

LENT 2023  
**LISTEN**

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



*Maundy Thursday*

**Prelude**

*Wondrous Love*

**Gathering**—Come and rest. Come and listen. Lay the fullness of your lives before our Maker.

*Music Refrain: Come and Find the Quiet Center, #477, verse 1*  
*Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,*  
*Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:*  
*Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we may see*  
*All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.*

We have a long way to travel during this holiest of weeks. Let us begin by coming to the table to partake of the food for the journey—the bread and cup of God’s grace that sustains us. Tonight, we will prepare for the table as Jesus did when he served his friends by washing their feet. We will listen-in at what Jesus had to say at the table. We will feast at the table, and we will rise from the table, ready to face what is ahead. Listen with your whole heart for tonight you will find abundant grace.

*Music Refrain: Come and Find the Quiet Center, #477, verse 2*  
*Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,*  
*God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,*  
*Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,*  
*Raising courage when we’re shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.*

**A Time of Prayer**— Jesus, you who walked among us and lived so radically that in the end, even your friends betrayed you – give us Courage. Gift us with breath that fills our bellies and soothes the panicked fluttering of our hearts.

Jesus, you who wept as we weep, who ate and drank, who prayed loudly and alone, who spent a lifetime filled with doubt, but didn’t allow that to stop you from speaking up and acting out – grant us Strength. Move not only our mouths to prayers of justice, but our bodies to action.

Jesus, you who brought sight and life, who calmed storms and fed the masses, you who welcomed all who were excluded – gift us Rest. Guide us to those who will share the load so that when the pain becomes too much to bear, we may lay down knowing the good work will go on. Amen+

**The Lord's Prayer** (unison)—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.

**Special Music**

*I'd Rather Have Jesus*, Bob Brown

**WE PREPARE FOR THE TABLE**

**We Hear God's Word**

*John 13:1-17* (NRSV)

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.

## **A Symbolic Washing Of Feet**

Jesus knelt and washed the feet of his disciples as a reminder to them and to us of what it means to serve one another, to care for one another, to show up for one another. To be the recipient of such tender and intimate care can be hard sometimes. We want to be self-sufficient. We want to go-it-alone. We don't want to be that vulnerable before others, yet sometimes we need to be cared for.

On the other hand, it can also be hard to serve as Jesus served, to humble ourselves, to get down on our knees to wipe away the dust and dirt of a hard day, yet Jesus did all of this and more. Not only did he care for those he loved and serve those he loved, he dared to meet us in the fullness of our humanity. He wept and despaired. He felt the agony of a human body, and the pain of betrayal by those he loved. He was beaten and rejected and left to die, questions on his lips even at the very end.

Yes, our Lord and our Savior washed feet. He continued to show up, even knowing what he did about how flawed people could be. His human heart must have been breaking, and yet he stayed to teach and to be in community with his disciples.+

Tonight, as we get ready to find our place at Christ's table, let yourself be washed over, cleaned, restored by Jesus' love and care. Let us pray.

**Prayer**—Spirit of Christ, we pause to extend to you what feels most vulnerable in each of us. We ask you to pour out compassion over us as you did water over the feet of your disciples. We may be prideful, uncomfortable, anxious, depressed. We may be grieving or overwhelmed, but we ask for your help attuning ourselves with your guidance, strength, and hope. Amen.

## **Hymn**

*What Wondrous Love Is This, 257*

## **WE LISTEN AROUND THE TABLE**

Having been washed and cleansed, let us now find our place at Christ's table. We've been listening a lot this Lent, and tonight, we listen in to the dinner conversation that Jesus had with his friends on that Passover night. Through God's

Holy Word, we get a glimpse into what took place just moments before Jesus was to be betrayed. Though he knew what was ahead, still he gathered his disciples that they might hear God's liberation proclaimed, that he might feed them and forgive them and bless them.

The table can be a place where wondrous, life-giving moments take place. Think about conversations you have heard at the table when you've gathered with those you love. I'm so thankful my parents prioritized family dinners for us and that even now that we're grown we can meet together at the table. How precious, though chaotic and messy, are family dinners now, with my niece and nephews when we gather to share a meal. The laughter and the joy and the stories make my heart full. How grateful I am whenever my friends carve out time in their very full lives to dine with me and share of their lives with me. What comfort we find, in the midst of our grief, when we gather to be nurtured and nourished with good food and loved ones by our side who offer us support and tender care. What I wouldn't give for one more family dinner with my Grandma Mouri or my Grandma Frische, with that delicious food they so lovingly prepared. At the table we share with one another our joys and our sorrows, our hopes and our dreams, our struggles and our celebrations. We hear words of love, words of challenge to grow, words of hope in our dinner conversations.

Listen in, now, on those words Jesus had to share with those he loved when he gathered for his very last meal.

### **We Hear God's Word**

*Luke 22:14-20 (NRSV)*

When the time came, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles joined him. He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. I tell you, I won't eat it until it is fulfilled in God's kingdom." After taking a cup and giving thanks, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. I tell you that from now on I won't drink from the fruit of the vine until God's kingdom has come." After taking the bread and giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup after the meal and said, "This cup is the new covenant by my blood, which is poured out for you.

### **Hymn**

*Let Us Break Bread Together, 699*

## WE EAT AT THE TABLE

**Set Your Place at the Table**—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.

**Our Invitation**—Before Jesus was to breathe his last breath, he gathered together his friends to celebrate God’s goodness at the table, offering blessing, forgiveness, and grace. At this table is a place for you, so come, let us now feast together at Christ’s table.

**A Prayer for Transformation**—O God, our failings are ever before us. At times we feel crushed under their weight. Yet in your eyes, Holy One, we remain beloved children created in the glory of your image. Help us see ourselves as you see us. Help us hear once again the gift of grace Christ proclaims. Amen.~

**Assurance of Grace**—God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that whosoever believed in him may not perish but have everlasting life. Jesus offers to us life this day. Receive the fullness of his mercy and grace and know that you are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**The Words of Institution**— On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, we remember...we offer ourselves...we proclaim God’s love...

**Blessing Our Meal**—God of wondrous love, bless this bread and this cup that they might be for us visible signs of your unending grace. Nurture and nourish us as we partake that this meal might ready us for all that is ahead as we journey with our Savior to the cross. 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**—Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior’s presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ’s body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.`

### **WE RISE FROM THE TABLE**

Having been fed at Christ’s table, we now rise from the table ready to make that journey with Christ from the cross to the grave. Here at the table we have met our Savior and our friends, enriched by each other’s company. We make this journey together, and though the way will not be easy, it is a path we must follow to witness the fullness of God’s love.

#### **Hymn**

*Go To Dark Gethsemane, 272*

**Benediction**—Listen every day until we meet again. Get quiet enough to hear the still small voice and to find your own. And may the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with you all. Amen.

#### **Postlude**

*Resignation*