

April 9, 2020, Maundy Thursday

Parts of this service marked with an asterisk () may be led by one person.*

Invitation to the Great Three Days

* Friends in Christ, in this Lenten season we have heard our Lord's call to struggle against all that keeps us from loving God and each other. This year, the experience of pandemic has deepened our experience of human separation, and given a more intense desire for community with each other, with our world, and with God. This has been a struggle, but it is the struggle to which we were called in Baptism.

Hear then the Good News - God never wearies of forgiving sin and giving the peace of reconciliation. On this night let us confess our sin against God and our neighbour, and enter the celebration of the great Three Days reconciled with God and one another.

Confession *(Read together)*

God who is love, we come admitting the brokenness in our lives:
the brokenness between ourselves, the brokenness between nations,
the brokenness between humanity and creation.
Give us the courage to acknowledge this truth.
Give us the faith to trust your presence.
Give us the desire to share your healing,
promised and provided in Jesus Christ (†) our Lord. Amen.

* We are forgiven. We are reconciled. We are one.
Thanks be to God!

Hymn *(Read or sung together)*

(Hymn lyrics printed under OneLicence #731166-A)

Our Father, we have wandered and hidden from your face;
in foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.
But now in exile dwelling, we rise in fear and shame,
as, distant by compelling, we hear you call our name.

And now at length discerning the evil that we do,
behold us, Lord, returning with hope and trust to you.
In haste now come to meet us and home rejoicing bring,
in gladness there to meet us with calf and robe and ring.

O Lord of all the living, both banished and restored,
compassionate, forgiving, and ever caring Lord,
grant now that our transgressing, our faithfulness may cease.
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon and in peace.

For those of you reading this on line, this hymn may be heard by clicking here -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YjE13aw5mg>

Prayer of the Day (*Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress*)

* God is with us. 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 Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gospel Reading

* The Holy Gospel according to John.

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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' 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.' For he knew who was to betray him.

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? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 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." I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

* Jesus calls us to serve.

And we have done this! In many and various way, you, and the congregations to which you belong, have been serving the community and the world for decades, and even centuries.

It is frequently a challenge. It takes time, and effort, and finances, and coordination, and a whole bunch of willing hands.

But it's what we do. Because Jesus has called us to do it.

And we are continuing to serve. Right now.

By sitting in our living rooms or kitchens (or wherever you are!), and by praying this service in our separate homes, we are serving our neighbours and our world. And we are doing it together.

In a very real way, we are fasting. We are giving things up, important things, for a bigger purpose.

We are fasting from coming together for worship, and fasting from Communion. We are fasting from eating together in restaurants. We are fasting from parties, and sporting events, and concerts, and quilting bees. Some of us, or some of our neighbours, are even having to fast from work.

For a bigger purpose. A holy purpose.

We are fasting to serve our neighbours. We are fasting to serve our world. We are fasting to keep people healthy.

This is a difficult time, for all of us. It contains challenges which none of us have ever faced before. We don't know how long it will continue, or who will be affected, or what the results will be.

But let's be honest with ourselves - We have never known these things! A life of service is always ambiguous, always a challenge.

So tonight, as our journey to the cross is drawing to a close, we take a breath. We remember that Jesus served his disciples. We remember that Jesus serves us. We remember that Jesus calls *us* to serve. We remember that everything we are doing right now is for the sake of our neighbours and our world; neighbours and a world which are all loved by God.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, *if you... have... love....*”

Amen.

Prayers of the People

* Coming together in faith and hope, we offer our prayers for the world God loves, the church God calls, and all people in need.

God of love, you served your disciples; you serve us. Enable us to respond by doing the same for others. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of love, Peter was uncomfortable being served by you. Enable us to let go of needing to be in control. Inspire us to follow your call in spite of our unease. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of love, you call us to serve in ever changing situations. We can become fearful, because we can't do things the way we are used to doing them. Remind us of your presence in the changes. Set us free again. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of love, your church is experiencing a distance from each other. We are fasting from our usual connections. Bridge the gap between us. Walk with us through this night. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of love, use us to remind others of your presence in their loneliness. We especially remember those who are sick, who are hospitalized, who are separated from family and friends. We also ask your blessing for those who serve in this dangerous time in health care, food distribution, sanitation, government and mental health. We pray especially for those we name before you.

[Names of those who are of special concern may be offered.]

In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Trusting the promise that our prayers will be heard, we pray in the name of our suffering Saviour, who taught us to pray,

Our Father....

Lord's Prayer (*Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress*)

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

OR

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are your, now and forever. Amen.

OR

To pray with the leaders of our local congregations, you may click here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D7r99aSnzg>

Psalms 22, A Lament (*Read together*)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;

‘Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—let him rescue the one in whom he delights!’

Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;

my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;

my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;

you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shrivelled; I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
But you, O Lord, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!
Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!
Save me from the mouth of the lion!
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.
I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him.
From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live for ever!
All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.
For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.
To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.
Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,
and proclaim to a people yet unborn, the saving deeds that God has done.

If you have access to Youtube, you can look up the Good Friday video which is being put together by the Clergy of the Lunenburg churches. No link is available yet, but searching for “Lunenburg Good Friday” will direct you to the video. It will be available on the day of Good Friday.