

GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
The Nails: A Service of Service



Mark Street United Church

The “Service of The Nails” is a series of readings, responses, and silent reflection and prayer designed to help us enter more deeply into the meaning of Good Friday. Please take a nail from the basket to serve as an icon of betrayal, and keep it with you for use during the service. Please prepare in silence for worship.

INVOCATION TO WORSHIP

God is with you.

And also with you

Once upon a time, God was Good, and Good was born in each of us. Good took on human form to move across the face of the earth. As we let Good direct us, it taught us its wisdom; we realized its inspiration, treasured its compassion and deployed its power. We rejoiced in the ways of Good and gladly acclaimed its rule in our hearts. But we became afraid of where Good might lead us. We questioned that Good could sustain us. Our misgivings suspected its mission. Cynical thoughts, malicious feelings and greedy hearts doubted Good. We shunned Good and avoided its causes. We scorned its manifestations. We felt insecure, even fooled and we accused Good of making false promises. We came to despise and reject Good. We subdued it by force and arrested it. We put Good on trial, twisted the evidence and believed the colluders' call to crucify, crucify! With the uncaring throng, we taunted, tortured and helped execute Good. We buried Good in darkness. We shrouded Good in desolate gloom and abandoned it. But its ways did not leave us.

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Merciful God, those who crave wealth and power made Jesus an example to others who might follow his ministry of empowerment and shared power, of equality and mutuality, of hope and compassion. Those who hate vulnerability mocked and tormented this gentle and humble servant. Those who fear justice tortured and executed this non-violent activist. Grant that we may examine ourselves to realize our own cravings for wealth and power, our own hatred of fragility, our own fears of uncertainty and impartiality. Help us to recognize those nails which we drive into his cross today. Help us to become more faithful disciples of his spoken and lived teachings. Amen.

THE NAILS OF THE CROSS

THE NAIL OF PRIDE – MATTHEW 23.2-22

The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat...They do all their deeds to be seen by their place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by their peers. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all siblings. And call no one your head of household on earth, for you have one Head of Household, who is heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the anointed one. The one who is greatest among you shall be your servant; those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and whoever humbles themselves will be exalted.

Silence and prayer

God, help us consider our own pride and where it leads.

O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our pride hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

O God, we know too that our pride hurts you.

Sung Response

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;

Were you there when they crucified my Lord.

THE NAIL OF GREED

LUKE 12.16-21, MATTHEW 5.42, 19.21, LUKE 10.4

Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.' Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to those who cannot pay you back, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.

SILENCE AND PRAYER

O God, help us consider our greed, how we abandon others in need, how we think of ourselves first.

O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our acts of greed hurt us and create walls between us and others.

O God, we know too that our greed hurts you.

Sung Response

Where you there when he walked the road alone?

Were you there when he walked the road alone?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;

Were you there when he walked the road alone?

THE NAIL OF EXCLUSION – LUKE 10.29-37

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ Jesus replied, ‘Someone was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a despised Samaritan clan member while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

SILENCE AND PRAYER

O God, help us consider how we exclude others, how we hold ourselves as superior and seek to shame and reject others.

O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our exclusion hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

O God, we know too that our exclusion hurts you.

Sung Response

Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?

Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;

Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?

THE NAIL OF JUDGMENT—MATTHEW 18.23-33, LUKE 6.37-38

For this reason the reign of heaven may be compared to a ruler who wished to settle accounts with the slaves. When the ruler began reckoning, one who owed ten thousand talents was brought and, as he could not pay, his ruler ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the ruler of that slave released him and forgave the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred coins; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly

distressed, and they went and reported to their ruler all that had taken place. Then the ruler summoned him and said to him, “You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?”

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

SILENCE AND PRAYER

O God, help us consider how we pass judgment, how we seek to deflect responsibility while despising others who fall short.

O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our judgments hurt us and create walls between us and others.

O God, we know too that our judgments hurt you.

Sung Response

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?

THE NAIL OF HATRED – LUKE 6.22, 32-35

Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Human One. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even hypocrites love those who love them.

If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even hypocrites do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even hypocrites lend to one another, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, who is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked

SILENCE AND PRAYER

O God, help us consider how we repay unkindness with unkindness, how we fail to show compassion, even to those who hate us.

O God, do not let us deceive ourselves. Our hatred hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

O God, we know too that our hatred hurts you.

Sung Response

Were you there when the sun refused shine?

Were you there when the sun refused shine?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

THE NAIL OF SELF-PRESERVATION – MATTHEW 16.21-26

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Teacher! This must never happen to you.' But Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a

stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’ Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?’

SILENCE AND PRAYER

O God, help us consider how we are try to cling to life and comfort above all else, how we cast aside your love and law so as to risk nothing that we have.

O God, do not let us deceive ourselves.

Our self-preservation hurts us and creates walls between us and others.

O God, we know too that our self-preservation hurts you.

Sung Response

Were you there when they mocked the child of God?

Were you there when they mocked the child of God?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;

Were you there when they mocked the child of God?

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

Confident of the hope received by God's love, we bring our hearts – broken, stained with hurt and shame, filled with falling short - to the One who sprinkles them with grace, cleansing them with the waters of life.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Like little children who can wander off in a crowded store, we lose our way, God. We betray you when we do not befriend the poor; we deny you when we are afraid to speak up for the voiceless; we turn our backs on you when we do not do good for others; we crucify you when we do harm or allow it instead of doing healing. We run from the foot of the cross with all who have forgotten you and forsaken the way which you offer to us. Forgive us, friend and teacher, and fill us with the mercy, the hope, the life you lost when they took your life for showing so much hope and mercy.

Please come forward with your nail and lay it before the cross as a renewed commitment to God's loving, peaceful, and risky reign while "Jesus, Remember me" is played.

THE PROMISE OF MERCY – PSALM 86.1-7

Incline your ear, God, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God; be gracious to me, for to you do I cry all day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, God, I lift up my soul.

For you, God, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

Give ear, God, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication. In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

HYMN: STAY WITH US THROUGH THE NIGHT 182

*When you are ready, please leave the sanctuary in quiet.
(Service adapted from Rev. Miller Hoffman)*