



EVANGELICAL REFORMED
United Church of Christ
– An Open and Affirming Congregation –



GOOD FRIDAY

A Service of Silence and Sorrow

April 7, 2023

About Our Service

No one enjoys experiencing sorrow, lament, or grief, yet these are natural parts of the rhythms of life. These moments make us feel vulnerable and exposed so we avoid them, and in doing so, we deny ourselves an important opportunity to meet God in different ways. To be clear, we should not seek out sorrow, lament, or grief, nor should we chase these experiences in order to pass some kind of “test” from God. God does not play games with creation. God does not think so little of our hearts and minds to put us through experiences that cause us harm; rather, in the midst of so much pain in the world, God makes Godself known in the midst of it all.

Our Good Friday service rests in the belief that in places of sorrow, lament, and grief we meet God differently. In our culture of conflict avoidance, we too often rush through these moments, touching down as lightly as possible as we reach out for the new life offered on Easter Sunday. In doing so, we do not give ourselves a chance to meet the God who sits with us in our sorrow. With this in mind, central to this service is creating a space where people can gather around the cross with as much vulnerability as possible in silence and in sorrow.

This service relies heavily on facilitating silence; embrace it. Bulletins are often used as a comfort tool. Generally speaking, this is a good idea, but for this particular service, the jarring nature of not having something to hold will help to create a space that invites openness and vulnerability.

We will be prompted into silence with the ringing of a chime and invited back by singing a verse of, *Were You There?*

- v. 1 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

At the conclusion of the service, we will sing: *Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*
Worshippers will exit in silence.