

Tenebrae
April 1, 2026

St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are on the unceded traditional land of the Coast Salish people, including the Duwamish and Suquamish People past and present. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish and Suquamish tribes.

Serving in Worship This Evening

Presiding: The Rev. Cn. Elise B. Johnstone, The Rev. Robert Stevens
Music: Thomas Aláan, SJB Choir
Cantors: Cathie Knox-Browning, Tucker Rogers, Layne Bautista, Elise Johnstone, Sonja Lund, Melinda Sims, Chad Proctor, Jason Skuda

*Please know, that wherever you are in your spiritual journey,
you have a place at St. John's.*

About Tenebrae

Elise Johnstone

The name Tenebrae (the Latin word for “darkness” or “shadows” has for centuries been applied to the ancient monastic night and early morning services (Matins, 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. Toward 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.

Notes on Performance of Tenebrae

Notes on Singing Psalms

When there is an **antiphon**, the antiphon melody is first intoned on the keyboard. The cantor or choir sings the antiphon, then the congregation joins and sings the antiphon a second time. Verses are sung alternating between cantor or choir (non-bold text) and congregation (**bold text**). After all the verses are sung, the full congregation sings the antiphon one last time.

Nocturn
Antiphon I



Zeal for your house _____ has eat-en me up; the scorn of those who scorn you has fal-len up - on - me.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some words in bold and some in regular font. There are horizontal lines under the words "house" and "up - on - me" to indicate a long note or a rest.

In the **verses**, an accompanying psalm tone is indicated. The following symbols are used:

Psalm Tone (Psalm 69: 1-22)



[] / \ / \

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of a series of quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. There are square brackets, a slash, and a backslash under the notes, indicating specific performance instructions. A vertical bar line is present in the middle of the staff.

- [] = Notes contained in these brackets are only sung on the first verse
- / = First flex tone(s) sung on the syllable(s) that follow
- \ = Second flex tone(s) sung on the syllable(s) that follow

Notes on Singing the Lamentations of Jeremiah

The congregation and choir sing the psalm verse numbers. An antiphon concludes each of the three lessons.

Notes on the Strepitus

After the final anthem is sung, “a loud noise is made.” This loud noise, also known as the strepitus, should be made by all in the congregation. You may do this by thumping your hands on the pews or chairs, stomping your feet, or by other (non-destructive means). After approximately 30 seconds, the sound should quickly give way to silence.


The Office of Tenebrae

The ministers enter the church in silence and proceed to their places. The Office begins immediately with the Antiphon on the first Psalm. It is customary to sit for the Psalmody.

Matins


Antiphon 1: Psalm 69: 1-22

Nocturn
Antiphon I



Zeal for your house _____ has eat-en me up; the scorn of those who scorn you has fal-len_ up - on_ me.

Psalm Tone (Psalm 69: 1-22)



- 1 [Save me,] O God, for the / waters have come up \ to my neck. *
I sink in deep mire, / where there is no \ foothold;
- 2 I have / come in- \ to deep waters, *
and the / flood sweeps over \ me.
- 3 I am weary with my / cry- ing; my \ throat is parched. *
My eyes grow dim with / wai- ting for my \ God.
- 4 More in number than the hairs of my head are those who / hate me \ without cause;*
many are those who would destroy me, my enemies who accuse me falsely.
What I did not steal, / must I now re- \ store?
- 5 O / God, you \ know my folly; *
the wrongs I have done / are not hidden from \ you.
- 6 Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame be- / cause of me, O Lord \ God of hosts;*
do not let those who seek you be dishonored be- / cause of me, O God of \ Israel.
- 7 It is for your sake that / I have \ borne reproach, *
that / shame has covered my \ face.
- 8 I have be- / come a stranger \ to my kindred, *
an alien / to my mother's \ children.

- 9 It is zeal for your / house that \ has consumed me; *
the insults of those who insult you / have fallen on \ me.
- 10 When I / humbled my \ soul with fasting, ***
they insulted me / for doing \ so.
- 11 When I / made sack- \ cloth my clothing, *
I became a by- / word to \ them.
- 12 I am the subject of gossip for / those who sit \ in the gate, ***
and the drunkards make / songs a- \ bout me.
- 13 But as for me, my / prayer is to \ you, O Lord. *
At an acceptable time, O God in the abundance of your steadfast / love, answer \ me.
- 14 With your faithful help rescue me from / sinking \ in the mire; ***
let me be delivered from my enemies and / from the deep \ waters.
- 15 Do not let the flood sweep / over me or the deep swal- \ low me up *
or the / Pit close its mouth over \ me.
- 16 Answer me, O / Lord, for your steadfast \ love is good; ***
according to your a- / bundant mercy, turn to \ me.
- 17 Do not / hide your face \ from your servant, *
for I am in di- / stress—make haste to answer \ me.
- 18 Draw / near to me; \ redeem me; ***
set me free / because of my \ enemies.
- 19 You know the / insults I receive and my shame \ and dishonor; *
my / foes are all known to \ you.
- 20 Insults have / broken my heart, so that I am \ in despair. ***
I looked for pity, but there / was none; and for comforters, but I found \ none.
- 21 They / gave me poi- \ son for food, *
and for my / thirst they gave me vinegar to \ drink.
- 22 Let / their table be a \ trap for them, ***
a / snare for their \ allies.

Candles 1 and 2 are extinguished. A brief silence is kept.

Antiphon 2: Psalm 70

Nocturn
Antiphon II

Let them drawback and be disgraced who take pleasure in my misfortune.

Psalm Tone (Psalm 70)

1 [Be pleased,] O God, to deliver me. *
O Lord, make haste to help me!

2 Let those be put to shame and confusion who seek my life. *
Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire to hurt me.

3 Let those who say, "Aha, Aha!" *
turn back because of their shame.

4 Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you.
Let those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!"

5 But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God!
You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay!

Candles 3 and 4 are extinguished. A brief silence is kept.

Antiphon 3: Psalm 74

Nocturn
Antiphon III

A - rise, O God, maintain my cause.

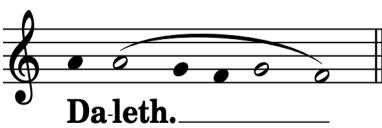
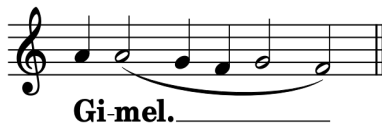
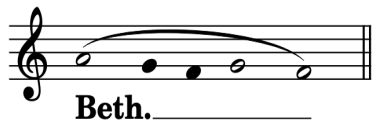
Psalm Tone (Psalm 74)

1 [O God,] why do you cast us off forever? *
Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?

Lessons

Lesson I: Lamentations 1: 1-5

Congregation



Cantor

A reading from the lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet.

How solitary lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a Queen among the Cities has now become a vassal.

She weeps bitterly in the night, tears run down her cheeks; Among all her lovers, she has no one to comfort her; All her friends have dealt treacherously with her, They have become her enemies.

Judah has gone into the misery of exile and of hard servitude, She dwells now among the nations, but finds no resting place; All her pursuers overtook her in the midst of her anguish.

The roads to Zion mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts; All her gates are desolate, her priests groan and sigh; Her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

Her adversaries have become her masters, Her enemies prosper, Because the Lord has punished her for the multitude of her rebellions; Her children are gone, driven away as captives by the enemy.

Concluding Antiphon (all)



Responsory 2: Tristis est anima mea

- V. My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death;
R. **remain here and watch with me. Now you shall see the crowd who will surround me; you will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you.**
- V. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
R. **You will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you.**

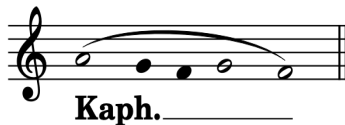
Lesson 3: Lamentations 1: 10-15

Congregation



Cantor

The adversary has stretched out his hand to seize all her precious things; she has seen the Gentiles invade her sanctuary, those whom you had forbidden to enter your congregation.



All her people groan as they search for bread; they sell their own children for food to revive their strength. "Behold, O Lord, and consider, for I am now beneath contempt!"



Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted, on the day of his burning anger.



From on high he sent fire, into my bones it descended; he spread a net for my feet, and turned me back; he has left me desolate and faint all the day long.



My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by his hand they were fastened together; their yoke is upon my neck; he has caused my strength to fail. The Lord has delivered me into their hands, against whom I am not able to stand up.

Concluding Antiphon (all)



Responsory 3: Ecce vidimus eum

- V. Lo, we have seen Him without beauty or majesty,
R. **with no looks to attract our eyes. He bore our sins and grieved for us, he was wounded for our transgressions, and by His scourging we are healed.**
V. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows:
R. **and by His scourging we are healed.**

Lauds

Antiphon 10: Psalm 63: 1-8

Lauds
Antiphon X

God did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

Psalm Tone (Psalm 63: 1-8)

- 1 [O] God, you are my God; I seek you; my soul / thirsts for you; *
my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there \ is no water.
- 2 **So I have looked upon you in the sanctu- / ary, ***
beholding your power \ and glory.
- 3 Because your steadfast love is / better than life, *
my lips \ will praise you.
- 4 **So I will bless you as long as / I live; ***
I will lift up my hands and call \ on your name.

5 My soul is satisfied as with a / rich feast, *
and my mouth praises you with \ joyful lips

6 **when I think of you / on my bed ***
and meditate on you in the watches \ of the night,

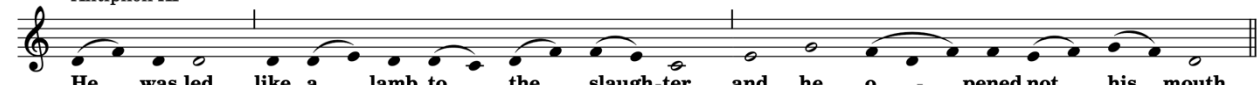
7 for you have / been my help, *
and in the shadow of your wings I \ sing for joy.

8 **My soul / clings to you; ***
your right hand \ upholds me.

Candles 7 and 8 are extinguished. A brief silence is kept.


Antiphon 11: Psalm 90: 1-12

Lauds
Antiphon XI



He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and he opened not his mouth.

Psalm Tone (Psalm 90: 1-12)



[Lord,] you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

1 [Lord,] you have been our / dwelling place *
in \ all generations.

2 **Before the mountains were brought forth**
or ever you had formed the earth / and the world, *
from everlasting to everlas- \ ting you are God.

3 You turn us / back to dust *
and say, \ “Turn back, you mortals.”

4 **For a thousand years in your sight**
are like yesterday when / it is past *
or like a \ watch in the night.

5 You sweep them away; they are / like a dream, *
like grass that is re- \ newed in the morning;

6 **in the morning it flourishes and / is renewed; ***
in the evening \ it fades and withers.

Lauds
Antiphon XI

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and he opened not his mouth.

Psalm Tone (Psalm 90: 1-12)

- 7 For we are consumed by your / anger;
by your wrath we \ are overwhelmed.
- 8 **You have set our iniquities be- / fore you,
our secret sins in the \ light of your countenance.**
- 9 For all our days pass away under / your wrath;
our years come to an \ end like a sigh.
- 10 **The days of our life are seventy years
or perhaps eighty, if / we are strong; *
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, \ and we fly away.**
- 11 Who considers the power of your / anger?
Your wrath is as great as the \ fear that is due you.
- 12 **So teach us to / count our days
that we may \ gain a wise heart.**

Candles 9 and 10 are extinguished. A brief silence is kept.

Antiphon 13: Isaiah 38: 1-20

Lauds
Antiphon XIII

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

Psalm Tone (Isaiah 38: 10-20)

- 1 [In my] despair I said, "In the noonday of my life I / must depart; *
my unspent years are summoned to the por- \ tals of death."

Lauds
Antiphon XIII

From the gates of hell, O Lord, de - li - ver my soul.


Psalm Tone (Isaiah 38: 10-20)

- 2 And I said, “No more shall I see the Lord in the land of the / living, *
never more look on my kind among dwel- \ lers on earth.
- 3 My house is pulled down and I am un- / covered, *
as when a shepherd \ strikes his tent.
- 4 My life is rolled up like a / bolt of cloth, *
the threads cut off \ from the loom.
- 5 Between sunrise and sunset my life is brought / to an end; *
I cower and hope \ for the dawn.
- 6 Like a lion he has crushed / all my bones; *
like a swallow or thrush I utter plaintive cries; I mourn \ like a dove.
- 7 My weary eyes look / up to you; *
Lord, be my refuge in \ my affliction.”
- 8 But what can I say? for he has / spoken; *
it is he who \ has done this.
- 9 Slow and halting are my steps / all my days, *
because of the bitterness \ of my spirit.
- 10 O Lord, I recounted all these things to you and you / rescued me; *
when entreated, you re- \ stored my life.
- 11 I know now that my bitterness was / for my good, *
for you held me back from the pit of destruction, you cast all my sins \ behind you.
- 12 The grave does not thank you nor death / give you praise; *
nor do those at the brink of the grave hang \ on your promise.
- 13 It is the living, O Lord, the living who give you thanks as I / do this day; *
and parents speak of your faithfulness \ to their children.
- 14 You, Lord, are my / Savior; *
I will praise you with stringed instruments all the days of my life, in the house \ of the Lord.

Candles 11 and 12 are extinguished. A brief silence is kept.


Antiphon 14: Psalm 150

Lauds
Antiphon XIV



O Death, I will be your death; O Grave, I will be your destruction.

Psalm Tone (Psalm 150)



- 1 [Praise] God in his holy / temple;
praise him in the firmament \ of his power.
- 2 **Praise him for his / mighty acts;**
praise him for his ex- \ cellent greatness.
- 3 Praise him with the blast of the / ram's-horn;
praise him \ with lyre and harp.
- 4 **Praise him with timbrel / and dance;**
praise him \ with strings and pipe.
- 5 Praise him with resounding / cymbals;
praise him with loud- \ clanging cymbals.
- 6 **Let everything that / has breath**
/ praise the Lord.

Candles 13 and 14 are extinguished. A brief silence is kept.

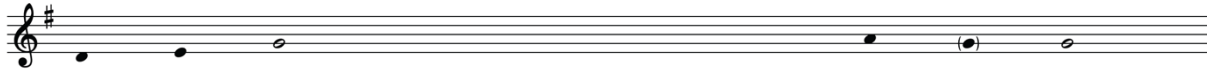
V. My flesh also shall rest in hope:
R. You will not let your holy One see corruption.

All stand. During the singing of the following Canticle, all other lights in the church are extinguished except one single candle.

Canticle 16: Luke 1: 68-79



1. Bless - ed be the Lord, the God of Is - ra - el; He has come to His peo - ple and set them free.
2. He has raised up for us a mighty sa - vior, born of the house of his ser - vant - Da - vid.



3. Through His holy prophets he promised of old that he would save us from our e - ne - mies,
4. He pro - mised to show mercy to our fa - thers.



3. from the hands of all who hate us.
4. and to remember his ho - ly co - ve - nant.



5. This was the oath he swore to our father A - bra - ham, to set us free from the hands of our e - ne - mies.
6. Free to worship him with - out fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life



7. You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, the dawn from on high shall break up - on us,
8. To give His people knowledge of sal - va - tion and to guide our feet in - to the way of peace.

After the Canticle, the remaining candle is taken from the stand and hidden out of sight. All sit or kneel for the following anthem.

Christus factus est

*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
even unto death, death on the cross.
Therefore God exalted Him
and gave Him a name
which is above all names.

A brief silence is observed. All remain seated for the following anthem.

Miserere mei Deus
Psalm 51 (abridged)

Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)
arr. Thomas Aláan

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness...
- 10 Hide your face from my sins*
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God,*
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 16 Open my lips, O Lord,*
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,*
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;*
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
- 19 Be favorable and gracious to Zion,*
and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- 20 Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices,
with burnt-offerings and oblations;*
then shall they offer young bullocks upon your altar.

All rise.

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.

Nothing further is said, but a noise (the strepitus) is made, and the remaining candle is brought from its hiding place and replaced on the stand. By its light, the ministers and people depart in silence.
