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A Good Friday Experience: Reflecting Around Cedar Lake

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Tetelestai. Pronounced tuh-tel-uh-sty, this Greek word is one of the most important in the history of Christendom. Translated in English, "It is finished," this phrase marks the final statement from Jesus before he breathed his last breath on the cross as recorded in John 19:30. And this year, Cedarville University will mark this most somber and significant event with an immersive indoor and outdoor experience on Good Friday, April 2.

"Seven: The Good Friday Experience" will be a unique audio-visual event exploring seven facets of the sufferings of Jesus. The first experience will be offered for students, faculty and staff at 10 a.m. on April 2 in the Dixon Ministry Center's Jeremiah Chapel, and it will be repeated at 11 a.m., noon, 1 and 2 p.m. for the general public. COVID protocols will be observed.

The exegetical artwork of 2009 Cedarville alumnus Christopher Powers, pastor of Community Christian Church in Sabina, Ohio, will provide the visual presentation of the events of Jesus' crucifixion. Visit fullofeyes.com to learn more.

At 2:45 p.m. university operations will cease as the campus community encircles Cedar Lake for a moment of silence at 3 p.m. to remember the moment that Jesus died. At that moment, the bells in the Dixon Ministry Center will chime 33 times to mark the 33 years of Jesus' life.

"When you think about the uniqueness of Cedarville, it makes sense to make this a significant moment in our campus life," noted Dr. Tom Hutchison, professor of educational ministries and applied theology, who is serving on the Good Friday committee. "During a normal school year, our students would have this day as a holiday. This year, we have an opportunity to gather as believers to worship and remember together this special moment in our faith."

It was Hutchison who suggested ringing the bells 33 times at 3 p.m. This audible reminder of the moment of death harkens back to an earlier time in American history when small towns and villages would sound bells to communicate important events, including the death of a member of the community. This included a chime for each year of the person's life, which would cause adults and children alike to pause so they might know who had passed.

"It is right for us to pause, reflect and remind ourselves of the significance of Christ's death, the game-changer for all of history," Hutchison added. "We want to remember in a way, without sounding trite, that will continue ringing in our ears, reminding us why we're here."

Dr. Chris Miller, senior professor of biblical studies and member of the Good Friday committee, created an extensive timeline of the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion. His work will be offered as a guidebook to participants in the Good Friday Experience.

“We want this to be an experience that will move people and also inform them,” Miller said. “We wanted to put out this carefully detailed outline of all that is happening between Thursday evening and Friday afternoon – the prayer and betrayal in Gethsemane, the desertion by the disciples, the three hearings with the Jewish leaders, the three Roman trials, all of the intrigue around all that.”

“Good Friday is when the atonement happens, and we want to do it justice,” he added. “We want to make this a memorable and teachable moment that will give students and the Cedarville family something deeply valuable that they can treasure and remember to make the atonement more of the focal point of all our lives.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including its [Master of Divinity](#) program, strong graduation, and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.

Story Written by Clem Boyd, Communication Content Manager, Cedarville University