

**EASTER SERVICES**

Easter Breakfast 8:30am

Easter Service 9:30am

Easter Egg Hunt 10:50am

Service In-Person and Livestreamed at [rfcov.org](http://rfcov.org)

Adam J Christian

**Lead Pastor**

Brian Majerus

**Pastor of Christian Formation**

**& Family Ministries**

Emily Myers

**Director of Worship Ministry**

Neil Vance

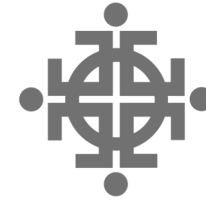
**Director of Youth & Children's Ministry**

Andrew Ertsgaard

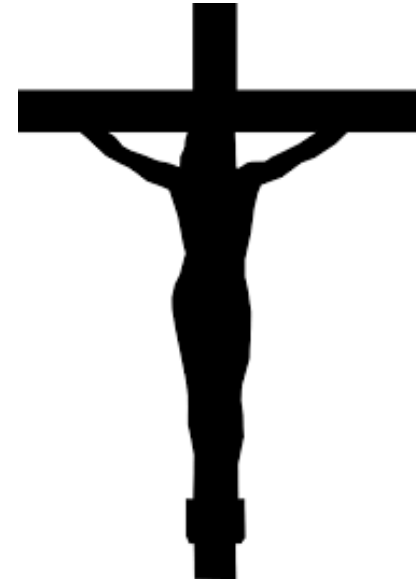
**Director of Digital Ministry**

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**GOOD FRIDAY  
SERVICE**



**MARCH 29, 2024**

**FIRST COVENANT CHURCH  
RIVER FALLS**

## Good Friday: A Service of Shadows

On Good Friday we pause to observe the most grief-stricken of holy days as we remember Christ's suffering and death on the cross. Before we can race ahead to the good news of Easter Sunday we must first confront the horrors of Good Friday and take a clear-eyed look at what Jesus endured for our sake. He was wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities; his suffering exceeds what we can imagine and to simply gloss over it would be an insult to his great love which motivated this truly outrageous action of self-sacrifice.

Tonight we are marking Good Friday by holding a service of shadows. It is a tradition which stretches back to the 700s when Christians would hold night-long prayer vigils to commemorate Christ's death. Through the course of the vigil they would slowly extinguish candles, each one symbolizing apostles and followers of Jesus who fled and abandoned him on the night of his arrest, trial, and execution. The room would slowly grow darker until the only remaining light came from the large Christ-candle. The service would culminate with a loud noise representing Jesus' death, and then the candle would be extinguished to mark Jesus' entrance into the grave. The total darkness of the room suggested the hopeless and despair of the disciples, indeed the whole world, when death had appeared to have triumphed over God.

However, as the service went through the night, the light from the dawn would slowly begin to light up the room again and served as a foreshadowing of the resurrection and the hope of Jesus permanently dispelling the darkness.

### A GOOD FRIDAY PRAYER

Gracious Father,

We remember today, the pain and suffering of the cross, and all that Jesus was willing to endure, so we could be set free. He paid the price, such a great sacrifice, to offer us the gift of eternal life.

Help us never to take for granted this huge gift of love on our behalf. Help us to be reminded of the cost of it all. Forgive us for being too busy, or distracted by other things, for not fully recognizing what you have freely given, what you have done for us.

Thank you Lord that by your wounds we are healed. Thank you that because of your huge sacrifice we can live free. Thank you that sin and death have been conquered and that your Power is everlasting.

Thank you that we can say with great hope, "It is finished..." For we know what's still to come. And death has lost its sting. We praise you for you are making all things new.

In the name of Jesus Christ, the Lamb Who Was Slain,

Amen

## **The Seventh Candle - The Shadow of Death**

Luke 23:44-49

Song - *Mery*

John 19:38-42

Song - *O Praise the Name*

### **A Time of Silence**

### **Words of Hope**

John 16:16 & 1:1-5

### **Dismissal and Blessing**

Jesus Christ, our Lord, was crucified for us all. Until the dawn of Easter morning let us keep vigil by the tomb, in the silence of our hearts, until we too emerge into the radiance of the resurrection.

Go in peace. May Jesus Christ, who for our sake became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, keep you and strengthen you this night and forever.

Amen.

### **Depart in Silence**

Prayer is available after the service for those who wish to receive it.

## **Order of Service**

### **Gathering**

Please Enter in Silence

### **Greeting**

Welcome from Pastor Adam

### **Call to Worship**

From Isaiah 53

*Who has believed what we have heard?*

*And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

*For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of the dry ground.*

*He had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity.*

*Surely he has born our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted  
him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.*

### **Song**

*By His Wounds/Nothing but the Blood*

### **Opening Prayer**

### **Lighting of the Candles**

John 1:1-13

### **Remembering Our Abandonment of Jesus**

Mark 14:26-31

## The First Candle - The Shadow of Betrayal

Luke 23:26-34

Song - *Man of Sorrows*

## The Second Candle - The Shadow of Desertion

A Responsive Reading from Psalm 22:1-5, 7-8

*Pastor: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?*

**Congregation: O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.**

*P: Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.*

**C: To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.**

*P: All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;*

**C: Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver, let him rescue the one in whom he delights!**

Song - *How Deep the Father's Love*

## The Third Candle - The Shadow of Unshared Grief

John 19:25b-27

Song - *Here is Love*

## The Fourth Candle - The Shadow of Accusation

Matthew 27:45-54

Song - *Lead Me to the Cross*

## The Fifth Candle - The Shadow of Crucifixion

Mark 15:21-32

Song - *When I Survey the Wonderous Cross*

## The Sixth Candle - The Shadow of Disunity

A Prayer for Unity

*Pastor: Lord, we remember the words of the apostle, when he wrote: "Do your best to preserve the unity that binds you together. There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God called you. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There is one God and Father of all: who is the Lord of all, works through all, and in all."*

**Congregation: But Lord, we are slow to learn. We dwell on our differences and refuse to see our similarities.**

*P: We suffer from a worldly mind that embraces a divisive spirit and from a mistaken zeal that fuels religious pride.*

**C: Lord, forgive us. Make us one in our eagerness to put aside differences and speak together your good news.**

*P: Make us one, in concern for the poor, the hurt, the downtrodden, and the lost.*

**C: Make us one. Unite us as a living body under Jesus Christ the one true Head who is always faithful, who never fails us, and who will one day come to gather all who claim him as Lord.**

**Amen.**