

Northminster Presbyterian Church

Indianapolis, IN

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Maundy Thursday at Home

prepared by The Rev. Carol M. McDonald, Parish Associate

Welcome

The Thursday before Easter is known as Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday. The name is derived from the Latin word for 'command' and refers to Jesus' commandment to the disciples to "love one another as I have loved you." On Maundy Thursday, we remember Jesus' last supper with his disciples where he breaks bread and pours wine, offers them to his disciples saying, "do this remembering me."

At Northminster, it is our custom to remember this meal together – in community. But Maundy Thursday 2020 comes to us at an unprecedented time in the history of our world. This Maundy Thursday at Home liturgy is offered so that, at your kitchen or dining room table, you may engage in moments of remembering – by reading Scripture, listening to music, reflecting on the meaning of this holy day, and praying for each other and our world. I live alone and know that many of you do, too. My prayer as I wrote this liturgy is that it could be used at a table of 1, or 3, or 6 – for I do believe that, as we worship this night, we are joined by our sisters and brothers in the faith. As we worship at home, we are joining a community around the world gathered to receive the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. May God bless our meals. May God bless our community.

About Maundy Thursday

The Last Supper was a Passover meal; Jesus was a Jew and observed the Jewish holy days. Jesus and his disciples ate unleavened bread to commemorate the exodus of the

Jews from Egypt; when the people left Egypt so quickly, there was no time for the bread to rise.

We also associate foot washing with Maundy Thursday. In John 13, Jesus washes his disciples' feet, teaching them to be servants. Washing their feet is the ultimate symbol of servant leadership.

There's also a dark side to Maundy Thursday. As he shares the meal with his disciples, he points towards his death by declaring he will not eat again until the Reign of God is fulfilled. And he acknowledges that one of his loved ones will betray him.

Preparing for Worship

You are encouraged to include your Maundy Thursday worship as part of your evening meal. Even as the Passover meal included special foods, prepare something special for supper. Set a time for all who will be at your table to gather for the meal.

Set the table with real dishes and silverware; use cloth napkins if you have them 😊. Create a centerpiece or worship focal point. You might include:

A cross of another symbol of faith

A Bible

A candle or candles

A small bowl of water representing the baptismal font

A special plate and cup for your agape meal.

Elements for your agape meal – use any kind of bread or crackers you have in your pantry ... use grape juice or wine or any kind of juice you have in your pantry or refrigerator. Remember these are symbols.

Centering Thought

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” (I Corinthians 11:26)

In emptied sanctuaries
with the techie a safe distance
with a few saltine crackers
and a glass of orange juice,
around a kitchen table and
hearing the words online,
with a slice of whole wheat
and a glass of milk,
gathered in a living room
or sheltered in a lonely apartment,
we proclaim your death,
O Lord,
even as we await the promise
of new days, new hope, new life,
when we are called from the tomb

of isolation.

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Gathering

At the appointed time, come to your table.

Prayer before the Meal

Holy God, we thank you for all your gifts. For food that nourishes our bodies in these difficult lory days, we are grateful. For family, freidns, and community who lift our spirits even in isolation, we are grateful. May our worship this evening be one small sign that we trust you to surround us, support us, and strengthen us no matter what. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Mealtime Conversation/Reflection

Call to mind someone you know and love – perhaps someone you might have worshipped with at church this evening. Remember/share a story about that person or persons. Give thanks to God for them and the gifts they offer to your life.

Prayers

Spend some time in prayer. Offer to God

Something you are thankful for

A time in recent days when you have experienced God's love

Any fears and concerns you've been holding during these days

People and places you know need God's special touch right now

Our church, our community and our world

Conclude with the Lord's Prayer

Agape Meal

Song of Praise – Sing, play instruments, use You Tube

Let Us Break Bread Together – No. 525 in Glory to God

Let us break bread together, on our knees;

let us break bread together, on our knees.

Refrain: When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together, on our knees (repeat)

Refrain

Let us praise God together, on our knees (repeat)

Refrain

Scripture

John 13: 12-15

After Jesus 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."

Reflection

What is the invitation to you in this passage?

What is the challenge to you in this passage?

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God of all life, we thank you for this night – a night different from all other nights. On this night, we remember that Jesus ate with his special friends, even the one who would betray him. We thank you for his example of love and devotion and service. And we rejoice in the bread and cup he offered that night as symbols of his body and his blood. May the symbols on this table remind us we are nourished by the bread of life and the cup of salvation – for Jesus has promised we will never go hungry and we will never thirst. In his name we pray. Amen.

Sharing the symbols

As you hold and eat the bread, remember and give thanks that Jesus is the Bread of Life for us all.

As you hold and drink from the cup, remember and give thanks that Jesus is the Cup of Salvation for us all.

Prayer after the Meal

Holy God, you feed us with the bread of life. You quench our thirst with the cup of salvation. May this meal empower us to go into the world with courage and with generosity – to serve all we meet with the love and mercy of Jesus Christ – in whose name we worship and in whose name we pray. Amen.

Song of Praise – Sing, play instruments, use You Tube

“God Be the Love to Search and Keep Me” – No. 543 in Glory to God.

God be the love to search and keep me;

God be the praise to move my voice;

God be the strength to now uphold me:

O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Walking behind to hem my journey,

going ahead to light my way,

and from beneath, above, and all ways:

O Christ, surround me, O Christ, surround me.

Christ in the eyes of all who see me,

Christ in the ears that hear my voice,

Christ in the hearts of all who know me:

O Christ, surround me, O Christ, surround me.

Blessing

Go from this table, knowing that Christ walks behind you to hem your journey.

Go from this table, knowing that Christ walks before you to light your way.

Go from this table, knowing that Christ is beneath and above you,
that Christ is with you in all ways.

Go from this table, knowing that Christ surrounds you –
this night and forever. Amen!

Sharing the Peace of Christ

If you are worshipping alone, take a moment to send a text or email – or make a phone call – to someone to whom you want to offer God's peace. If you're at a table of 2 or 3 or 6 ... offer Christ's peace to one another.

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Resources:

Worship Preparation suggestions from Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church,
Shepherdstown, West Virginia – The Rev. Gusti L. Neuquist

Glory to God – The Presbyterian Hymnal

The writings of the Rev. Thom M Shuman, PCUSA