

Maundy Thursday
Thursday, April 17, 2025

Introduction to the day

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 this 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. Departing worship in solemn silence, we anticipate the coming days.

PART 1: CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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.

Most merciful God,

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.

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.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14

A reading from Exodus.

Israel remembered its deliverance from slavery in Egypt by celebrating the festival of Passover. This festival featured the Passover lamb, whose blood was used as a sign to protect God's people from the threat of death. The early church described the Lord's supper using imagery from the Passover, especially in portraying Jesus as the lamb who delivers God's people from sin and death.

PSALM: Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19

I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. (Ps. 116:13)

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

In the bread and cup of the Lord's supper, we experience intimate fellowship with Christ and with one another because it involves his body given for us and the new covenant in his blood. Faithful participation in this meal is a living proclamation of Christ's death until he comes in the future.

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

The holy gospel according to John.

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 his disciples and urging them to do the same for one other.

MAUNDY THURSDAY - Jesus' Hands

On this Maundy Thursday, what does it mean that Jesus, with his carpenter-calloused hands, takes the role of the servant and washes the feet of his friends? So often we focus on the feet, but what if our attention is on the hands instead? Jesus' hands—the very hands of our God.

Imagine Jesus kneeling in front of you, and you, along with the other disciples, placing your feet in his hands. He looks you in the eye and begins to wash. You glance down and gaze on Jesus' hands and remember.

These hands were birthed in Bethlehem to carry the promise of God's salvation. Jesus' hands felt the flow of the Jordan River in his baptism and belovedness. These holy hands scooped up the little children to bless them and receive them in love. These are Jesus' hands that, coursing with righteous fury, demanded justice for the oppressed. Jesus' soothing hands that healed and comforted, revealing the reign of God. Jesus' powerful hands that stood at death's doorstep and gestured for Lazarus to come out. Jesus' hands that broke bread and ushered in a new covenant. Jesus' hands clasped in prayer: "Not my will but thy will be done." Jesus' nail-pierced hands that from the cross revealed the fullness of salvation, taking on sin and death through the power of God's self-giving love. These are the same hands that folded up death's garments on Easter and opened up eternity for you, for all. These are Jesus' hands that washed the feet of his disciples.

Look upon Jesus' hands that hold you, along with the whole of Christ's church, as we journey through these Great Three Days. These are God's hands that carry us from life, through death, to life everlasting.

PART2: Washing of Feet

FOOTWASHING

On this night we have heard our Lord's commandment to love one another as he has loved us. We who receive God's love in Jesus Christ are called to love one another, 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 our Lord gave us on the night before his death.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Holy God, we come to you in prayer for the church, your good creation, and all who are in need.

Heal the wounds of your church, O God. As we remember your commandment to love one another, guide us toward reconciliation within the body of Christ. Bless all who gather around the world and in this community for these holy three days. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Renew the life of your creation. Restore lands suffering from chronic drought or flood, and protect fragile habitats from destruction. Encourage all who strive to build more sustainable systems for life and thriving. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Bring peace and justice among your people. Where there is oppression or fear, bring liberation and hope. Instill wisdom and humility in local and national leaders, and guide them to serve their communities in the way of Jesus. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Console all who suffer. We pray especially for all who are lonely and yearning for community. Assure them of your loving presence. Come alongside all who cry out to you in any need *especially* Linda Boland, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Elaine Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts those who need your healing touch. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

In the bread and cup we share, you show us the way of love poured out for the whole world. Nourish all who hunger in body or in spirit, that they experience the life abundant that flows from you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We remember the saints who rest in you. We give thanks for all our beloved dead. Confident of your steadfast love, we commend them to your eternal care. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

PART 3: Last Supper

READING OF PSALM 88 (TO BE SPOKEN WHILE ALTAR BEING STRIPPED)

Depart in silence

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