

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.

PRELUDE

"Go to Dark Gethsemane"

Keeseler

WORDS OF WELCOME

CONFSSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Friends in Christ, the Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God. Welcome to the Maundy Thursday worship service here at Advent Lutheran Church.

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.

At this time I invite you all to kneel or sit and keep silence for reflection and self-examination.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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 In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

GREETING

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

P Let us pray together the prayer of the day.

C **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.**

WE HEAR THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Exodus 12:1-14

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.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ²This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.

⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs.

¹⁰You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

¹¹This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

After the reading:

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

P I love the LORD, who has heard my voice,
and listened to my supplication,

C **2for the LORD has given ear to me
whenever I called.**

P ¹²How shall I repay the LORD
for all the good things God has done for me?

C **13I will lift the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.**

P ¹⁴I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all God's people.

C **15Precious in your sight, O LORD,
is the death of your servants.**

P ¹⁶O LORD, truly I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.

C **17I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call upon the name of the LORD.**

P ¹⁸I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all God's people,

C **19in the courts of the LORD's house,
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.**

EPISTLE READING: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

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.

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

After the reading:

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 13th chapter.

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

GOSPEL: 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 his disciples and urging them to do the same for one another.

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,

"Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."

⁹Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

^{31b}"Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

After the reading:

P The Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE SERMON

HYMN

"Great God, Your Love has Called"

Vss. 1–3

WOV # 666

Great God, your love has called us here

1 Great God, your love has called us here as we, by love, for
 2 We come with self - in - flic - ted pains of bro - ken trust and
 3 Great God, in Christ you call our name and then re - ceive us
 4 Then take the towel, and break the bread, and hum - ble us, and
 5 Great God, in Christ you set us free your life to live, your

love were made.

cho - sen wrong, Your liv - ing like - ness still we bear,
 as your own half - free, half - bound by in - ner chains,
 call us friends. not through some mer - it, right, or claim
 joy to share. Suf - fer and serve till all are fed,
 Give us your Spir - it's lib - er - ty

though marred, dis - hon - ored, dis - o - beyed.

by so - cial forc - es swept a - long, We come, with all our
 but by your gra - cious love a - lone. by pow'rs and sys - tems
 and show how grand - ly love in - tends We strain to glimpse your
 to turn from guilt and dull de - spair, to work till all cre -
 and of - fer all that

heart and mind your call to hear, your love to find.

close con - fined yet seek - ing hope for hu - man - kind.
 mer - cy seat and find you kneel - ing at our feet.
 a - tion sings, to fill all worlds, to crown all things.
 faith can do while love is mak - ing all things new.

Text: Brian Wren, b. 1936

Music: RYBURN. Norman Cocker, 1889–1953

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FOOT-WASHING

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. Normally 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. But tonight, since we cannot be together for the sacrament of Holy Communion or for the act of love in foot-washing, I hope you will participate in something... different.

On Maundy Thursday, tonight, we remember when Jesus offered the humblest gesture of welcome to his friends. It was not the host's role to wash the feet of dinner guests. This was the work of servants to clean their feet from the dust and dirt of the desert road on which they journeyed.

On this night, the disciples of Jesus weren't simply observers... but participants. The disciples will stumble through the days ahead, uncertain and fearful, but mindful of all that Jesus has said and done.

This is our story, our narrative too. We too are the followers of Jesus. And so tonight, as we have been told time and time again to keep washing our hands in these unique days of the COVID-19 pandemic, tonight we are going to show the love of God to others in our homes by washing each other's hands. I believe that is what Jesus would do today. I believe that is what we are called to do tonight.

Take a few minutes, go to a sink nearest to where you're watching this, and wash the hands of someone else in your household. If you are alone, wash your own hands. Feel the love of God surround each finger, nail, palm, and knuckle. Feel, as disciples of Jesus today, what the disciples of Jesus on this night so long ago felt - washed, welcomed, loved, and cherished.

Then, when you have finished washing, if you are with someone else, dry their hands for them too. As Jesus washed the feet of his friends that they might be prepared to stand on the holy ground of his suffering, so may our hands be cleaned so that we may love our neighbor as ourselves, with the love we have first received from our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

THE PRAYERS

After each portion of the prayers:

A Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

LORD'S PRAYER

A Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

C **Our Father, who 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 who 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,
 forever and ever. Amen**

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

On this night we strip the altar in symbolic remembrance of our Lord's humiliation by Pilate's soldiers. Psalm 22 is read out loud by Jim Blazek as the altar is stripped.

Maundy Thursday is the first day of the Triduum, the three sacred days of Jesus' betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection. Beginning with Maundy Thursday evening, these three sacred days come to their conclusion on the eve of Easter. The Triduum is the most sacred and important time of the entire Christian year.