



## Holy Week: Maundy Thursday

Order of Worship for streaming service during COVID-19

April 9, 2020

7:00 pm



### about today's service

*This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in the meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world.*

P: Presiding Minister C: Congregation L: Lector A: Assisting Minister

### + Gathering +

*We gather together to praise God and receive God's love.*

Welcome/Introduction Pastor Jack Horner

Prelude: "O Mortal, Lament Your Great Sin" J. S. Bach

*O mortal, lament your great sin,  
for the sake of which Christ left his Father's bosom and came to earth.  
Of a pure, gentle virgin Jesus was born for us;  
He wanted to become the Mediator.  
He gave life to the dead and put aside all sickness,  
until the time arrived that he should be sacrificed for us.  
He bore the heavy burden of our sins stretched out on the cross.*

Confession and Forgiveness Pastor John Brock

P: Friends in Christ, in this Lenten season we have heard our Lord's call to struggle against sin, death, and the devil – all that keeps us from loving God and each other. This is the struggle to which we were called at baptism. Within the community of the church, God never wearies of forgiving 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 the great Three Days reconciled with God and with one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

P: Most merciful God,

**C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

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

**C: Amen.**

Greeting Pastor John Brock

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day Pastor John Brock

P: 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 the 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.

**C: Amen.**

### + Word +

*We listen to the story of God's mighty acts for the sake of God's people.*

Reading: Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14 Steve Kauffman

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19 Pastor Jack Horner

Gospel Acclamation: Pastor Liz Frey

P: The Holy Gospel according to John the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: John 13:1-17, 31b-35 Pastor Liz Frey

P: The Gospel of our Lord

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon Pastor Liz Frey

Prayers of Intercession Pastor Jack Horner

Each portion of the prayer ends:

A: Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

Solo: "The Lord's Prayer" A. H. Malotte

Nancy Moore, soloist

Stripping of the Altar

*Listen as Psalm 22 is read and the altar and chancel are stripped.*

*Just as Christ was stripped of his power and glory and placed in the hands of his captors, the church is stripped in preparation of the solemnity of Good Friday.*

**United and empowered to worship, connect, serve.**

### worship leaders

**Presiding Minister:** The Rev. John H. Brock

**Preacher:** The Rev. Elizabeth E. Frey

**Assisting Minister:** The Rev. Dr. Jack M. Horner

**Musician:** H. Timothy Koch

**Lector:** Steve Kauffman

**Audio Visual:** Jon Lobaugh, Danelle Andrews

**Bulletin Artwork:** Patty Marshall

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## Feast, Forgotten, First

The Reverend Elizabeth E. Frey

Well, friends, the last few weeks have been filed under “Things They Don’t Teach Us in Seminary.” This fact may come as a shock to many of you. They don’t teach us how to be pastors during a pandemic. They do, however, teach us how to gather our people together, how to love and care for them, how to lead worship, and how to celebrate the most holy of days.

The Three Great Days, as Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil are called collectively, are some of my favorite days in the church calendar. Each worship service is full of ritual and meaning. We gather as community to wash each other’s feet, receive communion, experience the solemnity of Good Friday, and hear the ancient stories of God’s promises to God’s people at the Vigil. Tonight, Maundy Thursday, is a night full of ritual that calls us to human contact.

And everything that makes Maundy Thursday special, we can’t do together tonight. We live in the reality of social distancing, face masks, and no physical contact with other human beings.

So, friends I am grieving that we can’t be together tonight. I’m sure many of you feel the same way. It’s odd to be standing here right now. As I look out at the Nave, it is empty except for the few of us here to livestream this service. I’ve been thinking a lot: how do we do Maundy Thursday when we can’t be together?

Let’s look back at our scripture for tonight from John’s Gospel because again, Jesus has something to say to us now. After washing his disciples’ feet and Judas leaves into the night to betray him, Jesus says, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another...” What does love look like in this new reality we live in? We need to examine what kind of love Jesus is talking about here.

We forget that when Jesus washes the disciples’ feet, he washes all their feet. Jesus washes the feet of Judas, the one who is about to betray him. Jesus washes the feet of Peter, the one who is about to deny ever knowing him. When we read the love commandment through this lens of betrayal and denial, we see a deeper picture of the love Jesus talks about here. Jesus loves these disciples, even in the face of excruciating brokenness: broken relationships that led to betrayal and denial. This kind of love is difficult for us to imagine. Jesus’ love looks past these broken relationships and his love seeks to repair that which is broken. Jesus’ love is more than we can ever imagine; his love is so great that nothing we do or say will change it. We are loved. Period.

Friends, this is also love in a time of pain and separation. Jesus knew as he said, “love one another as I have loved you,” that separation was coming. Jesus knew he would leave those that he loved. We catch a glimpse of the last moments Jesus spends with his disciples here. Imagine the pain and sadness Jesus felt as he prepared the disciples for his departure.

Just as there was pain for Jesus as he spoke these words, there is pain for us now. There is pain in how we are separated. It breaks my heart to be separated from all of you. It causes me deep pain to be separated from my family. But what is giving me a little bit of hope is that though we are separated, love remains. In this case, we are separated out of love for one another. We separate from one another to care for one another. We maintain social distance to care for the bodies of our neighbors. That is what love looks like right now. This is the kind of love Jesus is talking about here. Love that looks beyond itself. Love that cares for the neighbor, sometimes the neighbor we’ve never met.

I also find hope in another promise Jesus makes to his disciples this same night later in John’s Gospel. Jesus knew that in a few days’ time his beloved disciples would quarantine

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themselves in a house. They would hide in isolation and in fear. So, after sharing this commandment of love, with their separation in mind, Jesus promises his presence through the Holy Spirit. And though this is not included in our scripture for tonight, we need to hear this promise from our God. Jesus says to his disciples – and us: “the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.”

Just as the Holy Spirit would come to connect these fearful, isolated, and separated disciples to Jesus, the Holy Spirit connects us to one another and to God tonight.

So yeah, Maundy Thursday 2020 looks very different from what any of us expected. Maybe we can't wash one another's feet tonight or receive communion, but that doesn't mean we are loved any less by God or we aren't connected to one another.

Yes, we might be separated, but that does not mean we are not connected. Reach out your heart to your neighbors. Love your neighbors as Jesus loves you; this is still our call as followers of Jesus. Earlier this week, Lynn Ungar wrote a poem about connection. She writes:

...reach out with your heart.  
Know that we are connected  
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.  
(You could hardly deny it now.)  
Know that our lives  
are in one another's hands.  
(Surely, that has come clear.)  
Do not reach out your hands.  
Reach out your heart.  
Reach out your words.  
Reach out all the tendrils  
of compassion that move, invisibly,  
where we cannot touch.

We might be separated, but that does not mean we are not connected. As Paul reminds us in the Letter to the Romans: nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Nothing, not even a pandemic.

Because God loves you for who you are. Remember Jesus loved Judas and Peter. You are deeply loved by God. You are not alone. You are surrounded by the love of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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