

April 9 2020 – Maundy Thursday

Welcome to Everyone for our fourth online worship service. Today we share with you the Maundy Thursday service. At St. Peter's, since I have been your pastor, our services usually include either foot washing or handwashing, and an anointing for service to the wider community, according to Jesus' instruction to the disciples in the upper room – the instruction he gives them after he has washed their feet for them:

***'And now I give you a new commandment:
love one another.
As I have loved you,
so you must love one another.'
-John 13:34***

With nightfall tonight, our Lenten observance comes to its culmination. We gather, in Spirit, with believers around the world remembering the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. We do more than retrace the last days of Jesus' life. Throughout these Three Days, through word, sacrament, and ceremony, we participate in the saving power of Jesus' transition from life to death to life. As the Three Days begin, we are invited to glory in the cross of Christ—our salvation, our life, our resurrection.

*On this night we hear Jesus' new **mandatum**, meaning the new commandment, to love one another. The word '**Maundy**' is derived from the Latin word "**mandatum**". On the night before his betrayal, we are called to follow Jesus' example of humble servitude, living out our baptismal vocation with humility and care for one another, and especially for the poor, the unloved, those living on the margins. This very unusual COVID-19 isolated Maundy Thursday, I invite you to reflect on how we love each other by washing our own hands, and anointing ourselves in a manner practical for the context of pandemic. As we anoint and carefully care for ourselves as an act of service to each other, we are reminded that we are forgiven, and everyone is forgiven through Jesus who died for us.*

You are also invited tonight, wherever you observe this worship service, whether you are alone or with others, you are invited to eat and drink, and in those acts, to remind ourselves that Jesus gave his body for us, his blood was shed for us. When we remember the holy meal, we remember that we are the body of Christ, offering ourselves in love for the life of the world.

At the conclusion of this service, if we were at church usually the altar and chancel furnishings are removed, preparing the worship space for Good Friday. Through this stark ritual we recall that Jesus was abandoned by his followers, stripped of his dignity, and left to face the cross alone. I think it fair to say we have had much stripped away from life as we knew it before COVID-19. Our church building is missing its most important furnishing: the gathered believers. We do not need to strip anything more away, but I invite you to observe a few moments of silence with the lights off at the end of the service, to reflect on all the things that have been stripped away, and furthermore, on all that is yet possibly to come. Tonight we descend into the darkness. We engage in it and with it, because we know our faith brings us through it, one whole body, in, with and through Jesus. Amen.

**Please take a few moments of silence and deep breaths
to centre yourself for worship before you continue ...**

Confession: A Prayer During COVID times.

During these past few weeks, much has changed in our world.
 We want to visit and hug and hold hands.
 We want to throw open our arms and our doors, sit together.
 But we are called to respect the nature of this virus and refrain from contact.

We serve each other in this time through our efforts:

- At proper handwashing.
- At social distancing.
- With isolation.
- With attentive and responsible care about all we do, to minimize risks.

We confess of our weakness in keeping safe distances, in maintaining social isolation, in keeping the vulnerable ones as safe as possible.

We confess of our weakness in NOT reaching out by the means available to us:

- by telephone or internet,
- across fences and good safe distances,
- to encourage and cheer each other up.

We confess of our weaknesses in keeping strong faith and the encouraging message of eternal life in the forefront of our consciousness.

We confess of allowing our Christ-enlightened consciousness to be pierced by the arrows of despair and the dark invasion of news.

Forgive us of these ways Holy God, please.

Forgive us of our need to be in control.

Forgive us of our stubborn refusal to release old ways,

Please help us in our submission to the requirements of this time.

Please help us to open our hearts and minds to what you have to show us. **Amen.**

We hear the assurance of God's forgiveness:

- Jesus Christ on the altar holds God's doorway ever open.
- Jesus on the cross ensures we have a way home, where all is love:
 Through his broken body, through his blood that was shed,
 We are welcomed back into our home with God
 Who receives us with love,
 Forgiving and renewing us every time we knock.

We come knocking, asking for God's grace and forgiveness, and it is given to us.
 Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gathering Hymn: The Prayer (Father Daughter Duet)

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqFCbtRz1Z0&list=RDQ7u4KMjOSYs&index=11>

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Prayer of the Day: *(we pray together ... where-ever we may be)*

Holy God, source of all love, Jesus gave us a new commandment on the night of his betrayal: to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment on our hearts. Give us courage and faith over fear, to serve as Jesus served, with ALL our actions and our very selves. Amen.

Reading Homework: Exodus 12

Psalm 116 "I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord"

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2n3MqANa08>

The Lesson: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

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, 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.' 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.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Word of God word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation: A New Commandment I Give Onto You

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhoFmt1nfGo>

The Holy Gospel According to John 13:1-17, 31b-35

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. Having loved his dear companions, he continued to love them right to the end. It was suppertime. The Devil by now had Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, firmly in his grip, all set for the betrayal.

Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron.

When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, “Master, *you* wash *my* feet?”

Jesus answered, “You don’t understand now what I’m doing, but it will be clear enough to you later.”

Peter persisted, “You’re not going to wash my feet—ever!”

Jesus said, “If I don’t wash you, you can’t be part of what I’m doing.”

“Master!” said Peter. “Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!”

Jesus said, “If you’ve had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you’re clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you’re clean. But not every one of you.” (He knew who was betraying him. That’s why he said, “Not every one of you.”)

After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table.

Then he said, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Master,’ and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other’s feet. I’ve laid down a pattern for you. What I’ve done, you do. I’m only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn’t give orders to the employer. If you understand what I’m telling you, act like it—and live a blessed life.

When he had left, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is seen for who he is, and God seen for who he is in him. The moment God is seen in him, God’s glory will be on display. In glorifying him, he himself is glorified—glory all around!

“Children, I am with you for only a short time longer. You are going to look high and low for me. But just as I told the Jews, I’m telling you: ‘Where I go, you are not able to come.’

“Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.” (The Message)

The Gospel of our Lord. ***C: Praise to you, O Christ.***

Message (imagine Pastor Janaki's voice here!)

When I thought about our usual Maundy Thursday services, and what has become my new usual in COVID-19 context, my mind immediately went to the avid handwashing that has become my new normal. Probably at least 10 times a day, I do the infection-control recommended 20 second hand wash and about two weeks into our awareness of the importance of hand-washing in infection control, I realized my hands were super dry. So dry that I could see little micro-cracks appearing in my knuckles. So now, in my home each handwashing station has a pump jar of lotion beside it. Every time I hand wash, I also put a dab of lotion on so that my hands are gently prepared for the next task.

20 seconds is quite a bit of time to handwash, and I find I use those 20 seconds to think of water-related things ... things like:

- My baptism & The baptism of those whom I have facilitated in this sacrament
- The beautiful Georgian Bay waters, where I love to swim
- The swimming pool at the gym, which I miss so much
- The Caribbean sea, where I learnt to scuba dive and snorkel
- Jesus washing the disciples feet.

Usually, any one of these things helps me to keep sudsing for the full 20 seconds as I remember all that was a part of each of these things ... the hymns, the gatherings, the feeling of the water at the baptisms ... Last summer, floating on my back in the Georgian Bay and seeing monarch butterflies overhead ... swimming laps in the pool until worries are washed away by the regular breathing ... in and out ... in and out ... the pleasure of emerging from the salty sea water to a cold Red Stripe beer, and a meal with friends on the beach ... and the image of Jesus, finding himself in a cheesy room full of cheesy disciples feet, unwashed, taking his robe off and kneeling at each one's feet in turn, to wash their feet:

A job usually reserved for a servant, which reminds me of the Palm Sunday scripture from Philippians ... Jesus, though holding oneness with divinity, not considering that a barrier, but joining us in our humanity to pour himself out like a slave ... I think of the Greek word "kenosis" ... of Christ's self-emptying ... I think of how these times are emptying me of all pre-conceptions of being in any kind of charge of my life and the world around me. And, as the fresh water runs over my soap suds hands, I think about how all of this stands the opportunity to make me new. When I am emptied of the old, how I am made available for the new.

The job Jesus undertakes in the upper room is the job of a servant. He goes to it with complete humility, washing each disciples feet in turn. He loves them. He is preparing himself, and them for his journey to the cross. He is preparing to literally lay his life down on the cross for them. And I can imagine how he feels as he is washing those dusty, crusty feet ... what words can I leave them with, so they know how to continue when I am gone?

This servant nature of Jesus in this gospel scene often hurts our souls. This is our Messiah, our Saviour. Someone should be washing his feet ... he shouldn't be

doing this, especially since we know all too well what comes next ... it is enough ... and Peter brings this up, objecting to Jesus' actions ... but Jesus persists. And then he explains himself:

"if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other's feet ... Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other."

Jesus uses the foot washing as a way to teach his disciples, even on this last night before he goes to die.

On most Maundy Thursdays, some version of washing each other would be used to mark this ... if not foot washing, then hand washing. I will never forget the image of Lucas washing feet, I will never forget how many of you I have seen kneel and wash feet, how often I have seen the tears as your hands were anointed and I said these words to remind you:

**"In obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ,
all your sins are forgiven. Amen."**

Today we remember the example Jesus set ... and perhaps we bring that example into our self-isolating, social distancing experience today by thinking of our hand-washing, and our application of lotion not merely as germ control and skin care practices, but with a sacramental quality to them, a thing of mysterious and sacred affect and significance ... a sacred time to remember Jesus' example, to remember how we can best love each other in our current context, and to remind ourselves that, in obedience to the command of Jesus, all of our sins are forgiven.

When we take the care with ourselves that is necessary in this time, we keep each other safe as well as ourselves. This connects powerfully with the reflexive nature of that second most important commandment ... that we should love each other as we love ourselves. This is the time to make sure we take that care to love ourselves, to keep safe ourselves because, in so doing, we also keep safe each other. In the measure by which we care for ourselves are we able to care for each other.

It may seem or feel to us that God has left us in this crisis ... but in the words of the Taizé hymn:

Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.
Where love and charity prevail, God is there.

As we prepare ourselves for the journey to the cross with Jesus, and as we daily prepare ourselves for each potential encounter with harm along our way in our context with our hand washing, let us remember the commandment he gave us, to love each other. And let us remember that every act of safe-guarding and care taking right now is exactly that: the loving of each other, following the very example Jesus has given us. Where such love prevails, God is with us. **Amen.**

Hymn of the Day - Ubi Caritas

Click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tymXKxomv_A

Thanksgiving for our Presence on this Land.

We thank you God, for granting our existence on this safe, bountiful, land, and we recognize that we thrive here and enjoy life on the traditional territories of the Anishnabe, Neutral and Haudenosaunee people. **Amen.**

A RE-cited Apostle's Creed (By Bishop Sid Haugen)

I believe that God created this good world of sun and stars, of wild places and cultivated fields, of work and play, of art and sport. I believe that God placed me on this earth for a reason; along with every other human being I meet each day. I believe that every day is a gift. For all of this I am called to thank God and love the life God made.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the divine one: who walked this earth, and who, in his teaching, life and death shows me the heart of a loving God. I believe that the resurrection of Jesus brings a hope and a life to the world and to my life that cannot be quenched by all the forces of this world, by my own human brokenness, or by death itself. For all this, I am called to love Jesus and to follow him by serving others.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe that I could never find God by my own intelligence or effort, but the Spirit of God, moving like the wind, has graciously called me through the wonder of the gospel: through the community of Jesus, through the Word and sacraments – just as the Spirit calls the whole church in its many families with its many names. I believe this same Spirit speaks and works through people who may not know a church and who may not call themselves religious in any way. For all of this, I am called to live generously, as one who has faith that God is always at work in me, in the church, and in the world itself.

While you listen to the offertory song, continue your prayers with the words of the song, and consider how you may be a blessing in the coming week.

Offertory – **Dona Nobis**

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bURkIF4aULM>

Offering Prayer

God of all abundance, receive our brokenness and the offering of our lives. Take us, who return to you in thanksgiving: form us and shape us into a love like Jesus, so that we may be love for this broken world. **Amen.**

(please remember to send an offering to the church if you are able)

Prayers of Intercession (Prepared by Pastor Joanna Miller)

Loving God, in these days, when it feels like we're living out the realities of Holy Week like never before, keep reminding us that the story doesn't end with death, or waiting. Help us to believe that something new and wonderful will emerge from this; fill us up with hopeful expectation for what will come. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We are seeing reports, God, of drastic drops in the levels of emissions and pictures of the ways that life is re-emerging. Help us to be inspired by these stories and pictures, that we might become even more committed to the work of caring for this planet we inhabit and for all the creatures who share it with us. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for the decision makers, O God. For our political leaders, that they lead according to the best information to keep as many of our neighbours as safe as possible. For the scientists, who are working so hard to understand what is happening and for the ones who work hard for a vaccine. For the business leaders who are responsible for the care of their workers. For the health care providers, who run towards the fire and accept the risk in the name of serving others. For the parents, who struggle to find a balance between work and play, screens and fresh air. Give them all your wisdom and compassion. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for the vulnerable in our midst. For those whose suffering began long before we heard of COVID-19. For those whose mental health is suffering. For those who are in the midst of treatments and diagnoses and for all who are medically fragile. Be with each one, send them your healing, be present with them. We pray especially for those we name we name either silently or aloud. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for all the saints that have gone before us, whose faith reminds us to hold on in the midst of fear and unknown. Bless all those in your presence and all who will die this day. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

All these things, Lord, we entrust to your care, knowing that you hear all of our prayers. And we pray in the way that Jesus taught us to pray:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
 and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. **AMEN.**

Sending Hymn: Be Still for the Presence of the Lord ...

Click here, go minute 11.47 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67e6P8uAUG0&feature=youtu.be>

We close this service with silence and reflection ...

Join us tomorrow for Good Friday worship, beloved friends 😊