

Maundy Thursday April 17, 2025

A Service of the Lord's Supper

Today we remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples. During the meal he told them to love one another just as he has loved us. He gave us signs of his love through the bread and the cup, and because we are gathered here in his name, remembering him, we can trust he is present with us now.

A Scripture Reading John 13:1-17, 31b-35 (CEB)

Before the Festival of Passover, Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them fully.

² Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal. The devil had already provoked Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. ⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later."

⁸ "No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me."

⁹ Simon Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

¹⁰ Jesus responded, “Those who have bathed need only to have their feet washed, because they are completely clean. You disciples are clean, but not every one of you.” ¹¹ He knew who would betray him. That’s why he said, “Not every one of you is clean.”

¹² After he washed the disciples’ feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table. He said to them, “Do you know what I’ve done for you? ¹³ You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you speak correctly, because I am. ¹⁴ If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other’s feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do. ¹⁶ I assure you, servants aren’t greater than their master, nor are those who are sent greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ Since you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

³¹ When Judas was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Human One has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify the Human One in himself and will glorify him immediately. ³³ Little children, I’m with you for a little while longer. You will look for me—but, just as I told the Jewish leaders, I also tell you now—‘Where I’m going, you can’t come.’

³⁴ “I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. ³⁵ This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.”

Prayers for Communion¹

Friends in Christ, when we come to this table, we remember this night so long ago when Jesus gathered at table with his disciples. On the last night of his life, as the forces leading up to his arrest

¹ adapted from the United Church of Christ’s *Book of Worship* “Brief Order of Word and Sacrament” and from the *Iona Abbey Worship Book*.

and trial were building, Jesus served his friends: washing their feet and giving them a meal by which to remember his love.

Tonight we recall this meal. We are reminded of its humility, we are served by its grace, and we are connected by its strength. Christ is indeed present with us here.

Come to this table, all who are seeking Christ, all who wished to be served by him and to go and serve him. Come, eat, and drink. Here are the bread of life and the cup of salvation. Come, receive Christ's presence and remember his love.

May we be in the spirit of prayer...

Holy God, we praise you and thank you that you have always been with us. From the beginning you have been our God and formed us to be your people. While you made us in your image and gave us your breath of life, we turned from you and broke relationship with you. Yet through prophets and leaders, in word and wonders you called us back to you.

When your repeated attempts to heal our broken relationship didn't work, you became one of us. Taking the name Jesus of Nazareth, you lived as we do.

You experienced the full depths of humanity:

our hungers and desires;

our failures and fears;

our joys and laughter;

our pain and fragility.

By your willingness, Holy God, to embrace of the mess of being human and follow where it would lead, you reconciled us. Your path to the cross forced the worst of humanity to meet the best of God, and creation was forever changed.

Through your Spirit, you continue to meet us with your goodness, O God. You bring us into community that shapes and

changes us. You rework our lives with your creative power. Your courage is with us always.

We remember that on this night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, Jesus also 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."

Lord Jesus Christ,
present with us now,
as we do in this place what you did in an upstairs room,
breathe your Spirit upon us
and upon this bread and this cup,
that they may be heaven's food and drink for us,
renewing, sustaining, and making us whole,
and that we may be your body on earth,
loving and caring in the world. Amen.

Break pieces of bread, and offer them to the people next to you, saying, "The body of Christ broken for you." Eat the bread together. Then offer the cup to one another with the words, "The blood of Christ shed for you." Drink the cup together.

The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Blessing