

Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves United Church of Christ



Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

APRIL 1, 2021



Maunderly THURSDAY

*We respond to God's call by welcoming everyone
regardless of ability, age, ethnicity, race, gender identity,
sexual orientation or socio-economic background.*

*To proclaim in word and deed the love of Christ,
we affirm that all may share in the full life, ministry, fellowship,
responsibilities and blessing of our congregation.*

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.*

Order of Worship

TOLLING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Prayer

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. Amen.

ANTHEM

I Wonder as I Wander

J. J. Niles

GREETING (Leader; People)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

Friends, tonight is Maundy Thursday, the night on which we remember Jesus' betrayal and arrest. Our worship will occur in two movements: The first takes us to Christ's Table, for which you have been invited to prepare a serving of bread and cup at your home. The virtual sharing of bread and cup remind us that Christ is with us, in us, and is desiring for us through the Spirit to be one with him and with God.

When the first movement of the service is concluded, the second movement will commence. This is a ritual called Tenebrae, or Shadows. It is an ancient practice, dating back as far as the 14th Century. Twelve candles in the Prayer Chapel will be lighted from the flame of the Christ candle, and all will eventually be extinguished, in recognition of the Passover night so long ago when Jesus was betrayed, denied, and deserted by the Twelve.

If you feel moved to contribute an offering tonight, please consider making an online donation to Webster-Rock Hill Ministries.

The service will conclude with silent contemplation. There is no benediction and no postlude.

GATHERING HYMN

"Song of the Supper"

Iona Community

The time was early evening,
The place a room upstairs,
The guests were the disciples
Few in number and few in prayers.
 Oh, the food comes from the baker,
 The drink comes from the vine,
 The words come from the Savior:
 I will meet you in bread and wine.

The company of disciples
Had met to share a meal.
The One who made them welcome
Had much more to reveal.
 Oh, the food. . .

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

John 13:1-17, 31b-35
(The Inclusive Bible, by Priests for Equality)

ONE

It was before the Feast of Passover, and Jesus realized that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to Abba God. He had always loved his own in this world but now he showed how perfect this love was.

TWO

The Devil had already convinced Judas Iscariot son of Simon to betray Jesus. So during supper, Jesus – knowing that God had put all things into his own hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God – rose from the table, took off his clothes and wrapped a towel around his waist. He then poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel that was around his waist.

THREE

Jesus came to Simon Peter, who said, "Rabbi you're not going to wash my feet, are you?"

ONE

Jesus answered, "You don't realize what I am doing right now, but later you'll understand."

THREE

Peter replied, "You'll never wash my feet!"

ONE

Jesus answered, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with me."

THREE

Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Then, Rabbi, not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!"

TWO

Jesus said, "Any who have taken a bath are clean all over and only need to wash their feet – and you're clean, though not every one of you." For Jesus knew who was to betray him. That is why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

ONE

After washing their feet, Jesus put his clothes back on and returned to the table. He said to them, "Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me 'Teacher,' and 'Sovereign' – and rightly for so I am. If I, then – your Teacher and Sovereign – have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

TWO

"The truth of the matter is, no subordinate is greater than the superior; no messenger outranks the sender. Once you know all these things you'll be blessed if you put them into practice.

THREE

"Now is the Chosen One glorified and God is glorified as well. God will in turn glorify the Chosen One and will do so very soon. My little children,

ONE

I won't be with you much longer. You'll look for me, but what I said to the Temple authorities, I say to you: where I am going you cannot come.

TWO

I give you a new commandment:

ALL

Love one another.

THREE

And you're to love one another the way I have loved you.

ONE

This is how all will know that you're my disciples:

ALL

that you truly love one another."

Pause.

ALL: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

People: Thanks be to God.

RITUAL OF CONFESSION

Invitation to Confession (Responsive)

Brothers and sisters, we are called to be children of the day and not children of the night.

Let us approach the throne of grace that we may receive mercy.

Corporate Confession (Unison)

Gracious God, we remember that Jesus' feet were washed and anointed by a woman who loved him. Tonight, we remember how he also washed the feet of his disciples. We admit our hesitation to stoop as they did and our reluctance to acknowledge our servanthood in this same way. As we seek restoration by your grace, we pray, forgive us our sins. Give us comfort and assurance, wash us clean, and anoint us by your Holy Spirit. Then, guide us to forgive as we have been forgiven and to bless others as we have come to know your blessing. Amen.

Silence for Personal Confessions

Prayer for Mercy

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

Assurance of Pardon

Let us love the holy One, because God has heard our voices and our supplications

What shall we return to our God for all the bounty we have received? We will lift up the cup of salvation and call on God's name.

RITUAL AT CHRIST'S TABLE

Introduction and Litany of Prayers

Institution and Consecration

"The bread and body broken,
The wine and blood out poured,
The cross and kitchen table
Are one by my sign and word."
Oh, the food. . .

Christ Jesus, now among us,
Confirm our faith's intent,
As, with your words and actions,

We unite in this sacrament.
Oh, the food. . .

The Prayer of Our Savior

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.

Invitation

Take the bread and cup, for together they are the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation.
Amen.

The meal is served.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you, God for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

A SERVICE OF SHADOWS (TENEBRAE)

Interlude

First Reading

"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 Human One goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Human One is betrayed! It would have been better for that person not to have been born."

Judas who betrayed him said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?"

Jesus replied, "You have said so."

Second Reading

"The Shadow of Desertion"

Matthew 26:31–35

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written,

'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you."

Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times."

Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

Third Reading

“The Agony of the Soul”

Luke 22:39–44

Jesus 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, “Abba, 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.

Interlude

Fourth Reading

“The Unshared Vigil”

Mark 14:32–41

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”

He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.”

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

He came 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 Human One is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

Fifth Reading

“Father, the hour is come”

John 17:1–6

After saying these words, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Abba, the hour has come; glorify your Child so that the Child may glorify you.” (You have given your Child authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given into Christ's care. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.)

“I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Abba, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”

Sixth Reading

“That they may all be one”

John 17:15–22

Jesus continued praying, “I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Abba, are in me and I am in you, may they

also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

Interlude

Seventh Reading

“Arrest in the Garden”

John 18:1–5

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?”

They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus replied, “I am he.”

Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

Eighth Reading

“The Shadow of the Cross”

Mark 15:16–20

Then the soldiers led Jesus 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.

Interlude

Final Reading

“And the Word Was God”

from John 1 and 3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through the Word, and not one thing came into being without. What has come into being in the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and in this we have witnessed glory, the glory as of a parent’s only child, full of grace and truth.

The Word was in the world.

The world came into being through the Word; yet the world did not recognize the Word. But to all who receive the Word, who keep faith according to the name by which the Word is known, the power is given to become children of God.

So, this is how the judgment works: The light has come into the world, but people love the shadows rather than the light, because their deeds are evil.

SILENCE



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