

**A SERVICE FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
**Zion Lutheran Church**  
**April 9, 2020**

**A NIGHT FOR  
REMEMBERING**



**Prelude**      *Thou Who at Thy Eucharist Didst Pray* Setting      J. Vandertuin

**Introduction to the Service**

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Tonight's service is probably like no other Maundy Thursday service you have experienced in the past, but then we are in the midst of a time very different than other years due to the spreading of the coronavirus within our nation and throughout the world.

Tonight's service is simple, but meaningful, in light of the many restrictions we face. We are unable to gather together in Zion Lutheran Church due to stay-at-home orders. We are unable to receive communion around the table of our Lord. We are unable to participate in the washing of feet and the laying on of hands. But, even so, we can confess our sin, we can remember that night so long ago when Jesus gathered with his disciples and shared a meal with them; we can pray, we can sing, and we can remember God's great love for us and we can remember Jesus' commandment to love one another as he has loved us. So, on this night of remembering, I ask you to join me in remembering the past as you hear a special story about a special night – a night that's truly worth remembering.

**Prayer of Confession**

Hear the words of Confession: Gracious God, Jesus taught us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus taught us to serve as he served his disciples. We confess that we have often failed to learn, and what we have learned we have often failed to put into practice. Yet, by your grace,

O God, we have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, you have forgiven our sins so Christ may live in our hearts through faith. Amen.

**HYMN**

*Where Charity and Love Prevail*

ELW 359

Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found.  
Brought here together by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.

With grateful joy and holy fear, God's charity we learn.  
Let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in return.

Let us recall that in our midst dwells Christ, God's holy Son;  
As members of each body joined, in him we are made one.

Let strife among us be unknown; let all contentions cease,  
Be God's the glory that we seek; be his our only peace.

Let us forgive each other's faults as we our own confess.  
That we may love each other well in Christian gentleness.

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray. God of humility and grace, walk with us through this Holy Week journey. Fill us with your grace. Help us live as people who serve and love. Guide us to be disciples who stay awake, even through dark and troubled times. Strengthen us to be disciples who are steadfast and true. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

**Duet**     *Lonesome Valley/ We Shall Walk*     Sung by David Albin & Jean Pretz

**The Passover with the Disciples**

**A reading from Mark 14:12-16**

*On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." So the disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.*

**A Meditation on a Night for Remembering**

This is a night on which we remember.

We remember something that happened so long ago ...

So long ago that none of us can trace our family trees back that far.

We remember something that happened so far away ... in a place where most of us have never been, and more than likely never will be.

Nevertheless, we remember.

We remember that on this night, Jesus and his friends were gathered to remember.

They gathered for a Passover meal, which is a feast of remembering.

And unlike us, in a time void of a deathly virus like COVID-19, they were gathered around a table.

They were telling the story of their faith.

Like us, they were calling to mind the saving acts of God ...

They remembered God being with them, in steadfast love, even as they were treated harshly and enslaved.

They remembered God leading their ancestors in faith out of slavery and turning their bitter burden into sweet freedom.

And as they dipped the vegetables in salt water, to remind them of their tears, and as they ate the sweet fruit, to remind them of their joys, the disciples were beginning to put it all together.

That's what "remember" means... to put something back together. We "re-member" something, and what was scattered becomes whole. What was many becomes one.

And so, they remembered together, Jesus and his friends, their identity as God's covenant people. Simon was there (who Jesus had named Peter), and Andrew. John and James, the brothers, sons of Zebedee. Philip. Bartholomew. Thomas and Matthew. Another James, the son of Alphaeus. Thaddeus. Another Simon, the Cananean. And Judas Iscariot. Oh, and we can't forget, the women who likely prepared the supper, the ones who are neither named nor mentioned.

They were all there, to remember God's great and saving acts. They were there, in a sense, to remember who they were.

And then Jesus did something ... inexplicable.

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body."

This wasn't the first time Jesus had taken bread, and blessed it, and broken it, and given it to people to eat. But those other times, he did it for great crowds. Here, in

this large upstairs room somewhere in Jerusalem, Jesus did it for his friends. The people he loved.

He did it for a group of people who, from the beginning of their time together, mostly didn't understand what Jesus was doing and where they were going.

He did it with some level of confidence that this was, in fact, the last supper he would share with them.

On this night, at this meal, the meaning of the bread was pre-determined. It was Matzoh ... unleavened bread eaten at the Passover Seder, and was called the "bread of affliction" or "adversity". In Isaiah 30 it says:

*Though the Lord may give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.*

The matzoh reminds us of the suffering of the slaves in Egypt. But on that night, Jesus tells his friends, he is the bread. He will suffer. He will be broken.

Then, scripture tells us, Jesus took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the new covenant..." – a promise of a new relationship between God and all people.

Again, Jesus has taken this night for remembering, and done something new and electrifying – something inexplicable.

The meaning of the wine at the Passover meal is consistent. The wine is shared as part of a blessing.

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine, and who gave us, Lord our God, with love, festivals for happiness, holidays and times for joy ... this day of Passover ... the time of our freedom.*

At the Seder, wine is drunk in blessing and celebration and abundance, and the sharing of it is meant to "show freedom and majesty."

And then Jesus, after passing around the wine, says, "This is my blood." Jesus tells his friends, his life will be poured out, in much the same way as the life of the Passover lamb.

Jesus joins with his friends to remember, to celebrate the Passover ... a meal that resonates at the heart of their identity as Jews. At the same time, Jesus interprets the bread and wine of that meal in a way that forms the heart of our identity.

That's what we're here to remember, to re-member. In re-remembering, what was scattered becomes whole. What was many, becomes one.

At this table, we remember that Jesus spoke of his body being broken, like a piece of bread; and he spoke of his life being poured out, like a cup of wine.

And now, Jesus is not hidden from us anymore; our eyes can see our Teacher.

We see: In Jesus, God's love is poured out, like a never-ending cup of wine.

We see: In Jesus, that God's presence comes to us ... in daily bread ... in bread for the journey.

We see: In Jesus, that God acts with love and power, and the goal is joy and freedom.

We see all these things when we re-member. When what was scattered in our history becomes whole. When what was many — and that would be us — becomes one.

Like Jesus and his friends, we too can gather around a table tonight in our homes and tell the story of our faith. And when we do, we call to mind the saving acts of God.

We can also remember these words spoken by Jesus: *Where I am going, you cannot come. I give you a new commandment, that you 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.*

And as we extend our love, visualize that love as we take on a servant role, silently washing the feet of others.

And like Jesus and his disciples, let us join together with some of Zion's choir members and sing from our hearts from wherever we are ...

## Hymn

*Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*

ELW 708

### *Refrain*

Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,  
Show us how to serve, the neighbors we have from you.

1. Kneel at the feet of his friends, silently washes their feet,  
Master who acts as a slave ... to them. (*Refrain*)
2. Neighbors are wealthy and poor, varied in color and race,  
Neighbors are near-by and far ... away. (*Refrain*)
3. These are the ones we will serve; these are the ones we will love;  
All these are neighbors to us ... and you. (*Refrain*)
4. Kneel at the feet of our friends, silently washing their feet:  
This is the way we will live ... with you. (*Refrain*)

## **Pastoral Prayer**

Let us pray: Loving God, as Jesus had his Seder meal with the disciples, remind us that tonight is part of the great story that allows us to pass over from death to life. As the Hebrew children remember their meal of unleavened bread, may the bread of affliction help us also to “do this in remembrance” of Jesus, reflecting God’s great love for us. And even as the Hebrews departed from the land of Egypt, may we too depart from a land of vacuous and meaningless existence. Teach us once again that we are one another’s greatest gifts and that sometimes all those things that are distractions simply keep us divided from other people. As Jesus urged the disciples to “love one another,” may we also heed that divine word as we remember Maundy Thursday in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

## **Blessing**

As this day comes to an end, let us remember God’s good works in our lives. Let us give thanks for the leadership that God freely offers. May we walk in trust and faith, knowing that God, who passed over the Israelites, will always take care of those who follow him. Now may the God who gives us memories of Maundy Thursday call us back to this place again and again to worship and praise. Amen.

## **The Stripping of the Altar**

*We will end tonight’s service with the stripping of the altar in preparation for Good Friday.*

## **PSALM 22**

Intoned by David Albin and Jean Pretz

*Silence follows the stripping of the altar.*

**The Good Friday and Easter service bulletins  
and recordings will be emailed out and will also  
be available on Zion’s website  
([zionhempfield.net](http://zionhempfield.net)) under the Worship tab.**