

Maundy Thursday - April 6

We invite you to worship on Maundy Thursday by remembering and practicing the final teaching of Jesus. Feel the freedom in the way that you choose to engage this teaching. Some options could be to do handwashing, foot washing or to use lotion on hands. The invitation is to remember Jesus' teaching together as a community. This practice is not something that you can do alone so you will need at least one person to join you.

Handwashing or Footwashing: A Spiritual Practice for Maundy Thursday

- Prepare a pitcher of water, a bowl, and towels
- Read together John 13:1-17, 34-35.
- Prayerfully pour water over each hand (or allow a member to do so)
- As you pour, reflect on the grace and love of Jesus Christ poured out in your life
- Dry your hands (or those of family members) with a towel
- Finish with a simple prayer for the one who was washed.

John 13:1-17, 34-35

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. **3** Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; **4** so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. **5** After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." **11** For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. **13** "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. **14** Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. **15** I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. **16** Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. **17** Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Commentary on John 13:1-17, 34-35 | by Rev. Danielle Shroyer

Sometimes it is so hard to let Jesus love us. It’s the love we need most in the world, and yet, sometimes within us resides a roadblock, a kind of joy barrier. And only love can wash that away.

On Maundy Thursday, we remember when Jesus washes the disciples’ feet. He takes the time to do this in a week that will include his own arrest, betrayal, and death. It is *this* important to him to spend time with his students and closest friends in this way.

Priest and theologian Rev. Sam Wells says that “with” is the most important word in the Gospels.²⁵ It is this “with” that, above all, marks the unique character of Divine Love. Jesus wants to be with us: not above us, not over us, not even in charge of us. *With us*. And on this night, he shows what it means to “love his disciples to the end” (John 13:13) by being with them as he washes their feet.

And yet, this same act of service and vulnerable love feels completely unacceptable to Peter. How can an offer of such love be so unwillingly received? It can be so hard to let Jesus love us. Is it because it will ask so much of us to follow in his example? Is it because this love will ask us to wash someone else’s feet, even when our love for them is lacking?

On this night where water is poured out like attending love, and betrayal awaits in the shadows, Jesus tells his friends to love one another. He tells them this knowing he will love them to the end, and beyond. Jesus asks those of us who follow him to serve the world *in* love and *with* love.

What does it look like for Jesus to wash your feet this Lenten season? Will you let him? And... will you seek to be the kind of person who washes the feet of others, loving one another as Jesus asks? **What could it look like for you to love in this way?**