

Westminster Presbyterian Church
of Akron, Ohio
Good Friday Noon Prayer Service
April 19, 2019



What is Good Friday and why are we gathered here? It is a day of contradictions, to be sure. Now is the “acceptable time” of which Paul spoke in 2 Corinthians 6:2. We are always dying and rising to new life, but especially on this day. We are all the actors in this story: the people shouting “Crucify him!” and the women who stand vigil at the foot of the cross, the soldiers who cast lots for his tunic and Joseph of Arimathea who gave his own tomb for Jesus’ burial. Today we lament the pain of this world and we face our complicity in that pain; we seek to be witnesses to--and participants in--God’s power over the evil of this world. Now is the acceptable time – the time when Christ’s death sets us free to choose life.

Opening Words

On this Good Friday, we contemplate the good news of the cross: how Christ our Lord stretched out his arms to embrace a world of suffering and sin; how Christ our Lord stretched out his arms to save us.

Hymn 93 Ah, Holy Jesus HERZLIEBSTER JESU verses 1, 4

Call to Worship

Beside the gate, a woman asked Simon Peter if he was a disciple of Jesus.

He said, “I am not.”

Later they asked him again, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?”

Peter denied it and said, “I am not.”

Then one of the slaves of the high priest asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?”

Again, Peter denied it.

Ring bell three times.

Call to Confession

Since we have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin,
let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer of Confession

Christ Jesus was despised and rejected.

We thought nothing of him.

He was oppressed and afflicted.

We hid our faces from him.

He bore our sickness and sin.

We believed God was punishing him.

We, like sheep, have gone astray.

Yet he, like a lamb, was led to the slaughter.

Silent confession

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, grant us peace. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

This is the new covenant I make with you, says the Lord. I will put my law in your hearts: I will remember your sin no more. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, as we bow our heads beneath the cross pour out your Holy Spirit upon us to testify to the truth so that we may believe; this we pray through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. **Amen.**

The First Lesson

Hymn 98 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded PASSION CHORALE verses 1, 3

The Second Lesson

Hymn 95 He Never Said a Mumbalin' Word African-American Spiritual
verses 1, 4

The Third Lesson

Selected Verses from John 18 and 19

Prayers of Intercession

In his journey on earth, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the One who was able to save him from death. Now we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, in whose name we pray:

We pray for all who are despised and rejected, suffering and wounded, oppressed and afflicted.

Silence

We pray for all who feel forsaken, crying out by day and night: Where is my God?

Silence

We pray for those who are mocked and scorned, the subjects of insult and injury.

Silence

We pray for all who hunger and thirst, whose mouths are dry, whose bodies waste away.

Silence

We pray for all who face the end of life, who lie in the dust of the earth.

Silence

We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, source of all healing and endless life. Amen.

Dismissal

Jesus said, "It is finished."

All depart in silence.

