

HOME WORSHIP FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

simplified

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 adapted and simplified for United Methodist use, especially use with children.

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

Set out bowls of water and clean towels. Sit with them before you and begin with these texts.

Pray the prayer for this night:

Holy God, you are the source of all love.
Write Jesus' commandment to love others on our hearts.
Give us the will to love and serve others in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Then read the following:

PSALM 116:12-19

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

After the reading(s):

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

Here you may share your thoughts with others, perhaps reflecting on Jesus' words: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Or, if a Maundy Thursday sermon has been prerecorded, listen to it or view it here.

After reflection, 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:

Let us pray.

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. Accompany those preparing for baptism.

A brief silence.

Hear us, holy God.

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.

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

A brief silence.

Hear us, almighty God.

Blessed are you, faithful God, for you accompany suffering humanity with love. Be present wherever the coronavirus has struck. Visit all who mourn their dead. Reassure all who have contracted the virus. Strengthen the quarantined or those stranded away from home. Sustain those who have lost their employment. Give courage to 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.

Blessed are you, gracious God, for you care for the needy. Feed the hungry. Protect the refugee. Embrace the distressed. House the homeless. Nurse the sick. Comfort the dying. Especially we pray for those we name before you now.

A brief silence.

Hear us, gracious God.

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

Amen.

Conclude with these words:

Put love above all else,
and let Christ's peace rule in our hearts.

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