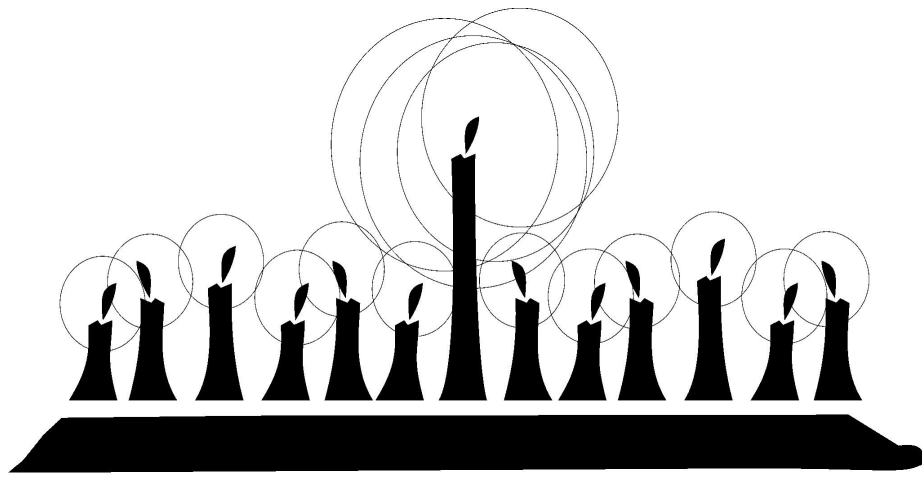


Maundy Thursday

April 9, 2020



Tenebrae Service



Plymouth United Church of Christ Rev. David Huber, Pastor

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PlymouthUnitedChurchOfChrist

Maundy Thursday

At-Home Worship with a Meal

The original Maundy Thursday was the night that Jesus shared his last meal with his friends. The “Maundy” is a name that came later: it’s Latin for “mandate,” the command that Jesus gave his disciples to love one another. We always celebrate Communion on Maundy Thursday because that’s the night that Jesus blessed and broke bread and blessed the cup of wine and gave them to the disciples. But we can’t do that this year, so we have a liturgy that you can use on Maundy Thursday around your dinner table. At the point that we would normally share Communion, you can enjoy your meal. Then when you done eating, come back to the liturgy to finish up our usual Maundy Thursday set of readings called Tenebrae (Latin for “darkness”). If you are alone, feel free to say all the words yourself. If you have others with you, divide parts however you would like. If you have a candle (or more than one), put them unlit on your dinner table—you will light them during the “Lighting the Candles” prayer part of the service. Especially if you have a candle that you received at our Transfiguration/Candlemas Sunday in February, use that one.

Opening Music

“Just As I Am”

If you remember the tune, then sing it—otherwise read the words as a prayer.

**Just as I am, without one plea, but that your blood was shed for me,
and that you called inviting me, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am, you will receive, will welcome pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because your promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!**

Call to Worship †

- L: Come to God, who has loved us through Jesus Christ. Present yourselves to the Spirit who understands your need.
- P: God has heard our voices and heeded our cries. We will call on God’s name as long as we live.**
- L: We gather in response to Jesus’ command that we love one another as he loves us.
- P: We gather as his disciples, awaiting a word of assurance and hope.**
- L: Come to embrace the new covenant God offers. Eat and drink in remembrance of Jesus Christ.
- P: We come to be washed and cleansed and healed. God will equip us here to love one another.**

Lighting the Candles

As you light your candle or candles, say this prayer together:

O Gracious Light, Pure brightness of the eternal Creator in heaven, O Jesus Christ holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold your vesper light, we sing your praises, Holy God, One in Trinity. You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Christ of God, O giver of life, and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Hymn

“Just as I Am”

**Just as I am, your love unknown has broken every barrier down;
Now to be yours, and yours alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!**

Confession §

God of love and grace, you speak to us new words of hope each day, asking us to follow where you call. We confess that we have not paused our busyness often enough to listen to you. We confess that sometimes when we have listened, we have found your words too discomfoting or challenging, and so we have ignored them, preferring the siren call of our egos or easy answers. Help us, we ask, to give pause in our days for gratitude, for prayer, and for listening to you and to our neighbors. Let our listening be a sign of our love for you and for others. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon §

Jesus knows us fully. Through his love you are forgiven!

Passing the Peace

Share the peace with those around the table

Gospel

John 13:1–17, 31b–35

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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 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.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 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.” For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

After 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? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 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.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Meal

Take time to enjoy a slow meal together. Do not be in a hurry. You have nowhere else to go this night, so enjoy the company of those you are with or enjoy your own company. As you eat together, think about some of the special meals that you have shared with the people you love. What made them memorable? How is this similar to or different from Holy Communion? What do you miss about taking Holy Communion in this time when we are not receiving it? What do you like about sharing meals together? Please begin your meal with a prayer, either one you are familiar with that you or your family often use, or you may use this:

Lord, Jesus, on this holy night you washed the feet of your friends, and you shared your last meal with them. Bless this meal that we share tonight. Help us to remember that whenever we eat, you are here at the table with us, teaching us to love one another the way you have loved us. Amen.

After the meal is done, then clean the table and put away the leftovers, keeping the candle or candles lit. When clean up is done, then come back to the table to finish the service with Tenebrae.

Tenebrae

When we come together to worship in our church building on Maundy Thursday, we end our time together with the stripping of the altar. Instead of removing items from the sanctuary, we instead drape black cloth over the Communion table, baptismal font, crosses, pulpit, and so on, and we blow out the Christ candle as a symbolic sign of Jesus' crucifixion and death. We do not relight the Christ candle until Sunday morning Easter worship. Stripping the altar or cloaking the sanctuary suggests the bareness of life without the hope of Christ that we have through his resurrection.

After you finish the readings for Tenebrae, you may do a "stripping of the altar" or "cloaking of the sanctuary" in your own home. Pack away any faith related items: icons, statues, religious art and symbols, or cover large items with cloth. Blow out the candles and remove all items from your dining table so it's completely empty and thoroughly wash it so it is both cleared and cleaned. Leave your table bare until Easter morning, including removing the tablecloth if you have one. As you gather for more meals between now and Easter morning, do not put anything on the table that isn't directly related to the meal: no flowers, candles, decorations, table cloths. As you eat, consider the symbolism of the undecorated, empty table that you are at.

Prayer

**Infinite, intimate God; this night you kneel before your friends and wash our feet.
Bound together in your love, trembling, we drink your cup and watch. Amen.**

The Shadows

The Shadow of Betrayal

Matthew 26:20–25

When it was evening, Jesus took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”

The Shadow of Agony

Luke 22:39–44

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.

The Shadow of Loneliness

Mark 14:32–41

Jesus came back to his disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

The Shadow of Desertion

Matthew 26:47–56

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

The Shadow of Accusation

Matthew 26:59–67

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.” Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him.

The Shadow of Mockery

Mark 15:12–32

Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort.

And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him.

Then they led him out to crucify him. They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!”

In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

The Shadow of Death

Matthew 15:33–39

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah.” And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

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§ Modified/written by Rev. David Huber