.

His brothers, Abd el-Munaim, 49, and Rashdan Aqtash, 47, are standing in their gloomy factory, where they make metal fences, window bars and bus-stop frames. Their late brother was sitting on the bench of a bus stop on display in front just minutes before he was killed.

That morning the family had worked as usual. Around midday two brothers from the settlement of Har Bracha nearby were killed; toward evening the Aqtashes learned via the social media that settlers were planning to avenge the deaths and to storm Hawara.

The men of Za'atara gathered in front of the metalwork shop, inside the fence, and awaited developments. There were about 10 of them at first. When darkness fell they shut the iron gate and turned off the lights.

They had never been attacked by settlers; in fact, they tell us, they had good relations with them – especially Sameh, who was friendly with a couple, Rachel and Yisrael, in Kfar Tapuah, a settlement on the other side of the road. He had even encouraged them to get married. When one of Sameh's daughters fell ill with a heart ailment, Rachel brought her medication from Israel. His brothers add that Sameh used his 4x4 Land Rover to pull quite a few travelers, including Israelis, out of snow and sand.

At about 8 P.M. a few dozen settlers were spotted striding along Highway 60, not far from Za'atara, Abd el-Munaim and his cousin Ayman tell us. As they marched, they shouted vilifications and curses against the Palestinians, including the de rigueur "Death to the Arabs!" Some were armed with pistols, some were masked.

Around 10 of them veered off the road and approached Za'atara's fence in a menacing manner. They were holding jerricans and apparently intended to set fire to a crane owned by the Aqtash family, which was parked outside.

The village men decided to chase them off. They emerged from their hiding place in the metalwork shop, surprising the settlers, pounding the tin walls of the building to frighten them and throwing stones to scare them away. The settlers fled, but the villagers became petrified with fear that they would return.

The men called the council head of Beita to tell him about the settlers and the fear that they would return. At their behest, he called the Palestinian Coordination and Liaison Office, and also recruited about 100 residents from his town, who arrived in short order to assist the group from Za'atara.

The settlers indeed reappeared, about an hour later, this time in far larger numbers, together with a settlement security coordinator in his vehicle, probably from Tapuah. A few IDF jeeps also approached; their occupants initially observed the events idly from the highway.

The security camera footage shows dozens of settlers on the road, some trying to bedazzle the besieged inhabitants by training flashlights with green laser beams on their facers. Then bursts of gunfire are heard. The villagers estimate that dozens of rounds were fired at them; the walls of the metal workshop are riddled with bullet holes. The only settler who was armed with a machine gun and not a pistol was the security coordinator, as were the soldiers, who after a time apparently also joined in the shooting.

Before the shots erupted, Sameh had approached the rioters and tried to persuade them to leave. He and the security man shouted at each other. "Take your crazy people and get out of here," Sameh yelled, and the man screamed "You get out!" "I'm in my home," Sameh retorted.

The shouting between the two intensified. For this reason, Sameh's brothers think the security coordinator was the one who fired the fatal shot. Some of his relatives say they saw a figure in civilian attire position himself on the road in a firing position, but the video footage doesn't show who shot Sameh.

A video clip posted on the Haaretz website this week by reporter Hagar Shezaf shows that soldiers were present when Sameh was shot and did nothing. The IDF Spokesperson's Unit told Haaretz that "the circumstances of the deceased's death are being clarified." A clarification, not even an investigation.

Sameh was hit in the stomach and collapsed. All the roads were blocked by the IDF, and Sameh had to be transferred from one private vehicle to another, via dirt roads, until they managed to reach the small hospital in Hawara.

There was little the physicians could do there. The bullet had exploded in Sameh's stomach and wreaked havoc. Sameh has left behind his wife Ahlam, 32, and five children: Assiya, 15, Yusuf, 12, Huda, 10, Yunis, 5, and little Reem.

A Reading from Leviticus 19:33-37

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God. You shall not cheat in measuring length, weight or quantity. You shall have honest balances, honest weights; an honest ephah and an honest hin; I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. You shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and observe them: I am the Lord.

Fourth candle is extinguished

Anthem Christus factus est

Felice Anerio (c. 1560–1614)

Christus factus est pro nobis
Obediens usque ad mortem,
Mortem autem crucis.
Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum,
Et dedit illi nomen,
quod est super omne nomen.

Christ became obedient for us to death, even
death on the cross.
Therefore God exalted him, and gave him that
name which is above all names.

Officiant: Let us pray:

Loving God, in Jesus you became a stranger in your own land, and a refugee who fled your own home; may we always recognize your face in the foreigner and the immigrant, and may we welcome them as we would your Son. Through him, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, now and forever, *Amen*

A reading from Them

Though the full human impact of the current legislative assault on trans existence can never be quantified, according to new statistics from the LGBTQ+ organization, more than one-fifth of trans youth live in states that have passed bans on gender-affirming care for minors.

On Wednesday, the Human Rights Commission released [a new map](#) outlining attacks on gender-affirming care by state alongside a new report with information pulled from the organization's own legislative tracking. The report also drew from data compiled by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law showing that there are more than 300,000 trans youth aged 13-17 in the United States. The map also illustrates which states have already banned gender-affirming care for minors and which are currently considering laws or policies to do so.

According to the report, 22.9% of trans youth live in states that have passed bans on gender-affirming care for minors, a list that includes Arizona, Utah, Texas, South Dakota, Iowa, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida. In three states — Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas — temporary court injunctions are currently blocking those bans. In addition to youth living in states that have already passed bans on gender-affirming care a further 27.5% of trans youth are at risk of losing access.

Combined, over half of trans youth (50.4%) live in states where they've already lost access to or are at risk of losing access to gender-affirming care, according to the HRC report. However, as ACLU

communications strategist Gillian Branstetter pointed out, this statistic accounts for every state that has a proposed ban, even though many of those bills will likely never pass into law.

However, that doesn't change the fact that the mere introduction of these bills profoundly impacts LGBTQ+ people, especially trans people. Jay Brown, senior vice president of HRC, stated that Republican politicians "are spreading propaganda and creating more stigma, discrimination, and violence against transgender people just to rile up extreme members of their base."

A January report by the LGBTQ+ advocacy organization Trevor Project found that state-level anti-trans laws negatively affected the mental health of 86% of trans and nonbinary youth between ages 13 and 24.

"LGBTQ+ people are living in a state of emergency," Brown said in a press release. "Today's findings illustrate how the ongoing assault against transgender people is taking hold across the country and underscore how dire the situation is growing for our community by the day."

A Reading from Isaiah 56:1-8

Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance will be revealed. Happy is the mortal who does this, the one who holds it fast, who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it, and refrains from doing any evil. Do not let the foreigner joined to the Lord say, "The Lord will surely separate me from his people;" and do not let the eunuch say "I am just a dry tree." For thus says the Lord: to the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me, and hold fast to my covenant, I will give, in my house, and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath and do not profane it, and hold fast to my covenant--these I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel: I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

Fifth candle is extinguished

Officiant: Let us pray,

Eternal God, you created us all in your image, and yet as varied as the sands on the seashore.

Teach us to rejoice in our diversity, to perceive it as yet another facet of your fathomless love, and so mightily spread abroad the power of your spirit, that all people may be gathered together as children of one Father, all barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear and hatreds cease, through your Son Jesus Christ, *Amen*

Hymn: Forgive our sins (*Detroit*)

Hymnal # 674

Confession of the Community:

O Lord, you open your hand, and all the earth is filled with good things, but we have cried out against you, saying, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink?"

Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.

O Lord, you have said, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength," but we have shouted, "No! We shall speed upon horses, we will ride upon swift steeds."

Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.

O Lord, you have said, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream," but we have said, "When will the Sabbath be over that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals?"

Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ, have mercy upon us, Lord, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, we have come before you with thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil, and we have caused you to cry out, "Oh my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!"

Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.

Sixth Candle is Extinguished

Psalm 51 (read in unison)

BCP 656

An acolyte processes the last lit candle, symbolizing Christ, out of the sanctuary.

Officiant: Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross.

STREPITUS *A loud sustained noise is made, symbolizing the earthquake at the time of the resurrection.*

Silent meditation *An acolyte returns with the last lighted candle and places it on the altar.*

All depart in silence.

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