



LET US SUPPOSE
THAT NATURE GAVE THE WORLD FLOWERS
AND BIRDSONG AS A LANGUAGE, BY WHICH
IT MIGHT SPEAK TO DISCERNING HUMANS.
AND WHAT MUST WE SAY BACK?

+ WENDELL BERRY

MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 2, 2026
6:30 P.M.

Order of Worship

Maundy Thursday
April 2, 2026 † 6:30 p.m.

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Recognition of First Communion

Tonight three of our young people will receive their First Communion.
They are: Emmett Insley Jennelle, Claire Faith Jennelle, Autumn Rose Johnson

Old Testament Reading: Exodus 12:1-14

¹The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²“This 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 with fire. 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. ¹²I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from human to animal, and 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. ¹⁴“This 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.”

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

¹ 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. ² The devil had already decided that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. And during supper ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵ Then 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. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus 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." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. ³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little 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.' ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Call to Worship

On this holy night, Jesus kneels to serve and calls us to love one another.

We come to receive his love and learn his way.

As Wendell Berry reminds us, the world speaks through beauty and grace, and we are called to respond with lives of kindness and service.

We come to follow Christ in humble love.

Come to the table and be renewed for service.

We come to worship and to serve.

Let us pray ... Jesus, our Servant Leader,
you kneel before us in love and call us to do the same. Shape our hearts by your grace, that we may serve one another with humility and kindness, and reflect your love in all we do. Amen.

Hymn "What Wondrous Love Is This" (hymn) 666 vv. 1, 2, 4

¹What wondrous love is this, O my soul O my soul.
What wondrous love is this O my soul.
What wondrous love is this, that caused the Lord of bliss,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

²When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down.
When I was sinking down, sinking down.
When I was sinking down, beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown, for my soul for my soul,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.

⁴And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be.
And thro' eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on.
And thro' eternity I'll sing on.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn "Here and Now"

¹Perhaps you have come down a well traveled road
bringing your hopes and your questions untold
or maybe you're holding too heavy a load
O come, just as you are.

Chorus

Here we are, on this sacred ground. Heaven dwells among us, here and now.

²So many the stories we carry and tend,
beauty and brokenness waiting to mend.
So come to this place from whatever has been;
remember whose you are. *(Chorus)*

³Consider the lilies, they haven't a care;
think of the sparrows, whose song is a prayer
and know you're created, if only you dare,
to be just who you are. *(Chorus)*

⁴Imagine a world where oppression will cease,
justice and mercy will blossom in peace
and all of creation will join in the feast:
beloved all, we are. *(Chorus)*

⁵The Spirit is blowing wherever she will,
stirring our hearts, heaven's call to fulfill.
May we be a beacon of light on a hill
to shine just where we are. *(Chorus)*

Confession & Forgiveness

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin. Merciful God,
we confess that we have not lived as you call us to live. We have chosen to be served rather than to serve. We have held back love, withheld kindness, and turned away from the needs of others.

Like Peter, we resist your humble grace.

We struggle to receive your love, and we fail to share it freely. Forgive us, renew us, and teach us your way.

Hear the good news: Jesus, who knelt to wash his disciples' feet, also gave his life in love for the world. In him, your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

You are freed and forgiven to love as Christ loves, to serve as Christ serves, and to walk in the way of humble grace.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Music

Offertory Prayer

Gracious God,

you have given yourself to us in love and service. Receive these gifts, and receive our lives, that all we offer may be used to serve others and reflect your grace in the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

As we come to the table on this holy night, we remember the call we have heard throughout this Lenten season, to turn from all that keeps us from loving God and one another. This turning is the journey of our baptism, and we trust that God's forgiveness and the Spirit's renewing power walk with us every step of the way.

Within the body of Christ, God never tires of offering peace, restoration, and new life. In the words of forgiveness spoken among us, we receive God's grace as surely as if it were spoken from heaven itself, because it comes to us in the name of Jesus.

We who have received God's love are now called to share that love: to kneel in humility, as Christ did; to break bread in remembrance, as Christ did; and to become the body of Christ, poured out in love for the world.

At this table, we draw close to the heart of the gospel. Here we remember Jesus' last supper with his friends, a meal of deep love and radical grace. In this bread and cup, we receive his presence, his promise, and his peace.

If we could hear the hearts of those gathered around us, we might be surprised by all that has been brought to the table, hopes and heartbreaks, weariness and wonder, memories of nourishing meals and questions still unresolved, deep longings to walk with Jesus, and moments when we have held back.

The list is long, O God. Yet in the midst of it all, Christ is here, walking beside us, holding our hands, lifting us up, mending what is broken, breathing new life into weary places. And tonight, he breaks the bread and pours the wine once again. This is what draws us together. This is what makes us one.

In remembrance of him, we eat the bread of life and drink from the cup of the new covenant. This is the heart of who we are. This is the heart of the gospel. Thanks be to God!

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Holy Communion

Creator God, we give you thanks for the gift of life and the abundance of the earth. From the beginning, you have fed us with the bread of your creation and the overflowing cup of your love. Through Jesus Christ, you showed us how to live with compassion and grace, sharing meals with sinners and outcasts, and calling all people to your table of grace. Pour out your Spirit on this bread and this cup, O God. Make them for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be nourished for the journey of faith and empowered to live as his body in the world. **Amen.**

The Words of Institution

We remember that night in which Jesus was betrayed ... do this also, in remembrance of me. We gather at this table in remembrance of Christ, alongside disciples old and young, from every walk of life. We are confident that through Jesus Christ, we are all nourished and made whole. Let us proclaim together the mystery of faith:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Let us pray: **Holy God, you nourish and provide for us. Help us savor this timeless meal of the bread and the cup. May we graciously receive this gift so we might share its abundance with others. Jesus, you believe in the life-changing power of a shared meal. Grant us the courage and strength to ensure God's table is everyone's table. Holy Spirit, you are our great sustainer. Stretch us to find new ways of making sure those who are hungry become fed. Amen.**

And now, as we are gathered together as one by the great sustainer, let us pray as Jesus taught us ... **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.**

Invitation to Communion

This is the meal of remembrance. All who come with a longing for grace, all who thirst for healing and hope, are invited to share in this bread and cup. Come as you are, and in the quiet of this moment, receive and remember these words: "The body of Christ, broken for you," and "The blood of Christ, shed for you."

On this Maundy Thursday you will also receive a special blessing reminding you of God's love for you and your forgiveness found in Him, in the words, "Through this gift of love, you are forgiven all your sins."

Communion Music

Stripping of the Altar

Psalm 22

There is no final blessing or postlude tonight.

This service continues and finds its fulfillment at the conclusion of our Easter Sunday worship.

You are invited to return tomorrow evening for our **Good Friday service at 6:30 p.m.**

Then join us on **Easter Sunday at 9:00 a.m.** for our "Sabbath Is ... Joy!" Celebration.

Wendell Berry, "Since, Despite the Stern Demands" (2012)
from This Day: Collected and New Sabbath Poems, VIII



Since, despite the stern demands of scientist and realist, we will always be supposing, let us suppose that Nature gave the world flowers and birdsong as a language, by which it might speak to discerning humans. And what must we say back? Not just thanks or praise, but acts of kindness bespeaking kinship with the creatures and with Nature, acts faithful as the woods that dwells in place time out of mind, self-denying as the parenthood of the birds, and like the flowers humble and beautiful.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN
CHURCH
SHARING CHRIST'S LOVE WITH JOY!

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