

HOME WORSHIP FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

without 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

Set out 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 the following:

FIRST READING: Exodus 12:1-14

PSALM 116

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

GOSPEL: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

After the readings:

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

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 aren't 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

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

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