



MAUNDY THURSDAY

APRIL 9, 2020
+ MAUNDY THURSDAY DEVOTIONAL LITURGY +

For individuals, families, or small groups.

Prior to beginning this liturgy, we invite you to decide how you'd like to practice communion and foot washing, our Maundy Thursday sacrament and practice.

The liturgy could be done over a meal that culminates with broken bread and a little juice or wine.

A small bucket of water could be available nearby as well, with a towel to dry one another's feet.

You have the freedom to choose here, and we encourage you to be both intentional and creative.

God is present. God is for you and for us.

- ✠ Read the following call to worship, either on your own or in a small group:

**What can we give back to God
for all the good things he has done for us?
We will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on his name!
We will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving!
We will keep the promises we've made to God
in the presence of all his people!
Come, let us worship!**

- ✠ Offer this prayer aloud:

**O God of love,
giver of concord,
through your only Son
you have given us a new commandment
that we should love one another
even as you have loved us,
the unworthy and the wandering,
and gave your beloved Son for our life and salvation.
Lord, in our time of life on earth
give us a mind forgetful of past ill will,
a pure conscience and sincere thoughts,
and hearts to love one another;
for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.**

- ✘ Read the following scripture texts, aloud or in silence:

Exodus 12:1-14

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

- ✘ Pray aloud this prayer of confession, based on John 13:34-35:

God's love for the world has been revealed in Jesus Christ, who certainly loved us to the uttermost; Jesus—Savior and Lord—who at his last meal with his disciples gave them—and us—that new commandment: "...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."

Merciful God,

**we confess that so often our discipleship has been weak...
when we have failed to serve as Jesus served;
forgive us.**

**When we have failed to love one another as Jesus loves us;
forgive us.**

**When we have been happy to proclaim our devotion to Jesus with
our lips and then denied him by our actions;
forgive us.**

**Merciful God, empower us by your Spirit to be steady and true
to you in every time of trial; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

- ✘ Reflect in silence for just a few minutes on the state of your own sinfulness and the overwhelming grace of Jesus.

- ✘ Read aloud these words of assurance:

This is the Good News! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. We are a forgiven people.

- ✘ COMMUNION AND FOOT WASHING

written by Rev. Doug Bixby and used with permission

What follows is a liturgy for holy communion.

*We invite you to participate in it as part of your meal with family,
on your own as part of private devotion, or with friends and family in an online platform.*

Invitation to the Lord's Supper

This is the Lord's Table. Our Savior invites those who trust him to share the feast which he has prepared. So come to this sacred table, not because you must, but because you may; come to testify not that you are righteous, but that you sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ, and that you desire to be one of his true disciples. Come not because you are strong, but because you are weak; not because you have any claim on the grace of God, but because in our frailty and sin we stand in constant need of his mercy and help; come not to express an opinion, but to seek his presence and power.

Words of Institution

Now hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ as they were delivered by the Apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 it says, "The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In 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.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father, Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead and buried;
he descended into Hades;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy Christian church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of Consecration

*You are invited to hold the bread you will eat and the cup you will drink from in your hands,
or to hold your hands over the elements as you pray:*

Gracious God, each time we approach this table we are reminded that you are the giver of great gifts, and that life loses its wonder and purpose without your gifts. May we receive this bread as a gift for the redemption of our lives, and may we receive this cup as a gift for freedom from our fears, and may we receive your grace as a gift of light for our world's darkness. We give you thanks for these holy gifts and for the gift of this sacred meal. Bless and be known to us again through it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!

Sharing the Bread and Cup

1 Corinthians 10:17 says, "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

"Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, which is broken for you."

"This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, drink of it in remembrance of him."

Thanksgiving after Receiving

Loving God, you have graciously accepted us as living members of the body of Christ, and have fed us with spiritual food in the sacrament of his body and blood. Give us now your peace, and grant all of us your healing strength and sustaining power, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

- ✘ Should you choose to wash the feet of those you are gathered with, now is the time. As you do so, consider offering these words to the person whose feet you are washing:

Where charity and love are found, there is God.

- ✘ As an ending to this devotional time, read the words written below (aloud or in silence), from the hymn "Go to Dark Gethsemane":

Go to dark Gethsemane, all who feel the tempter's power;
your Redeemer's conflict see, watch with him one bitter hour.
Turn not from his griefs away—learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgement hall, view the Lord of life arraigned.
O the wormwood and the gall! O the pangs his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss—learn of him to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb; there, adoring at his feet,
mark the miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete,
"It is finished!" hear him cry—learn of Jesus Christ to die.

✠ Read aloud these words of blessing and sending.

**This night is our calling to go into the world,
scattered to the ends of the earth
to love as Christ loved
and serve in the name of Christ.**

**It is our calling to remember,
even in our darkest hour,
who we are.**

We remember that Christ is always with us.

**And we remember that on this night,
we were taught how to love.**

**On this night, eternity begins,
and the fullness of God's Reign begins to spill into our lives.**

**So go into the world to give yourself for others,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Go into the world and love
in the name of the One who loved you until the end.**

It all begins and ends and begins again with Love.

That IS the story. Amen.

written by Rev. Shelli Williams, in Benediction

Some Words on Communion in Your Homes
written by Doug Bixby and used with permission

The reason Communion is typically done as a part of the worship service in Evangelical Covenant Churches, is because it is a sacrament of the church and, to keep things in proper order, clergy ordained to Word and Sacrament are typically the ones who bless the elements and share them. Most denominations and churches discourage people from treating communion as an individualistic experience that can be practiced devotionally at home.

Some virtual churches have also arisen recently, where people attend church as a virtual avatar, or computer robot. Trying to practice virtual communion in these contexts has also been strongly discouraged by various church leaders. The reason for this is that virtual community is not human community in the same way we as the church experiences real community in our actual congregations via the body of Christ.

Most churches, however, allow Pastors or Deacons to take communion to people who are sick or in hospitals or nursing homes, and unable to attend services. The idea is that by sharing the bread and the cup with these folks it sets them free from personal isolation and helps them to understand that they are able to participate in the broader communion of the church through the bread and the cup.

Ordained clergy are not, however, in the business of bringing communion out to those who simply avoid worship attendance because of laziness or apathy, or even hurt feelings. Nonetheless, we are facing a new challenge with virtual church services being conducted by clergy and church leaders, while our congregations are unable to meet in person because of this pandemic. Real people, meeting virtually, because they cannot meet together because of a pandemic virus is an entirely different set of circumstances. This is not related to laziness or intolerance of people, but a very real set of circumstances, like someone being home-bound due to illness.

So, as we celebrate communion during necessary virtual services, we make the special accommodation of blessing it from a distance, in the same way that delivering communion to the homebound is a special accommodation for those in need. So, if you are at home and have bread, and grape juice (or even a bit of wine), we should gather these elements for a Holy Communion Service blessed through this virtual communion service. Each person should have their own cup and piece of bread.

What makes Holy Communion sacred is not the type of plate or cup the fruit of the vine and the bread are in. It is not who prays over the elements in person. It is the fact that we set these elements aside for this purpose through prayer and that we do it in remembrance of Jesus and the sacrifice he made through his blood and body.

We welcome all people to begin or deepen their relationship with Christ through worship and study. We invite all believers to fully participate in the life and ministry of our church as members, leaders, and lay staff. We celebrate the gifts and presence of diverse Christians among us—whether those differences be race, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, or socioeconomic status. We are blessed by our diversity and are unified in Christ.

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