

Zion Lutheran Church, Lewistown, Montana  
Maundy Thursday                      April 9, 2020

**GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

**CHILDREN'S TIME**

- Listen for the word love.
- Find a stuffed animal or the hand of your parent, give a squeeze each time you hear the word love.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Friends in Christ, in this Lenten season we have heard our Lord's call to struggle against sin, death, and the devil—all that keeps us from loving God and each other. This is the struggle to which we were called at baptism.

Within the community of the church, God never wearies of forgiving sin and giving the peace of reconciliation. On this night let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor, and enter the celebration of the great Three Days reconciled with God and with one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

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.**

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

### SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

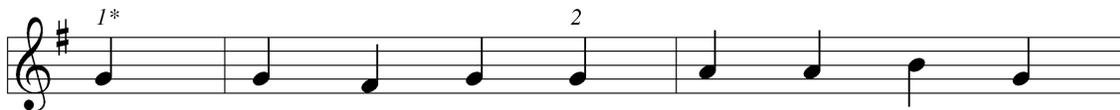
A reading from 1 Corinthians.

<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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### SONG *Come, Lord Jesus* (LS 97)



1 Oh, come, Lord Je - sus, be our guest, and  
2 Oh, come, Lord Je - sus, be our guest, and  
3 Oh, come, Lord Je - sus, be our guest, and  
4 Oh, come, Lord Je - sus, be our guest, and



let your gifts to us be blest. Keep us for - ev - er  
let your gifts to us be blest. Oh, may there be a  
let your gifts to us be blest. Guide us a - long the  
let your gifts to us be blest. Come deep with - in our



in your sight, and be our joy, our hearts' de - light.  
good - ly share on ev - 'ry ta - ble ev - 'ry - where.  
ser - vant's way, and lead us to your dawn - ing day.  
hearts to dwell, that we may all your good - ness tell.

*\*may be sung in canon*

Text: traditional table prayer, adapt. Susan Briehl  
Music: TALLIS' CANON, Thomas Tallis

Text © 1996 Augsburg Fortress

**GOSPEL: John 13:1-17, 31b-35**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<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."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

It has been less than a month since our last worship service together here, but it seems much longer. Thank you to all who are doing what you can to stay connected to one another. I know our elders who do not have internet access are really glad to hear a familiar voice and know that they are being remembered.

This extended time of isolation has most of us longing for a time to be in the same space again—to talk face to face, to laugh or cry together, to hear God’s word and sing God’s praises together! One thing I am missing is our weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper. In fact, tonight some of our children would have been taking Communion for the first time.

You may have heard that some churches are finding ways to do “virtual” Communion, whether they are blessing the elements and then delivering them or inviting people to use their own bread and wine or grape juice at home. Those churches are doing that with careful consideration for the Sacrament.

I have decided that we will not be doing that for our congregation. My prayer is that our time apart will be, in the grand scheme of things, relatively short. You might remember a time in your life when Holy Communion was only celebrated once a month.

Back in the time of the Westward Movement in the United States, many congregations only included Communion when the itinerate pastor came through, which might have been every three to six months.

The Communion meal is the table of our Lord for the gathered community. And each time we receive this meal we are meant to carry it out into the world to “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” as Paul instructs us in his letter to the Corinthians.

The meal feeds us with the presence of Christ so that we can serve as the presence of Christ to the world around us, which means loving one another as Christ loves us. We have been fed with this meal and the effects of Christ’s power and presence is not limited to a week or a month. Christ lives in us and by his Spirit we have been strengthened to serve the world in the ways we have been gifted by God.

In John’s gospel, there is no Last Supper with the words we use for Holy Communion, although Jesus is at a table with his disciples in our gospel reading tonight. The focus in this passage is the new commandment Jesus gives to his disciples—that they would love one another in the same way they received love from Jesus. And he demonstrates that love by washing their feet.

The washing of feet is practiced in many congregations for their Maundy Thursday services. We have done it a few times, but we aren’t very comfortable with it. In Jesus’ day, this was a common act of hospitality, usually done by a servant. In this last meal with his disciples, Jesus takes on that servant role and washes their feet—all of them, even Judas who would betray him.

Though feet washing is not a Sacrament—a holy act and a means of God’s grace—is it sacramental in nature. Jesus commands us to love one another as he has loved us. So, we take the act of loving seriously, and live it out in the ways that make sense for our time and place.

In this Covid-19 season we have seen many people step up to love one another with acts of service. People are making face masks. The cloth masks help us keep our germs to ourselves so that we don’t spread what we might have to others. A couple of our Zion members are also cranking out medical-quality masks on 3-D printers! Fantastic!

Staying home can be frustrating and limiting to our acts of service, but sheltering in place is really an act of love that seems to be working to flatten the curve so that the virus can die down and we can get back together sooner than later.

Thankfully we live in a time where we have phones and internet, not to mention electricity and cars, so we have tools to serve one another even if that means seeing each other on a screen. I know some of our kids and adults are writing letters and sending cards to people who might be living alone or feeling disconnected.

And many, many people are loving our neighbors simply by going to work—at the hospital, at stores and restaurants, delivering mail and supplies, and providing services in alternative ways.

For this season, as we wait for the time when we can share the sacrament of Holy Communion together again, I invite you to be even more intentional about your daily meals. Whether you live alone or with others, take the time to remember that Jesus is present at every meal. Pray your mealtime prayer with care and attention.

If you pray, “Come, Lord Jesus” be mindful that Jesus does come into our presence and the gifts of our tables are God’s blessing to us so that we are strengthened to love and serve all those Jesus loves—even the Judases among us who might be hard to love.

I long to share the Holy Communion meal with you again. And when that day comes, it will truly be a meal of thanksgiving to God for bringing us through this challenging time. And I’m sure I will weep tears of joy on that day!

May the love of Christ so feed and fill you this day, that you overflow with his love for your neighbor and the whole world.

Thanks be to God. Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love* (ELW 708)

*Refrain*

Je - su, Je - su, fill us with your love, show

us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you.

- |   |                                    |                                       |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Kneels at the feet of his friends, | si - lent - ly wash - es their feet,  |
| 2 | Neigh-bors are wealth-y and poor,  | var - ied in col - or and race,       |
| 3 | These are the ones we will serve,  | these are the ones we will love;      |
| 4 | Kneel at the feet of our friends,  | si - lent - ly wash - ing their feet: |

mas - ter who acts as a slave to them.  
 neigh-bors are near - by and far a - way.  
 all these are neigh-bors to us and you.  
 this is the way we will live with you.

*Refrain*

Text: Tom Colvin, 1925–2000, alt.  
 Music: CHEREPONI, Ghanaian folk tune, adapt. Tom Colvin  
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## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of love, unite your church in its commitment to humble service. Make us your faithful disciples. Speak words of truth and grace through us. Encourage us in self-giving acts of kindness. Let us love one another as you have loved us.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, tend to flocks, fields, and vineyards. Bring favorable weather for crops to grow. Guide the hands of those who cultivate, farm, and garden. Let the earth flourish so that all may eat and be satisfied. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, you give us a new commandment, to have love for one another. We give thanks for all those in our community and around the world who are serving their neighbor, even at the risk of their own health and safety. Encourage all who work each day to bring food, healing, supplies, and encouragement to the world around them. Help us each to love one another as you have loved us in the ways you call us and gift us to do. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, give ear to all who call upon you for any need of body or spirit, especially those infected with covid-19, those with other illnesses and afflictions, and those whose mental health is even more difficult to manage in these uncertain times. We pray for our members who are hospitalized and in care facilities and their families who cannot be together these days. Provide for those who do not have enough to eat, those who are unemployed or underemployed, and those who rely on the generosity of others. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, glorify your servants who walked by faith in this life and who now feast with you, especially our sister Dora. Inspire us by their faith and hope in you. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR**

"Were You There"

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