



Dear St. James's Church,

With nightfall tonight, our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we join Christians around the world in celebrating the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. This is one of the most intimate and embodied days of the church year, as tonight we remember Jesus's last supper, washing the disciples' feet, and giving us the commandment to love one another. My heart and my prayers are with you as you keep Maundy Thursday at home.

This evening, set aside some time to gather together around the dinner table. Set the table and make it feel warm and welcoming. *Choose a meal that can stay warm until you are ready to serve it.* The order of worship is below, along with links to the readings, music, and sermons.

If you live alone, you are still invited to keep this day: reading, singing, and praying aloud in your home. God is with you

The peace of Christ, who loves us to the end, be with you this night and always.

+Pastor Neil

### What you'll need to get ready:

- This order of worship
- Candle and matches
- Bible
- Food and drink
- Bowl or sink with some water
- Towel
- Be ready to clear the table after dinner
- Choose someone to be the leader (this person will read the leader parts)
- Choose reader/s to read the first reading, Gospel reading, and `teaching`
- Everyone will say the **bolded words**

# MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP AT HOME

## GATHERING

*Begin by lighting a candle. If you have a cross, place it on the table. Something special and holy is about to happen.*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*The leader says:*

In this season of Lent we have heard God's call to struggle against sin, death, and the devil. This is the holy struggle to which we were called at baptism. It is a struggle in which our Lord Jesus has gone ahead of us and has won! We cling to Him in faith. God never wearies of mending our broken places, forgiving our sin, and giving the peace of reconciliation. On this night let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor, and enter the celebration of Eastertide reconciled with God and one another.

*Take a time of silence for reflection and self-examination.*

*The leader begins:*

I confess to God Almighty,  
before the whole company of heaven, and to you, my family,  
that I have sinned by my own fault  
in thought, word, and deed.

I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me,  
forgive me all my sins,  
and bring me to everlasting life.

**Almighty and merciful God  
grant you healing, pardon,  
and forgiveness of all your sins.**

**What Jesus accomplished in Holy Week, He did for you.**

Amen.

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What Jesus accomplished in Holy Week, He did for you.

**Amen.**

## GREETING AND PRAYER

*The leader says:*

The God of grace is with us all.

Let us pray.

Holy God, source of all love, on the very night when friends would betray, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as Christ loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts, we pray, and give us the will to serve others just as you were the servant of all in your Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING – 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

*In the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper we experience intimate fellowship with Christ because eating the meal brings Christ right inside us. We believe that Jesus' body is in and with the bread and His blood is in and with the wine, so when we eat it we're receiving Him! We're also connected in love to one another because Jesus is them, too –He's in us all with great love. Faithful participation in this meal is a living proclamation of Christ's death to take away all our sins, and it will continue to be that until Christ comes in the future.*

*Before the reading, the reader says:*

A reading from First Corinthians.

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

*After the reading, the reader says:*

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL READING – John 13:1-17, 31b-35

*The story of the last supper in John's Gospel recalls a remarkable event not mentioned elsewhere: Jesus performs the duty of a slave, washing the feet of the disciples and urging them to do the same for one another.*

*(You could go round and round the table, everyone reading a verse until the reading is completed.)*

*Before the reading, the reader says:*

The holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup> During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup> rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. <sup>5</sup> Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. <sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." <sup>8</sup> Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

<sup>12</sup> When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" <sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup> If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup> Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' <sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

*After the reading, the reader says:*

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## TEACHING

*The leader reads:*

Did you know Jesus' last night with his friends was spent in a place called the Upper Room? That's where they gathered around a table for their meal. They thought it was going to be a meal just like so many other meals they had shared with Jesus, but this one turned out to be unlike any meal they had ever known.

You may have seen pictures of the Last Supper where Jesus and the disciples are sitting in chairs, the way we do it. But actually, they reclined on cushions at a table close to the floor. It was a “laid back” occasion.

There were two really important things that happened at this meal. It was the first time Jesus took the bread and wine, blessed them, and said, “This is my body” and “This is my blood.” Every time we celebrate communion, we’re remembering this night when Jesus shared himself with the disciples around the table. Jesus has promised to still to come to us, right down to this day, and share Himself with us in the bread and wine.

Christians celebrate Holy Communion when the church is together. The meal isn’t only about each one receiving Jesus in the bread and wine; it’s also about loving one another; we are God’s family and His Son, Jesus, is with us.

In fact, before Jesus even got to the part where He gave the disciples Holy Communion for the first time, He did something to show them how much He loved them. He knelt before them and washed their feet. It was Jesus’s way of showing them how to love and really serve and care for one another. Jesus gave them (and us) a new commandment, that we love one another as He has loved us. In fact, the word *maundy* means *commandment*.

And Jesus has done much more than even that because, on the next day, Good Friday, He went to the cross to wash away our sins with His blood. Every one of us is really, really loved!

## **FOOT WASHING**

*The leader says:*

We have heard Jesus’s commandment to love one another. We who receive God’s love in Jesus Christ are called to be servants to each other as Jesus became our servant. Our commitment to this loving service is signified in the washing of feet, following the example that Jesus gave us on the night before He died.

*You are invited (but not obligated) to participate in this sign of loving service. Here are a couple of options:*

- *Take turns washing the feet or hands of the people in your house. You can do this at the table or at the sink or tub. Pour water gently over the feet and dry with a towel.*
- *Perhaps you are on your own at home. Wash your own feet or hands as a sign of loving service to yourself and others. Particularly during this time of pandemic, washing one’s own hands is an act of loving service. If the absence of physical touch during this time is painful for you, consider taking time to name that before God in prayer.*
- *If you prefer not to wash, you can simply meditate on Christ’s love for you, and your own call to loving service.*

# PRAYERS

*The leader says:*

Let's go around the table and share our prayers with God. First, we'll go around the table and each person will say, "We thank you, God..." and then they'll add something we're thankful for. Each one does this. Then we'll go around again, but this time each person will say, "We ask you, God..." and then they'll add something we want to ask God for.

We thank you God...

We ask you God...

Amen. **Amen.**

## PEACE

*The leader says:*

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Share signs of peace with each other.*

## MEAL

*Before you start eating, pray this table blessing:*

Lord Jesus, on this holy night you washed the feet of your friends, and you shared your last meal with them. Bless this meal that we share tonight. Help us to remember that whenever we eat, you are here at the table with us, teaching us to love one another the way you have loved us. **Amen.**

*Then pray the Lord's Prayer together:*

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven:  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those that trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

## ***Enjoy your food and drink!***

*As you eat together, think about some of the special meals that you have shared with the people you love. What made them memorable? How is this like or different than Holy Communion? What do you miss about taking Holy Communion?*

# CLEARING THE TABLE

*After eating, read aloud:*

On many other years, when we have had Maundy Thursday worship in the church, we've ended the service with **'the stripping of the altar'**. Usually the altar has such beautiful things on it, but when we strip it (i.e. when we take away the candles, altar book, communion ware, linens and paraments) it looks terribly bare. This reminds us of how Jesus, just a few hours after His meal with the disciples ended, was arrested, abandoned, then stripped of His freedom, His clothes, and finally His life. All this He endured for us so that we can never be separated from God's love.

So as we clear the table, we are getting ready for the rest of the Holy Week story.

*As you clear the table, you might like to do some or all of the following:*

- *Remove all items from your table so it's completely empty and thoroughly wash it so it is both cleared and cleaned.*
- *Leave your table bare until Easter morning. Dim the lights*
- *Keep silence for a while for prayer.*

*The worship service is over for tonight, and will continue tomorrow night at 7 pm with Good Friday service where you can worship in person or watch a live streamed version at home.*