



Holy Week
in a
Time of
Quarantine:
Maundy Thursday

Praying

Worshipping

Connecting

Church of the
Holy Comforter
Montgomery, AL

Maundy Thursday

The Readings

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe,



and tied a towel around himself. 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are

you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 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." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

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

"Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 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.' 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."

Psalm 63

- 1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.
- 2 Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.
- 3 For your loving-kindness is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.
- 4 So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your Name.
- 5 My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,
- 6 When I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.
- 7 For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
- 8 My soul clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.



Activities

Foot Washing There may be a teeny tiny bit of relief, at least for some of us, that we will not have to make awkward decisions about whether or not participate in the rite of foot washing that is at the heart of Jesus' call to servant ministry. In the past few years, I have a new reason to struggle with it – when it is my turn to wash someone else's feet, I have to think through and plan for how to kneel and then stand with joints that seem to become increasingly stiff and sore.

Maybe this Maundy Thursday under quarantine gives us a way of reclaiming this simple practice? If you live alone, put a pitcher of

cool water next to a chair, along with a bowl. Have a towel nearby. As you pour the water of refreshment over tired feet at the end of day, imagine what it was like to sit and have Jesus himself pour that water. Think of water: life giving, dangerous in a storm, capable of washing away so much grit and grime. You can use the prayer that goes with foot washing in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP 274-5), or simply revel in the wonder and give thanks.

If you do this with family members or friends, talk about the awkwardness. Figure out who needs help kneeling and standing up and treat that truth light and gently. Tell stories about other times you've participated in foot washing. Remember that love is incarnational—we love not the idea of those we love, with long, slender, beautifully pedicured feet or old gnarled ones that tell a story of life's journeys and adventures. We are asked to see each other that clearly. We are also called to bless each other with that kind of specificity. It's how Jesus loves us.

Agape Meal In the absence of “places to go and people to see,” we have the opportunity to allow a meal to become a moment of deep blessing that nurtures us down to the very core of who we are. Whether you are alone for Maundy Thursday, or with others, consider having an Agape Meal. These simple instructions help us host a meal that is especially appropriate in this time of hardship and suffering in our country—and for this night in which we remember Jesus gathered for one last time with his friends.

*Agape for Maundy Thursday **

A meatless meal is to be preferred. The setting should be austere and the foods sparse and simple. Appropriate foods include soup, cheese, olives, dried fruit, bread, and wine.

If there are several persons present, one will preside. (Note: Multiple households could prepare for this service and coordinate their celebration of it using a video conferencing platform, alternating blessings.)



+ The Blessings +

At the time appointed, all gather around the table, standing as able. After a time of silence, the presider the following blessings.

Over Wine

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You create the fruit of the vine; and you refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May the time come quickly when we can share that cup again, even as you are with us now in our very thirst for you. Glory to you for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Over Bread

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You bring forth bread from the earth; and you have fed us on our way with the bread of life in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. Let us be fed again soon with that bread of life. And as grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Over the Other Foods

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

+ The Meal +

The meal is now eaten. If several are gathered, they first serve one another, then dine.

+ The Word and the Prayers +

*At the end of the meal, the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John is read.
A simple hymn can be sung.*

The following psalm is then said. If there is more than one voice, it is said in unison.

Psalm 63:1-8

- 1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.
- 2 Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place;
that I might behold your power and your glory.
- 3 For your loving-kindness is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.
- 4 So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your Name.
- 5 My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips.
- 6 When I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.
- 7 For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
- 8 My soul clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Let us pray

O God of the crucified and risen One, from whom no trial or trouble can separate us: you feed us with your Word and soothe us with your Spirit, closer to us than breath itself. Make us glad this night for the life of your servant Jesus; Make us servants of all for the sake of Jesus; who for our sake gave his life for the salvation of all. In the Name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

*From the *Book of Occasional Services* 2018, adapted/edited by the Rev. Dr. James Farwell and Dr. Lisa Kimball for use when Maundy Thursday Eucharist is not possible. Appropriate adaptations for illness in the household can be made.