



ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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**WORSHIP @ HOME**

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[www.zionuccindy.net/worshipathome](http://www.zionuccindy.net/worshipathome)

April 9, 2020  
Maundy Thursday Worship

*Our Maundy Thursday service centers around two sacred, ritual actions. The first is a reenactment of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. You will be invited to wash your hands or the hands of someone in your household. **What you will need: water, soap if you want, and a towel.***

*The second ritual action is that of communion. This sacramental act was first celebrated in the homes of those who were part of the early church. They would gather together to break bread, drink wine, and remember Christ. In this season of staying at home to slow the spread of COVID-19, many in the church around the world will go back to our ancient roots, breaking bread and drinking wine in our homes rather than in our sanctuaries. **What you will need: something to symbolize the body of Christ (it could be bread, a cracker, anything you have on hand) and something to symbolize the blood of Christ (it could be wine, fruit juice, a grape, water, or any other beverage of your choosing).***

**Prelude**

*Just As I Am, Martha Main*

**We Are Called to Worship (Psalm 116, John 13)**

**One:** In the dark of the evening, guided by candlelight,

**Many:** **We come to remember and give thanks.**

**One:** In the solemnness of this hour, guided by prayer,

**Many:** **we come to worship, to be fed by God's Spirit, to be filled with Christ's amazing love.~**

**Prayer** (unison, Psalm 116)— **Gracious God, we have been called here by your inviting Spirit. As we come to worship and praise your name, we wonder: “What can we bring you?” In the dark of night, and in the depths of our hearts, we hear your reply: “Your love is all I require.” So, in thanksgiving and praise, we bring you our whole selves, with hearts full to bursting. Incline our ears to your word, and open our hearts to the mystery of this holy night. Amen.**~

## **Song 1**

*Just As I Am, 34*

## **We Hear God’s Word**

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

13 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. <sup>2</sup>The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’ <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered, ‘You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’ <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.’ <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’ <sup>10</sup>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.’ <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’

<sup>12</sup> 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?’ <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup>So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

<sup>31</sup> When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. <sup>32</sup>If God has been glorified in

him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup>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.” <sup>34</sup>I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

### **Ritual Response to God’s Word: Handwashing**

In Jesus’ day, it was an act of hospitality and welcome to wash the feet of those who had traveled dusty roads. A servant would stoop down to remove the dirt and grime. In the Gospel of John, our great servant-leader, Jesus, humbles himself in order to serve those he loves, and he asks us to do likewise. Peter is shocked to see his Teacher and Lord put himself in this position of humility, but Peter soon understands that this household chore becomes a symbol of love. Servanthood and love are the marks of Christ’s disciples.

Tonight, rather than footwashing, you are invited to engage in a ritual act of handwashing. Handwashing has become increasingly important in our daily lives in the context of COVID-19. Washing our hands is truly a life-giving action. You’ve probably been washing your hands more frequently lately. You’ve probably been more mindful of how long this process takes, and you’ve probably been paying more attention to making sure you have scrubbed every surface of you hands and wrists.

As an act of prayer and a symbol of love, you are invited to wash your hands or the hands of someone in your household as you remember the act of love Christ did for his disciples. During this ritual action...

- It might be strange to wash someone else’s hands. Perhaps that awkwardness will emphasize for you what Peter must have felt when Jesus washed his feet.
- You might sing your favorite hymn as you wash your hands.
- Or, maybe in these moments, you might give thanks to God for all of those who continue to do acts of service for our communities—those essential workers who keep showing up, the healthcare workers risking their lives to offer healing care to others, the many volunteers who are helping feed the hungry and tend to our homeless neighbors, all those who are making masks to keep people healthy.

## We Hear God's Word

Matthew 26:17-30

17 On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' <sup>18</sup>He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples." ' <sup>19</sup>So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

20 When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; <sup>21</sup>and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' <sup>22</sup>And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' <sup>23</sup>He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup>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.' <sup>25</sup>Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' <sup>27</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; <sup>28</sup>for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup>I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

30 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

## Ritual Response to God's Word: We Gather at the Table

### Song 2

*One Bread, One Body, 689*



**Our Invitation**—Communion was first celebrated in the homes of those in the early church. Friends and family would gather together to pray, singing songs, and break bread. We carry on that tradition today. Whatever you have on hand to celebrate communion will work just fine, because this ancient ritual is not about what we use for this meal or where we partake of it. Instead, it is about the act of remembrance. So gather around the table, prepare your place, and remember that Christ is in our midst.

**The Words of Institution**—On the night when Jesus was to be betrayed, he gathered with his friends in that upper room to celebrate the Passover meal, a

meal of remembrance of the liberation of God's people from slavery in Egypt. After the meal was over, Jesus took the bread that was left, broke it, blessed it, and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you." In the same way, he took the cup, the fruit of the vine, and pouring it out he said, "This is the cup of the new covenant, my blood shed for you and the forgiveness of sins. As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, remember me." Tonight, we remember Christ's body broken for us and blood shed for us that we might know more fully of God's unending love. As we prepare to receive this holy meal, let us ready our hearts by confessing our sins to God. Together let us pray.

**Our Confession** (unison)— **Holy Lord, on this night of mystery, we ask with the disciples, "Lord, do you seek to wash our feet?" It is hard to witness acts of selfless service, for our actions are rarely pure. Forgive our selfish tendencies. Forgive us when we fail to live by your example. Help us listen for your guidance, and overcome our shortcoming, that we may become your faithful servants. Amen.**~

**Assurance of Grace**— Friends, hear these words of Christ: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." We are loved and forgiven and free, and made ready to once again share God's grace with one another. Thanks be to God!~

**Blessing Our Meal**—Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit into this bread and into this cup. May this act of remembrance empower us to serve one another like Christ first served us and to love one another as Christ first loved us. May these elements, whatever they might be, offer to us strength to carry on, may they sustain us for the journey ahead, and may they nourish us that we, too, might love and serve. Amen.

**We Share the Bread and the Cup** – As you eat the bread, remember, "This is the body of Christ broken for you, take and eat." As you drink the cup, remember, "This is the blood of Christ shed for you and the forgiveness of sins. Take and drink."

**We Give Thanks**—Loving God, we give you thanks for the simplicity and splendor of this Holy Meal which unites us with our sisters and brothers around the world. We give you thanks that we can celebrate your presence with us in all places and through all times. Thank you for sending Christ into this world that we might witness the power of your redeeming love. Amen.

## **We Respond to God with Our Giving**

*You are invited to continue to send in your offerings while we are unable to meet in-person. Though we cannot physically be together, our ministry continues. You can also now give online at [www.zionuccindy.net/donate](http://www.zionuccindy.net/donate).*

**The Doxology** (Please sing the version that is most meaningful to you)

*Version 1*

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*Version 2*

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.*

**We Give Thanks** (unison) — **Loving God, we give you thanks and praise for the gifts you have given us. May these gifts be used to spread your love and your grace with those in need— those who are in exile, those who are hurting, and all who are in need of your touch. May these gifts be a celebration of your very presence. Amen.~**

## **Song 3**

*What Wondrous Love Is This, 257*

## **We Are Sent Forth with a Blessing**

Brothers and sisters, remember this night. Remember the broken bread, the shared cup, and the cleansing water. Go into this night remembering and celebrating Christ's presence among us. Go in peace! Go forth this day to love and serve the LORD. Amen.~

Worship Notes:

~ Scifres, Mary. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020. Abingdon Press.