

Pastor: The cross shapes our lives in service, humility and joy. Let's form a reflection of this cross organizing ourselves in the shape of a cross with a place for everyone who belongs to the Lord of the cross.

This cross will remain here, of course, but as people of the cross we are called to go into all the world make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of Jesus who carried the cross. So, though we might like to stay here we go into the world God so loved that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. Take this cross as a reminder that God sends you into the world to tell the story of the cross and live the shape of the cross in your everyday life.

Pastor: Go now, in peace, and serve the Lord of the cross.

People: Thanks and praise, glory and honor be to God!

Hymn: *"Lift High the Cross"*

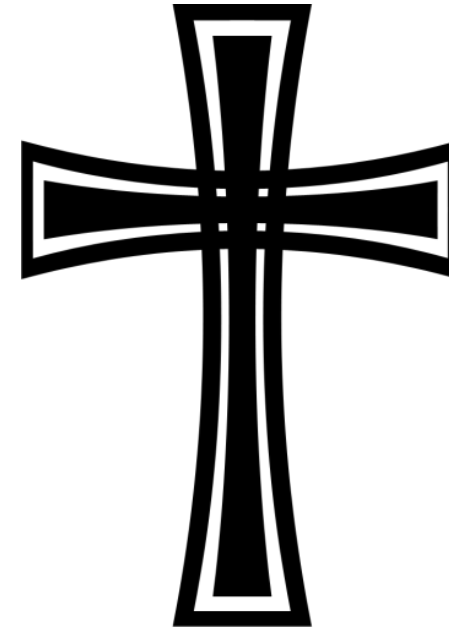
Refrain: Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
The hosts of God in conquering ranks combine. **Refrain**

O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
As thou hast promised, draw us all to thee. **Refrain**

So shall our song of triumph ever be:
Praise to the Crucified for victory! **Refrain**

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The Re-Placing of the Sanctuary Cross

Wednesday, April 8th, 2026
Watertown, South Dakota

Welcome & Greeting

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Responsive Reading of Psalm 118:19-29

P: Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

C: This is the LORD's gate; the righteous shall enter through it.

P: I will give thanks because you have answered me. You have become my salvation.

C: The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

P: This has come from the LORD.

C: It is marvelous in our eyes.

Hymn: *"Beneath the Cross of Jesus", verse 1*

Beneath the cross of Jesus I long to take my stand;
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land,
A home within a wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat and burdens of the day.

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Prayer

Pastor: O Lord, we are gathered together here this day as your people, as those who have been called out of darkness into your marvelous light. We are here only because you have loved us and been faithful across the generations that we might be your people. And yet we quickly confess that we are not worthy of that love. As we contemplate the cross and what it means, we are filled with joy and wonder at the sacrifice that you made to grant us forgiveness, show us light in the darkness and offer us life in the midst of death. Thank you for this church building and this cross that we install today. May it be a constant reminder of your faithfulness to us sinners. May it be a reminder of your love and obedience to the Father that meant even death on a cross for our sake. Grow within us a love that is willing to surrender all our fears and uncertainties to you, that desires nothing more than to love you with all our being and to love those around us with the same faithfulness with which you love us. **Amen.**

Hymn: *"Old Rugged Cross", verse 1*

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain.

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.

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Seventh Reading, Mike Aadland: Colossians 2:13-15

Reader: The cross would only be a sad memory of a life ended too soon but because God the Father raised Jesus from the dead we have life, a life that will not end. The cross, an instrument of death, became the instrument of life through Christ Jesus for us. His life beyond the cross has become our life through the cross as Paul says in Colossians 2:

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

Pastor: And so we do not bury or hide the cross but we raise it and we rejoice in it because through it Jesus has won for us forgiveness of sins, everlasting life and salvation.

Choir

"Lift High the Cross"
Sung as the cross is lifted and placed

TURN PAGE

First Reading, Parker Althoff: Matthew 16:24-25

Reader: Jesus made the cross the shape for our lives. He said:

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Second Reading, Zayne Hartwig: Philippians 2:5-11

Reader: Jesus made the cross the shape for our lives because it is the shape of his life as Paul says:

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Third Reading, Riley Hennen: Colossians 1:15-20

Reader: Because his life was shaped by the cross we have peace with God as Paul reminds us in Colossians 1:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

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Fourth Reading, Mesa Kirchmeier: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Reader: Even though the cross seems foolish to many, it is God's power at work to save as Paul states in I Corinthians 1:

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.’ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Fifth Reading, Logan Eide: John 19:17-18

Reader: The cross is more than a symbol among God's people, though. It is an event. It is *the* event that Jesus endured in order to save us from sin, death and the power of the devil. As it is told in the gospel of John:

“... and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.”

Sixth Reading, Jan DeBerg: Mark 15:29-32

Reader: The cross is more than a symbol for us: it is the work of suffering, shame and death which Jesus willingly and obediently endured there that saves us. He could have refused the cross ... and us ... but he didn't. The gospel of Mark tells us:

“Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!’ In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.’ Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.”

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