

Olive Branch Fellowship

A Baptist Faith Community

Worship of Our Lord
Maundy Thursday
April 13, 2006

Tenebrae Service

The “service of darkness,” or Tenebrae (Latin for “darkness”), dates back to the 4th century, according to some sources. Traditionally observed during Holy Week, it focuses on the final hours of Jesus’ life and crucifixion. We are reminded of the magnitude of God’s love: a love so great that it continues through all time and eternity.

For shadows to exist, there must be light. In the case of the Passion story of our Lord, that light, as the gospel of John tells us, “was the light of all people” (John 1:4). Although the Tenebrae service walks us through the final hours of Jesus life including his crucifixion, it symbolizes victory and life eternal. In a day when the powers of evil threaten to destroy our optimism for a brighter tomorrow, the cross stands as a reminder that love is stronger than hate, and that hope prevails in times of despair. Standing in the shadow of the cross, we find comfort and courage in knowing that we can live in a future that is ultimately of God’s making!

Prelude

Hymn 461

In Remembrance”

(Lighting of the seven candles during the hymn)

Observance of the Lord’s Supper

(All believers are invited to participate)

First Reading *The Last Supper* Matthew 26:20-35

*(First candle is extinguished)

Second Reading *The Garden* Matthew 26:36-46

*(Second candle is extinguished)

Third Reading *The Betrayal and Arrest* Matthew 26:47-52

*(Third candle is extinguished)

Fourth Reading *The Denial* Matthew 26:69-75

*(Fourth candle is extinguished)

Hymn 315 (v1) *Were You There”*

Fifth Reading *The Crucifixion* Matthew 27:27-37

*(Fifth candle is extinguished)

Hymn 315 (v2) *Were You There”*

Sixth Reading *The Death* Matthew 27:45-56

*(Sixth candle is extinguished)

Hymn 315 (v3) *Were You There”*

Seventh Reading *The Burial* Matthew 27:57-61

Meditation

(Purple cloth on cross is exchanged for black cloth)

*(Seventh candle is extinguished)

Benediction . . . Worshippers are asked to leave in silence and reflection

***The symbolism of extinguishing the candles is intended to underscore the gradual and deepening darkness as Christ’s death became imminent and then final.**