

HOME WORSHIP FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

with full scripture text

9 APRIL 2020

While Easter is every Sunday, the days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are like one great annual Sunday. Because of the pandemic, we cannot do these important services together in church. While Easter is a joyful festival, we keep it now in a time of difficulty and worldwide sorrow. Still, we believe that Christ is with us in his word, by his Spirit drawing us together as one before God. We believe that the gospel of Christ gives us strength amid distress and comfort in the face of our sufferings.

These three services are really one event, stretched over three days. As a sign of unity, you might consider using these three resources for prayer at the time the congregation would have gathered in the church building or at another commonly designated time. (Alternatively, several homes together or the entire congregation may observe these services using Zoom, Facetime, or some other internet platform.)

For this Maundy Thursday service, provide a bowl of water and a clean towel for each person present.

These resources for worship at home on the Three Days were developed by Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw for Resurrection Lutheran Church, Arlington, Virginia, and are offered for ecumenical use. They have been slightly adapted for United Methodist use.

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

THE FIRST OF THE THREE DAYS

Set out the bowls of water and clean towels. Sit with them before you and begin with these texts. First, remember God's forgiveness:

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us
even when we were dead in sin,
and made us alive together with Christ.
By grace we have been saved.
Our sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ.
Almighty God, strengthen us with power
through the Holy Spirit,
that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. **Amen.**

Then pray the prayer for this night:

Holy God, source of all love,
on the night of his betrayal,
Jesus gave us a new commandment,
to love one another as he loves us.
Write this commandment in our hearts,
and give us the will to serve others
as he was servant of all,
your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Then read this reading:

FIRST READING: Exodus 12:1-14 (CEB)

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month will be the first month; it will be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole Israelite community: On the tenth day of this month they must take a lamb for each household, a lamb per house. If a household is too small for a lamb, it should share one with a neighbor nearby. You should divide the lamb in proportion to the number of people who will be eating it. Your lamb should be a flawless year-

old male. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You should keep close watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month. At twilight on that day, the whole assembled Israelite community should slaughter their lambs. They should take some of the blood and smear it on the two doorposts and on the beam over the door of the houses in which they are eating. That same night they should eat the meat roasted over the fire. They should eat it along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Don't eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over fire with its head, legs, and internal organs. Don't let any of it remain until morning, and burn any of it left over in the morning. This is how you should eat it. You should be dressed, with your sandals on your feet and your walking stick in your hand. You should eat the meal in a hurry. It is the Passover of the Lord. I'll pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I'll strike down every oldest child in the land of Egypt, both humans and animals. I'll impose judgments on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be your sign on the houses where you live. Whenever I see the blood, I'll pass over you. No plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

"This day will be a day of remembering for you. You will observe it as a festival to the Lord. You will observe it in every generation as a regulation for all time."

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Then pray this Psalm:

PSALM 116 (CEB)

I love the Lord because he hears my requests for mercy.
I'll call out to him as long as I live,
because he listens closely to me.
Death's ropes bound me;
the distress of the grave found me—
I came face-to-face with trouble and grief.
So I called on the Lord's name:
"Lord, please save me!"
The Lord is merciful and righteous;
our God is compassionate.
The Lord protects simple folk;
he saves me whenever I am brought down.
I tell myself, You can be at peace again,
because the Lord has been good to you.
You, God, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears,
and my foot from stumbling,
so I'll walk before the Lord in the land of the living.
I have remained faithful, even when I said,
"I am suffering so badly!"
even when I said, out of fear,

“Everyone is a liar!”
What can I give back to the Lord
for all the good things he has done for me?
I’ll lift up the cup of salvation.
I’ll call on the Lord’s name.
I’ll keep the promises I made to the Lord in the presence of all God’s people.
The death of the Lord’s faithful is a costly loss in his eyes.
Oh yes, Lord, I am definitely your servant!
I am your servant and the son of your female servant—
you’ve freed me from my chains.
So I’ll offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to you,
and I’ll call on the Lord’s name.
I’ll keep the promises I made to the Lord
in the presence of all God’s people,
in the courtyards of the Lord’s house,
which is in the center of Jerusalem.
Praise the Lord!

Then read this reading:

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (CEB)

I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you: on the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me.” He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me.” Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you broadcast the death of the Lord until he comes.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Then read the Gospel:

GOSPEL: John 13:1-17, 31b-35 (CEB)

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Before the Festival of Passover, Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them fully. Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal. The devil had already provoked Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. Then he poured water

into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later."

"No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me."

Simon Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus responded, "Those who have bathed need only to have their feet washed, because they are completely clean. You disciples are clean, but not every one of you." He knew who would betray him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you is clean."

After he washed the disciples' feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table. He said to them, "Do you know what I've done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly, because I am. If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do. I assure you, servants aren't greater than their master, nor are those who are sent greater than the one who sent them. Since you know these things, you will be happy if you do them..."

"Now the Human One has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify the Human One in himself and will glorify him immediately. Little children, I'm with you for a little while longer. You will look for me—but, just as I told the Jewish leaders, I also tell you now—'Where I'm going, you can't come.'

"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Having read these readings, think of this:

This word about the love of Jesus is always the beginning of any time. By remembering the Passover and the Last Supper and the footwashing, we are not trying to get back to an old time. In the face of the suffering and death with which the world is filled, our trying would not come to much. But God's word comes to us now. To our time. Even when we cannot meet for the holy supper together, this word—which takes these three nights to say—comes to us: Jesus Christ is our forgiveness. He is the Lamb whose blood marks the doors of our houses and bodies. In the power of the Spirit, he has washed our feet and our lives. And he turns us toward our neighbors. In this word—and in the cross proclaimed tomorrow and the resurrection proclaimed on Saturday night—Easter comes out to hold us already.

Here you may share your thoughts with others. Or, if a Maundy Thursday sermon has been prerecorded, listen to it or view it here.

If you have the United Methodist Hymnal, you might now read or sing

Hymn # 432 “Jesu, Jesu”

Or see: https://hymnary.org/text/kneels_at_the_feet_of_his_friends

Hymn # 292 “What Wondrous Love Is This”

Or see: https://hymnary.org/text/what_wondrous_love_is_this_o_my_soul_o_m

Here each person may wash their own hands, using the water in the bowl in front of them, recalling Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. Or, if there are several worshipping together and it is safe to do so, each person may pour water on another’s hands, thinking of the love of Jesus poured out on each of us in this difficult time. Please note, that this action may be entirely omitted, especially if someone in your house has tested positive for the coronavirus.

Then you may pray these intercessions for our church and world:

United with Christians around the globe on this Maundy Thursday, let us pray for the church, the earth, our troubled world, and all in need, responding to each petition with the words, **Your mercy is great.**

A brief silence.

Blessed are you, holy God, for the church. Gather all the baptized around your presence in the Word. Strengthen the body of your people even when we cannot assemble for worship. Grant our pastor and church leaders faithfulness and creativity for their ministry in this time, and accompany those preparing for baptism.

A brief silence.

Hear us, holy God. **Your mercy is great.**

Blessed are you, bountiful God, for this good earth and for the flowering of springtime. Save dry lands from destructive droughts. Protect the waters from pollution. Allow in this time the planting of fields for food. Make us into caregivers of your plants and animals.

A brief silence.

Hear us, bountiful God. **Your mercy is great.**

Blessed are you, sovereign God, for our nation. Inspire all people to live in peace and concord. Grant wisdom and courage to heads of state and to legislators as they face the coronavirus. Lead our elected officials to champion the cause of the needy.

A brief silence.

Hear us, sovereign God. **Your mercy is great.**

Blessed are you, faithful God, for you accompany suffering humanity with love. Abide wherever the coronavirus has struck. Visit all who mourn their dead; all who have contracted the virus; those who are quarantined or stranded away from home; those who have lost their employment; those who fear the present and the future. Support physicians, nurses, and home health aides; medical researchers; and the World Health Organization.

A brief silence.

Hear us, faithful God. **Your mercy is great.**

Blessed are you, gracious God, for you care for the needy. We beg you to feed the hungry, protect the refugee, embrace the distressed, house the homeless, nurse the sick, and comfort the dying. Especially we pray for those we name before you now.

A brief silence.

Hear us, gracious God. **Your mercy is great.**

Blessed are you, loving God, that your Son knelt before us, your unworthy servants. Preserve our lives, comfort our anxiety, and receive now the petitions of our hearts.

A longer period of silence.

Hear us, loving God. **Your mercy is great.**

Blessed are you, eternal God, for all who have died in the faith, especially the martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whom we remember today, and those whom we name before you here.

A brief silence.

At the end, bring us with them into your everlasting glory.

Hear us, eternal God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive, merciful God, our prayers, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the host of our meal of life, who died and rose that we might live with you, now and forever.

Amen.

Again, if you have the United Methodist Hymnal, you might read or sing

HYMN # 549 “Where Charity and Love Prevail”

Or see: [https://hymnary.org/text/where charity and love prevail](https://hymnary.org/text/where_charity_and_love_prevail)

Finally, remembering Jesus going to his arrest and his death, the events from which all the mercy that fills this night flows, pray this Psalm.

PSALM 88 (CEB)

Lord, God of my salvation,
by day I cry out,
even at night, before you—
let my prayer reach you!

Turn your ear to my outcry
because my whole being is filled with distress;
my life is at the very brink of hell.

I am considered as one of those plummeting into the pit.
I am like those who are beyond help,
drifting among the dead,
lying in the grave, like dead bodies—
those you don't remember anymore,
those who are cut off from your power.

You placed me down in the deepest pit,
in places dark and deep.

Your anger smothers me;
you subdue me with it, wave after wave. Selah

You've made my friends distant.
You've made me disgusting to them.

I can't escape. I'm trapped!
My eyes are tired of looking at my suffering.
I've been calling out to you every day, Lord—
I've had my hands outstretched to you!

Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do ghosts rise up and give you thanks? Selah

Is your faithful love proclaimed in the grave,
your faithfulness in the underworld?

Are your wonders known in the land of darkness,
your righteousness in the land of oblivion?

But I cry out to you, Lord!
My prayer meets you first thing in the morning!

Why do you reject my very being, Lord?
Why do you hide your face from me?

Since I was young I've been afflicted, I've been dying.

I've endured your terrors. I'm lifeless.
Your fiery anger has overwhelmed me;
your terrors have destroyed me.
They surround me all day long like water;
they engulf me completely.
You've made my loved ones and companions distant.
My only friend is darkness.

The Three Days continue tomorrow with the service for Good Friday.