

**Central Queen's United Church
United Church of Canada**

March 28 2024 7:00 p.m.

Our Lenten Journey: We Are Not Alone

Maundy Thursday

Welcome

***We are glad that you are here as a visitor, a seeker, someone looking for a new church home, or as a regular worshiper or member.
All are welcome in this place.***

****Please rise as you are able.***

Gathering

Welcome

Welcome to this Maundy Thursday service as we take time to ponder the teaching and influence of Jesus, and remember key moments at the end of his life. Many of us have faced end of life with a loved one or reflected anew on the value of life as a friend, relative, colleague or community leader has neared the end of their life. Let us be open to this time of reflection and insight so that we may live in the light of truth that God shares with us all.

***Taize Chant** “With our Darkest Night”

**Within our darkest night,
you kindle the fire that
never dies away, --
that never dies away.**

***Call to Worship**

We are invited to gather, to watch, to feel and to wait.

This sanctuary is a sacred place.

In these sacred moments, welcome the stillness.

Experience the shadows – embrace the way.

**We look for the light of God even in the midst
of the shadows of despair.**

Come, then to worship, a time to watch and wait.

Quiet time to prepare *(Soft reflective music is played)*

Setting the Scene for Betrayal and Arrest

Hymn “Jesus, Keep me near the Cross”

VU #142

V1 Sacred silence: filled

V2 Holy moment: overflowing.

V1 Haunting seconds: brimming.

Tonight too much happens in the Holy story for us to
comprehend.

V2. Too much fear and deceit, too many questions and confusion, too few words, and too little space.

V1. The disciples have assembled. Heaven is tottering. The basin is ready. The towel is tied. The only One of God bends his knees. The shadows encroach. The light crumbles. Bread breaks and wine spills.

V2. Sacred silence: filled.

V1. Holy moments: overflowing.

V2. Haunting seconds: brimming.

V1. A questing promise, a broken covenant, a wondering band of followers, and a warried Messiah.

**V2. Won 't you wait her a while?
Won't you wait with me a while?**

V1. Long enough, long enough to grasp --- even a glimpse and hold ever a fraction of a broken heaven.

Silence

Prayer

Holy God, we come to worship in the gathering shadows of Jesus' suffering and death.

We come with his friends, the women and men who have followed him in every time and place, to live once again this story of service and betrayal,

of weakness and courage.

We come to witness your painful love in action.

Be with us, we pray, in the name of the One who is betrayed.

Amen

Hymn "Where you There"

VU #144

***Water of Forgiveness, Water of Baptism,
Water for Washing Disciples' Feet***

Prayer:

Servant God, kneeling, bending, serving us,
take our dusty journeys

and wrap your hands around them:

every path we have trodden in life,

every word that has taken us to hurtful scenes,

every thought that has moved us toward the shadows,

every act that has let us into harmful places.

Wash away the pain as we confess and you forgive.

*Water is poured into the foot-washing bowl
and the font*

Take the wounds of our travelling

and hold them in your healing hands.

Every journey of remembrance that holds too many memories,

**every memory that weights us down with anger we cannot
surrender,**

every place we have visited that holds too much pain.

Wash away the lingering memories as we let go and you heal.

*During a moment of silence,
water is poured*

Take away the discomfort we feel because of our failure
to honour our own values

and cleanse us as you kneel at our feet.

Every lesson about love we have not learned,

every heavenly value we have not grasped,

every truth of your realm we have ignored.

Wash away hesitation as we accept your love.

Amen.

*During silence, water is poured
and we reflect on our sin and shortcomings.*

Jesus says, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying
heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;

for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your
souls.

My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

Sharing the Word

Hymn: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

VU #149

Sacred Readings

John 13: 1-17, 34-35

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; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

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.'

Meditation

Silence

Remembering That Final Evening Together

- V1 Footsteps could be heard running through the streets toward Caiaphas's lodging, but few heard them as bitter herbs, radish, and celery were tasted.
- V2 Soldier's sandals sounded as they marched the alleyways out of the city, as they always did, in tens, but this time with a purpose that was different. Marching to a Garden as the evening light turned to night.**
- V1 No one's attention was drawn to them as roast lamb was cut with it slices of garlic for the Passover feast.
- V2 At one table, a betrayer was accused. A Holy Man and his followers faces each other denying and blaming the other. Only two of them knew who had done it and one of them was soon to leave under the noise of the shouting.**
- V1 We would walk the cobbled street under the moonlight, passing menorahs in every window, smelling wafts of roast lamb, turmeric, and coriander as the moved toward a secret meeting place among the trees and shadows.

V2 Around the table in an upper room voice feel silent and the Rabbi took unleavened bread and, with a face drawn and tried, ripped it. “This is my body,” he said. The followers looked at each other, foreheads furrowed. “Take and eat it, all of you.” Twigs snapped under the trees. A high priest’s door shut. Steps went scurrying.

V1 And as they each at a piece, chewing over silent questions, the Teacher took the cup of wine that is part of every Passover meal and, staring into it, said, “This is my blood, the sign of the new covenant. Drink it all of you.” And as whispers were heard around the city and religious leaders moved by stealth to the meeting place, the bewildered cluster in the upper room did drink – all of them.

V2 If they had listened maybe they would have heard what was happening in haven and I the streets. But their ears were filled with the back and forth of questions and silence. The world was turning against them and only One in the room could hear it.

The Table is Laid

(Bread and wine are carried to the table)

Here is that bread, broken.

Jesus said, “The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

he said to them, “I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,

and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

And no one who comes to me will I ever drive away.”

Here is that cup, filled.

Jesus said, “I am the bread of life,

whoever comes to me will never be hungry;

whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

(John 6:33-37)

**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,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.**

Amen.

Sharing the Bread and Cup

All who desire to walk in Jesus’ Way are invited to this Table.

Pause at the baptismal font or the bowl and dip your hand in the water as a symbol of your baptism and Jesus washing his disciples’ feet, your feet. Dry your hand on the towel. Take a piece of

(glutton free) bread, and cup of juice. Make your communion. Do all slowly and thoughtfully. When ready, return to your seat.

Prayer after Communion

Holy God, you enable our living service in the world. We thank you for Jesus, who, on the night he was betrayed, gave himself to his friend in humble service and in bread and wine. May we be a continuation of Christ's service in the face of life's sin, pain and suffering. Amen.

Living in the Shadows

(Seven lit candles are waiting on the Table)

God, in anguish we behold you and walk with you into the shadows.

(a candle extinguished)

God of passion, may we have the courage to stay awake, as you pray all alone into the night.

(a candle extinguished)

God of compassionate love, the world conspires against you and turns its back on your gift of redemption.

(a candle extinguished)

God, kneel with us as we, too, pray into our nights, as forces gather and betray love's future.

(a candle extinguished)

God of our day and night, be with us as we share
your cup of pain and loss, trusting you when
shadows seem so deep.

(a candle extinguished)

God, you live in us. Help us to hold your cup and
to walk in Jesus' footsteps, through death to live.

(a candle extinguished)

From the Upper Room into the World

V1 Love has moved out. The room is silent. The Table is
abandoned:
broken bread still sitting there; wine
half finished, herbs and lamb across the Table.

**V2 In the distance you can hear footsteps moving
through the olive grove. Whose they are, we do not know.**

V1 The room hangs, suspended in time, cushions
scattered, crumbs across the floor, a basin and a towel
discarded near the Table.

**V2 There is a rustle of leaves from among the trees, a
brushing of garments caught on branches, the sound of
knees breaking twigs as they kneel in prayer.**

V1 The room is cold, empty. The air is deep with the smell of betrayal and panic, of accusations and unfinished stories.

V2 And we are aware that someone has departed: his intricate bend of human and divine, prophetic presence, Galilean hope, Teacher with whom we have journeyed and broken bread.

V1 Footsteps echo on their way past each house out of the city. The room is dull. Shadows stretch across unfinished bread and half-drunk wine; unfinished conversations hang in the air.

V2 A breeze from the empty window fills the space, and crumbs roll and table cloth flutters as the wind searches and cools the wounds of that upper room.

V1 A ghostly presence fills the emptiness, tasting of unrequited love.

V2 Outside, there is a gathering with noise, shouts and then silence.

V1 From the room all that one can hear is a distant subtle rattle of weapons on breastplates. The circle is tightening. Suddenly, all at once, the wind changes direction; there are muffled voices, and a kiss is places on the Galilean's cheek.

V2 It is the moment of betrayal.

(The Christ candle is extinguished)

Stay as long as you wish and leave in silence when you are ready.

Tonight's liturgy is adapted from **Gathering, Resources for Worship Planners:**
(Lent/Easter/Pentecost 2012, Year).