

CC, Merlin, SA, SL, TS & DSM United Churches

Maundy Thursday – April 17th, 2025

Prelude: - by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Talbotstreet.ca and Southbuxton.ca

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: Just as the disciples gathered in a room with Jesus, so we gather in this place, ready to watch, listen, and pray on this Holy Thursday. We come to remember and encounter Love Incarnate, who sets us free.

People: **As Jesus kneels to wash the dirt from the disciples' feet, we join in their surprise; we've never seen a Savior who acts like a servant. We come to remember and encounter Love Incarnate, who sets us free.**

Kevin: As Jesus calls the disciples to wash one another's feet, we receive with them a new commandment: to love one another as Jesus has loved us. We come to remember and encounter Love Incarnate, who sets us free.

People: **May we come to kneel as a servant, come to the table with your fellow disciples, come to worship Love Incarnate, who sets you free.**

Sheryle: We come to remember and to worship God who has loosed our bonds and set us free to love one another as God has loved us. **

Opening Hymn: VU 133 "Go To Dark Gethsemane"

Go to dark Gethsemane,
you that feel the tempter's power;
your Redeemer's conflict see;
watch with him one bitter hour;
turn not from his grief away:
learn from him to watch and pray.

See him at the judgement hall,
beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned;
see him meekly bearing all;
love to all his soul sustained.
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss:
learn from Christ to bear the cross. **

Opening Prayer:

People: Holy God, source and sovereign, you put all power and authority into the hands of Christ— Christ, who washes our feet in humble service. Teach us to love one another as Christ has loved us, so that everyone will know that we are his disciples; through Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Friend, we pray. Amen. **

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 116: 1 – 4, 12 - 19

When the Lord Saves You from Death

I love you, Lord! You answered my prayers.

You paid attention to me, and so I will pray to you as long as I live.

Death attacked from all sides, and I was captured by its painful chains.

But when I was really hurting, I prayed and said, “Lord, please don't let me die!”

What must I give you, Lord, for being so good to me?

I will pour out an offering of wine to you, and I will pray in your name because you have saved me.

I will keep my promise to you when your people meet.

You are deeply concerned when one of your loyal people faces death.

I worship you, Lord, just as my mother did, and you have rescued me from the chains of death.

I will offer you a sacrifice to show how grateful I am, and I will pray.

I will keep my promise to you when your people gather at your temple in Jerusalem.

Shout praises to the Lord! **

Gospel Reading: John 13: 1 – 17, 31 - 35

It was before Passover, and Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and to return to the Father. He had always loved his followers in this world, and he loved them to the very end. Even before the evening meal started, the devil had made Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, decide to betray Jesus. Jesus knew he had come from God and would go back to God. He also knew that the Father had given him complete power. So during the meal Jesus got up, removed his outer garment, and wrapped a towel around his waist. He put some water into a large bowl. Then he began washing his disciples' feet and drying them with the towel he was wearing. But when he came to Simon Peter, this disciple asked, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You don't really know what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “You will never wash my feet!” Peter replied. “If I don't wash you,” Jesus told him, “you don't really belong to me.” Peter said, “Lord, don't wash just my feet. Wash my hands and my head.” Jesus answered, “People who have bathed and are clean all over need to wash just their feet. And you, my disciples, are clean, except for one of you.” Jesus knew who would betray him. That is why he said, “except for one of you.” After Jesus had washed his disciples' feet and had put his outer garment back on, he sat down again. Then he said: Do you understand what I have done? You call me your teacher and Lord, and you should, because that is who I am. And if your Lord and teacher has washed your feet, you should do the same for each other. I have set the example, and you should do for each other exactly what I have done for you. I tell you for certain that servants are not greater than their master, and messengers are not greater than the one who sent them. You know these things, and God will bless you, if you do them. Judas left!

Special Music: “Gathered in the Upper Room” (Faye Lopez and Patricia Mock)

After Judas had gone, Jesus said: Now the Son of Man will be given glory, and he will bring glory to God. Then, after God is given glory because of him, God will bring glory to him, and God will do it very soon. My children, I will be with you for only a little while longer. Then you will look for me, but you won't find me. I tell you just as I told the people, “You cannot go where I am going.” But I am

giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples. **

Invitation to Communion:

Eric: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Kevin: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Sheryle: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eric: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

People: In the beginning, you hovered over the waters and poured out your love over the formless void, turning chaos into life. You formed us in your image and provided for us from the fruit of creation.

Kevin: When we turned away, and our love failed, Your steadfast love never failed. You set the Israelites free and brought them through the waters.

People: When they doubted and complained, You provided manna from heaven and water from a rock. Even when we betrayed and broke covenant with you, You never abandoned us.

Sheryle: And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ.

People: When we turned away from you and abused your gifts, you gave us in him your crowning gift.

Eric: Divine Love poured out in human form, Christ fed the hungry, healed the sick, ate with the scorned and forgotten, and taught us how to love by incarnating Love among us.

People: By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from enslavement to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

(Kevin takes the towel and raises the pitcher of water):

Sheryle: On the evening in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus rose from the supper table and took a pitcher of water. He poured it into a basin, knelt down, and began to wash the disciples' feet.

People: When he was finished, he sat down and spoke with the disciples, saying, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

(Kevin pours the water into the baptismal font.)

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Reflection: VU 480 "Let Us Break Bread Together"

Let us break bread together on our knees,
let us break bread together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us drink wine together on our knees,
let us drink wine together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

Eric: That same night, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

People: **When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."**

Sheryle: And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Eric: As Christ, Divine Love poured out for us, came to show us how to love one another, pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood and called to love one another as Christ loves us.

People: **For it is by this love that everyone will know We are his disciples.**

Sheryle: By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

People: **Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.**

*** *You are welcome to come forward and dip your hands in the water of the Baptismal Font, and dry your hands. Proceed to the bread and the cup and take communion as a Child of God.*

Closing: VU 480 "Let Us Break Bread Together"

Let us break bread together on our knees,
let us break bread together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us drink wine together on our knees,
let us drink wine together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us praise God together on our knees,
let us praise God together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me. ***

Blessing:

Eric: May you go now in the blessing of the Triune God to love your neighbors, yourself, and all creation with the love Christ has demonstrated for us this day and every day.

Chorus: VU 480 Chorus

*When I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

Amen, Amen, Amen.

The Rest of the Story...

Gospel: John 18:

When Jesus had finished praying, he and his disciples crossed the Kidron Valley and went into a garden. Jesus had often met there with his disciples, and Judas knew where the place was. Judas had promised to betray Jesus. So he went to the garden with some Roman soldiers and temple police, who had been sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees. They carried torches, lanterns, and weapons. Jesus already knew everything that was going to happen, but he asked, "Who are you looking for?" They answered, "We are looking for Jesus from Nazareth!" Jesus told them, "I am Jesus!" At once they all backed away and fell to the ground.

The Roman officer and his men, together with the temple police, arrested Jesus and tied him up. They took him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. This was the same Caiaphas who had told the Jewish leaders, "It is better if one person dies for the people."

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. That disciple knew the high priest, and he followed Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest's house. Peter stayed outside near the gate. But the other disciple came back out and spoke to the girl at the gate. She let Peter go in, but asked him, "Aren't you one of that man's followers?" "No, I am not!" Peter answered.

It was cold, and the servants and temple police had made a charcoal fire. They were warming themselves around it, when Peter went over and stood near the fire to warm himself.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his followers and his teaching. But Jesus told him, "I have spoken freely in front of everyone. And I have always taught in our synagogues and in the temple, where all of our people come together. I have not said anything in secret. Why are you questioning me? Why don't you ask the people who heard me? They know what I have said."

Jesus was still tied up, and Annas sent him to Caiaphas the high priest.

While Simon Peter was standing there warming himself, someone asked him, "Aren't you one of Jesus' followers?" Again Peter denied it and said, "No, I am not!" One of the high priest's servants

was there, and he asked, "Didn't I see you in the garden with that man?" Once more Peter denied it, and right then a rooster crowed. (Rooster Crows)

Postlude: – Susan Baker