

**PARK HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
“GOOD FRIDAY: A FINAL JOURNEY TO THE
CROSS”
REV. JOHN L. THOMPSON
April 10, 2009
John 12:32
7:00 P.M. Service**

The Cross was a symbol of torture. It struck fear in the hearts of the people. It was Rome's means of state control. The penalty of crucifixion was always preceded by scourging; after this preliminary punishment, the condemned person had to carry his own cross to the place of execution, exposed to the snarls and insults of the people. On arrival at the place of execution the cross was lifted high.

That act of lifting Jesus high up on the cross was intended for him to die as a condemned man by crucifixion. As a matter of fact, Mark's gospel says very clearly ***“And they crucified Him.”*** (Mark 15:24).

On this final Journey to the Cross, let's take note of the act of lifting him up. That is the point at which we can all celebrate. Why? Listen to the words of John's gospel, chapter 12, verse 32: ***“But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”*** We have come tonight to lift him up. Let's lift him up with our voices, with our singing, with our words, with our music, with our praise and with ourselves. Jesus spoke of his death by crucifixion as being lifted up.

Martin Luther said, **“Man must always have a cross.”** Jesus said: ***“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”*** Every one of us does have a cross to bear. The journey to the cross has brought us here to Calvary; the place where his blood was shed.

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day;
And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared, unworthy though I be,
For me a blood bought free reward, a golden harp for me!
'Tis strung and tuned for endless years, and formed by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears no other name but Thine.

Standing beneath the cross we are faced with the wonder of his
redeeming love and our unworthiness. If you have any doubt as to the extent
of God's love for you, I invite you to look at the cross of Christ.

Amen.