

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Due to copyright limitations, we are unable to print the words to the songs. However, our musicians have chosen music to fit the scriptures. We invite you to look up the words in your worship book and ponder them. If you do not have a worship book, ponder the words to one of your favourite hymns and listen for God's voice. Those who have internet may find the songs on YouTube.

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### **BEFORE WE WORSHIP, WE REFLECT...**

*This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world. Departing worship in solemn silence, we anticipate the coming days.*

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

**Fountain of living water, pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.**

Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ☩ forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus. Amen.

**GATHERING SONG** WOV 666 Great God Your Love Has Called Us

### **CENTERING PRAYER**

**Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts, and give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### **READINGS AND PSALM**

**First Reading: Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14**

*Israel remembered its deliverance from slavery in Egypt by celebrating the festival of Passover. This festival featured the Passover lamb, whose blood was used as a sign to protect God's people from the threat of death. The early church described the Lord's supper using imagery from the Passover, especially in portraying Jesus as the lamb who delivers God's people from sin and death.*

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: <sup>2</sup>This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. <sup>3</sup>Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. <sup>4</sup>If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall

be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. [<sup>5</sup>Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup>You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. <sup>7</sup>They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. <sup>8</sup>They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. <sup>9</sup>Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. <sup>10</sup>You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ] <sup>11</sup>This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD. <sup>12</sup>For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup>The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

<sup>14</sup>This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

### **Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19**

***I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. (Ps. 116:13)***

<sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, who has heard my voice, and listened to my supplication,

**<sup>2</sup>for the LORD has given ear to me whenever I called.**

<sup>12</sup>How shall I repay the LORD for all the good things God has done for me?

**<sup>13</sup>I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. R**

<sup>14</sup>I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God's people.

**<sup>15</sup>Precious in your sight, O LORD, is the death of your servants.**

<sup>16</sup>O LORD, truly I am your servant;

I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

**<sup>17</sup>I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the name of the LORD.**

<sup>18</sup>I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God's people,

**<sup>19</sup>in the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. R**

### **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

*In the bread and cup of the Lord's supper, we experience intimate fellowship with Christ and with one another because it involves his body given for us and the new covenant in his blood. Faithful participation in this meal is a living proclamation of Christ's death until he comes in the future.*

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, <sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

### **Gospel: John 13:1-17, 31b-35**

*The story of the last supper in John's gospel recalls a remarkable event not mentioned elsewhere: Jesus performs the duty of a slave, washing the feet of his disciples and urging them to do the same for one another.*

<sup>1</sup>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>31b</sup>"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."

## **MEDITATION**

I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.

~Mahatma Gandhi

Have you ever received those memes on Facebook titled, "They only had one job..." Well, that is Christianity in a nutshell. Jesus gives a new commandment, a seemingly simple commandment, and yet... It is any wonder that Gandhi would make such a comment about Christians?

Seriously, Jesus, do you honestly believe that you can "command" people to love each other? Is there no wiggle room here? Can't we just "fake it 'til we make it"? Love everybody. Period. Really?

"as I have loved you", says Jesus. Love does the job of the servant, the washing of the feet. A servant does not have an option. Jesus does. He chooses to wash the feet of Judas, knowing what Judas will do next. Jesus chooses to wash Peter's feet, knowing he will deny him in the near future. To do this willingly implies love on Jesus' part.

It may surprise or even disappoint us that the "new commandment" concerns only love for each other within the community of faith. But is this not precisely the problem with the church, that we are turned inward, intent on our togetherness, when the gospel's mandate is to serve and bear witness to the world beyond our walls? Why, then, is the love command in John so exclusively focused on mutual love *within* the church?

Consider the context: Jesus is leaving them, the powers of darkness are closing in, betrayal from within the ranks has occurred, uncertainty and grief await them, terrible pressures are upon them—and to one extent or another this will *a/ways* be the circumstance of the community of Jesus. How can all of this be faithfully endured unless we love each other? Moreover, after Jesus' death he will return and tell

them, "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." How can such a mission be sustained unless those who undertake it are bound together in strengthening love.

I am grateful to St. John Lutheran Church in Ottawa, the congregation in which I grew up. This congregation endured many struggles, suffered divisions, shed a lot of tears, shared a lot of laughter and lifted the roof with their harmonious singing! The St. John congregation taught me forgiveness, compassion, devotion and love. We had a dynamic youth group and wonderful youth leaders. The congregation supported the youth, the youth gave back to the congregation. My faith experience at St. John shaped me and grounded me. It was where I gathered the strength to go out into the world and follow my call to ministry. As with any family, my faith family had its up and downs, yet love was there. Love got us through. There is wisdom in Jesus' words.

Entering into The Three Days, here are some questions to ponder as we get closer to Golgotha and the cross: why do we sometimes find it so hard to love? Or, put differently but perhaps better, who do we have the hardest time loving? Is it people who are different from us? People who have hurt us? People who see things differently? Who?

Jesus willingly washed the feet of the one who would betray him and the one who would deny him. Lord Jesus, teach us how to love and serve. Amen.

**SONG OF THE DAY** WOV 664 A New Commandment (sung twice)

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

United by the servant love of God in Christ, we pray this holy night for the needs of the world.

You call your people to hand on what we receive from you. Form all the baptized into teachers of faith. From one generation to the next, give your church hunger for your promises in the sacraments and joy in receiving and sharing your word. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your creation provides all that we need. Cleanse and protect the water you have given for washing and drinking, water on which all life depends. Sustain crops and herds that provide food; teach us how to live so that there is enough for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You redeemed your people from slavery. Preserve people throughout the world who flee violence and oppression. Establish just leadership in place of tyranny and peace in place of war. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Jesus loved his followers to the end. Grant assurance of that love to all who need it: those living with guilt, those struggling to forgive, those who are lonely or overlooked. Heal the sick and embrace the dying. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Jesus washed the feet of the one who betrayed him. Inspire this congregation's ministries of service, that we love as Jesus loved us. Give us renewed courage to serve. Bless the ministry of deacons throughout the church. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your glory shone in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We thank you for generations of the faithful who have proclaimed our Lord's death. Unite us with them in hope until he comes again. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Hear these and all our prayers, O God, in the name of the one who loves us to the end, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

**SONG** VU 467 *One Bread, One Body*

*(There is no benediction. The Three Days are considered one service. Spend some time in silent reflection before resuming your rhythm of life.)*

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