

Sermon Notes



STEPHEN MINISTRY
OPEN HOUSE
THURS, MARCH 26
11:30-1:00PM
COURTYARD CHAPEL

- FREE Event!
- "7 Ways to Care During a Major Medical Crisis"
- Q&A and Introduction to Stephen Ministry
- Light refreshments will be served

SIGN UP IN THE WELCOME CENTER




Life Notes

Steps to the Cross #5: Jesus Is Sentenced
John 19:1-16a

Opener:

When was the last time you stayed quiet because speaking up felt too costly? What made silence the easier choice?

Go Deeper: *(Exploring the Bible)*

1. Pilate declares Jesus innocent three times yet hands Him over anyway. What does Pilate's calculation reveal about how the fear of man competes with the fear of God?
2. The soldiers mock Jesus with a robe and crown — yet they are accidentally crowning a real King. What does it tell us about God that the truth about Jesus kept slipping out even through His enemies?
3. The chief priests declared, "We have no king but Caesar" (v. 15). What were they really surrendering in that moment? What does that warn us about the compromises we make under pressure?
4. Barabbas was guilty of the very crime Jesus was falsely accused of — yet the crowd freed him and sentenced Jesus. What does that exchange reveal about substitution and grace?

Live It: *(Applying to Our Lives)*

1. Where in your life are you most tempted to run "Pilate's calculation" — weighing the cost of standing with Jesus against the cost of going with the crowd?
2. Are there teachings of Jesus you have been softening or avoiding because they are unpopular right now? What makes those feel risky to hold?
3. Psalm 146 warns us not to put our trust in "princes." Who or what are the princes in your world that compete most with your trust in Jesus?
4. What would it look like this week to live as someone whose sentence has already been served — fully forgiven, fully free?

Daily Bible Readings (March 22-28)

Sun: John 19:1-16a	The King is Sentenced
Mon: Psalm 146	Trust the King
Tues: Isaiah 50:4-9a	Servant's Posture
Wed: Colossians 1:15-20	Cosmic King
Thurs: Romans 5:5-11	Died for Us
Fri: Philippians 2:5-11	Throne to Cross
Sat: Hebrews 12:1-3	Fix Your Eyes

Upcoming Week

Sunday, March 22
NOISY OFFERING FOR ORCHARD: AFRICA
 8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH
 8am Worship & Communion, WC
 9:30am Worship & Children's Church, WC
 11am Contemporary Worship & Children's Church, WC

Monday, March 23
 9-11:30am Food Pantry
 12:30-2:30pm GriefShare, C4
 4pm Confirmation Class, C1

Tuesday, March 24
 1:30-3:00pm Book Club, B7
 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5

Wednesday, March 25
 9am Feed My Starving Children (off-site)
 Bus leaves at 8am

9-11:30am Food Pantry
 10am Men's Bible Study, C1
 12:30pm AI-Anon, C4
 1pm Bell Rehearsal, CH
4pm Lenten Worship, WC
5pm Soup Supper, FH
 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC

CH = Chapel
 FH = Fellowship Hall
 C5 = Fireside Room
 NR = Nursery
 WC = Worship Center
 C4 = Community Room

Thursday, March 26
 10am Prayer Group, B7
 11am AI-Anon Meeting, C5
11:30am-1:00pm Stephen Ministry Open House

Friday, March 27
 OFFICE CLOSED

Saturday, March 28 - PALM SUNDAY WEEKEND
 8am Men's Bible Study, C5
 4pm Worship, WC

Pick up your Invite Cards at the Welcome Center!
 Scan the QR code to learn more.

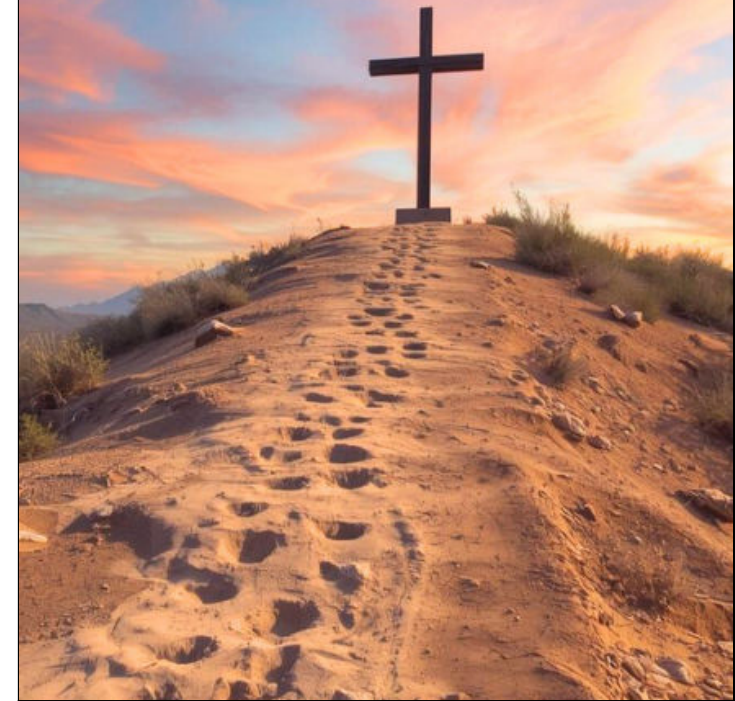





Victory Lutheran Church
 5946 E. University Drive, Mesa, AZ 85205
 hello@victorylutheran.com
 480-830-5024 | VictoryLutheran.com

 VictoryLutheran_Guest
 Password: Victory_46

STEPS TO THE CROSS



MARCH 21 & 22, 2026

Jesus Is Sentenced
John 19:1-16a



Todd Mathison, Lead Pastor
 Denton Bennet, Associate Pastor
 Dirk Duhstine, Chaplain
 Kristin Holton Prouty, Director of Worship & Music



Connect with us!



GOD TIME: God Walks with us in our Grief

Diane Snyder

My phone woke me at 3.20am. "He's bleeding out," said my nephew's wife. I sat on the edge of my bed and prayed, "Lord, I don't know how to do this!" "Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you." (Psalm 50:1)

Casey pulled through that night. When he was still on a ventilator, I asked if it helped him to know I was there even if I was in the waiting room. He nodded and a tear fell down the side of his face. For two months I worked and slept in the waiting room, being with him through 14 surgeries, talking him down after hallucinations in the middle of the night, encouraging his progress, and praying almost continuously! At one point the doctor called him a miracle (a word doctors rarely use). "The LORD your God is with you; He is mighty to save." (Zephaniah 3:17)

Casey died on Maundy Thursday. It's the deepest grief I have ever walked through. I was in the hospital the day he was born, held his hand as he died, and loved him every day in between. For months I walked around like an empty shell . . . my heart empty, my eyes swollen from crying, and my soul tired of crying out, "Why didn't You take me instead?!" "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, You are with me; Your rod and staff comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

Many people couldn't face the reality – including his wife and father. Casey would have been alone had I not been there. But the gift was mine. I've learned to not run away from hard times but to press in and feel all of the emotions and press in even deeper to the Lord and His strength. Grief is hard . . . as it should be. It means we loved. We invested. We gave. "He restores my soul." (Psalm 23:3)

Lord God, our times are in Your hands (Psalm 31:15). You have ordained our days (Psalm 139:16). You are our helper Who sustains us (Psalm 54:4). In You, Lord, we put our trust (Psalm 25:1). Amen.



GATHER TIME: Holy Week Services | March 28-April 5, 2026

PALM SUNDAY: A Triumphant Beginning: Holy Week begins as we wave palm branches and shout "Hosanna!" remembering Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4 & 6pm with Communion

Remembering the Last Supper and Garden Prayer. Our services include communion. Then, as the service ends, the stripping of the altar symbolizes the stripping away of Jesus' earthly life.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Will be open in the Fellowship Hall on both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday from 3–8pm. These interactive stations provide a quiet, contemplative space for personal devotion, with scripture, reflections, and hands-on elements to help you meditate on the sacrifice Jesus made for you.

GOOD FRIDAY: 4 & 6pm Rutter Requiem, Choir & Orchestra

A solemn and powerful Tenebrae experience—"tenebrae" meaning darkness. Through the music of John Rutter's "Requiem," choir and orchestra will lead us in a musical service reflecting on the sacrifice of Jesus and hope of eternal life. Candles are gradually extinguished, symbolizing the deepening darkness as Christ approached death.

EASTER SUNRISE—Sonrise!: Begins Easter morning outdoors at our 6am Sunrise Service, a beloved tradition at Victory. As the sun rises, we celebrate Christ's resurrection with communion, music by our Handbell Ensemble, and a message of hope as the Light breaks the power of darkness. A continental breakfast follows from 6:45–7:45am in the Fellowship Hall.

EASTER WEEKEND SERVICES: Our lead pastor will be preaching from John 20, and the Traditional Easter services include soloists, choir and brass on Saturday 4pm and Sunday 8am & 9:30am. If you could use extra time to park or want to get a better seat, the 8am service will be exactly the same as 9:30am. Contemporary worship is at 11am. Children's Church is available at 9:30 and 11am.



GO TIME: Retired, Not Finished — Called to Serve

Lynda Nordstrom



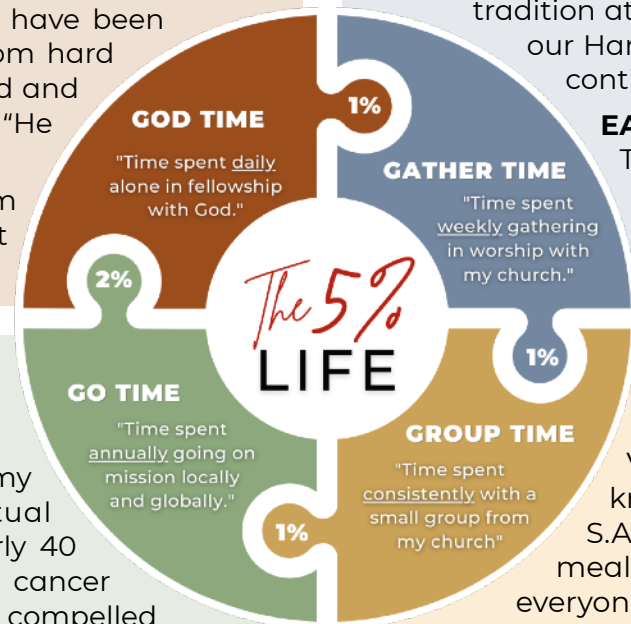
It was my 65th birthday on April 24, 2011, when I retired from my position as Vice President-Human Resources at RAM Mutual Insurance Company, in Esko, Minnesota. I worked there for nearly 40 years and I loved it! But my husband had been diagnosed with cancer and our two grown sons had moved to Scottsdale, Arizona, so I felt compelled to retire in order to spend precious time with my family.

Everyone had said, "In retirement, you're going to love all your FREE TIME!" And, at first I did!! I no longer had to set an alarm and, I must admit, I became a bit complacent. After so many busy years at the office, plus volunteering at church, community theater, school events and other committees, it felt so good to "do less."

With all our FREE TIME, we began living the "snowbird" lifestyle between Arizona and Minnesota; although we continued to sing with the church choir and community vocal groups. The years moved along quickly, and we then found ourselves worshiping at Victory Lutheran. What a blessing! The congregation welcomed us warmly and we were impressed by the pastors and the beautiful music from the choir.

After many "lazy" retirement years with so much FREE TIME, I attended Pastor Renee's "Spiritual Gifts" class. It was so interesting and I learned that one of my spiritual gifts is "leadership." This has inspired me to volunteer again....both at church and in our retirement community. I'm now one of the lectors and enjoy reading scripture whenever asked. And recently, I served as emcee for a variety show at Palmas Del Sol, our retirement community.

How about you? What gifts has God given you? If you're retired and still have FREE TIME, you might find an area where you can volunteer as well. In 1 Peter 4:10, it says, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in it's various forms."



GROUP TIME: Victory Connections Launch Denton Bennet, Associate Pastor

Victory is launching *Victory Connections*, an expanded version of the group formerly known as S.A.F.E., to create a more inclusive and connected church community. While S.A.F.E. has spent the past two years building meaningful relationships through shared meals, outings, and service projects, this new chapter opens those experiences to everyone at Victory Life Church (VLC).

Victory Connections is designed to bring people together across all life stages — whether single, married, widowed, or new to the church. Its mission is simple: foster friendships, reduce loneliness, and create opportunities to serve others. Through regular gatherings like dinners, local events, and food-packing projects, the group offers easy, welcoming entry points for people to connect and build relationships.

The name change reflects a broader vision. Loneliness is not limited to one group, and many people — including couples and newer members — can feel disconnected in a large church. Victory Connections removes barriers by being intentionally low-pressure and open to members, their families, and friends. No long-term commitment or specific status is required — just a willingness to show up.

Ultimately, this initiative is about ensuring no one at Victory has to walk through life alone. It's an open invitation to anyone looking to deepen relationships, meet new people, and experience community in a natural, meaningful way.

Get Connected! Event sign-ups are in the Welcome Center.

Judy Bailey — Victory Connections Leader
Questions? Reach out directly to judithmbailey@hotmail.com

