



## UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE

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Ministers: All of us

Lead Minister: Emmanuel Menyereye

Music: Grace Wilton

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Office Administrator: Denise Todosichuk

Caretaker: Faye Greier

Today's Greeter:

Scripture Readers:

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### ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Thursday, April 13, 2017**  
**Maundy Thursday Service**

### WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*As we gather for worship today we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 Territory. We honour the Cree and Métis people for whom this place has been a homeland for thousands of years. We respect the sacredness of our home and the ground on which we walk and we are grateful to gather here in peace and hope.*

### **WORDS OF WELCOME:**

Welcome to this Maundy Thursday service as we take time to ponder the teachings and influence of Jesus, and remember key moments of the end of Jesus' 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.  
Let us be open to the message of this evening.

***Maundy Thursday** takes its name from the Latin *mandatum*, meaning *commandment*, in reference to the new commandment Jesus gives to his disciples at the Last Supper in John 13:34: “And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (GNB).*

### **GATHERING IN THE UPPER ROOM:**

We gather here in God’s name. Tonight we are using seven candles –seven, the biblical number for wholeness and completion. They add light to this our gathering place.

### **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

We do not know quite where we are, O God.  
We celebrate the presence of Jesus in great feast,  
and in the selfless act of washing the disciples’ feet.

**Yet we also know that on this night we  
commemorate Jesus’ arrest, betrayal, and  
desertion by so many of his closest friends.**

We begin in a spirit of joy and festivity, and yet the  
evening ends with us feeling emptied, gutted, and quite  
alone.

**Yet we dare to hold all the aspects of this night  
in our time of worship – reminding us that you  
are with us in all the seasons and turnings of  
life.**

Come, friends, and let us worship God.

**HYMN (VU 142):** *“Jesus, keep me near the cross”*

**OPENING PRAYER:**

Sacred silence: filled.

**Holy moment: overflowing.**

Haunting seconds: brimming.

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

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

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

**Sacred silence: filled.**

Holy moment: overflowing.

**Haunting seconds: brimming.**

A questioning promise, a broken covenant, a wondering band of followers, and worried Messiah.

**Won't you wait here a while?**

**Won't you wait with me a while?**

Long enough, long enough to grasp – even glimpse and hold even a fraction of a broken heaven. (*silence*)

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

**We come with his friends, the men and women 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 (VU 144):** *"Were you there"*

**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 led us into harmful places.**

Wash away the pain as we confess and you forgive.

*(During a moment of silence, water is poured into the hand-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 weighs 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.**

*(During silence, water is again poured, and we reflect on our sins 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 11:20-30).*

### **SHARING THE WORD**

**HYMN (VU 149):** *"When I survey"*

#### **RESPONSIVE READING:**

**Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 (VU p.836)**

*How can I repay you.*

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

*Jesus washes the disciples' feet.*

#### **MEDITATION:**

**HYMN (MV 202):** *"Bread for the journey"*

#### **REMEMBERING THAT FINAL EVENING TOGETHER:**

Footsteps could be heard running through the streets toward Caiaphas's lodging, but few heard them as bitter herbs, radish, and celery were tasted.

**Soldiers' 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.**

No one's attention was drawn to them as roast lamb was cut with its slices of garlic for the Passover feast.

**At one table, a betrayer was accused. A *Holy Man* and his followers faced 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.**

He would walk the cobbled street under the moonlight, passing menorahs in every window, smelling wafts of roast lamb, turmeric, and coriander as he moved toward a secret meeting place among the trees and shadows.

**Around the table in an upper room voices fell silent and the Rabbi took unleavened bread and, with a face drawn and tired, ripped it.**

**“This is my body,” he said. The followers looked at each other, foreheads furrowed.**

**“Take and eat, all of you.” Twigs snapped under the trees. The high priest's door shut. Footsteps went scurrying.**

And as they each ate a piece, chewing over silent questions, the Teacher took the cup of wine that is part of every Passover meal and, staring into it, he 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.

**If they had listened maybe they would have heard what was happening in heaven and in 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:**

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)*

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

As children turn to a mother who watches over them, let us turn to God, saying:

**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.**

**THE WASHING OF FEET (HANDS):**

Please stand up and walk to the baptismal font or to the bowl and dip your hands in the water as a symbol of your baptism and Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet, your feet. Dry your hands with the mini towel provided and then return to your seat.

**SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP:**

Take a piece of bread, dip it in the wine (juice); pass the bread and cup to the next person.

Make your communion. Do all slowly and thoughtfully.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:** *(in unison)*

**God our Saviour, you enable our loving service in the world. We thank you for Jesus, who, on the night he was betrayed, gave himself to his friends 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 at the Table).*

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

*(a candle is extinguished).*

God, hold us as we, too, walk through, on, into the world's  
shadows.

*(a candle is extinguished).*

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

*(a candle is extinguished).*

God of compassionate love, the world conspires against  
you and turns its back on your gift of redemption.  
*(a candle is extinguished).*

God, kneel with us as we, too, pray into our nights, as  
forces gather and betray love's future.  
*(a candle is 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 is extinguished).*

God, you live in us. Help us to hold your cup and to walk  
in Jesus' footsteps through death to life.  
*(a candle is extinguished).*

**Amen and Amen.**

**HYMN (VU 593):** *"Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love"*

**COMMISSIONING:**

And now into the care of God I commend us:  
that the Creator might touch us in our hurting places and  
bring us healing, that the Son might make his way to the  
cross, but not alone this time, and that the Spirit might  
transform all who come to

God in faith, seeking the new life which God alone can  
give. May this be our blessing, this day, this night, and  
forevermore. **Amen.**

*[Written by Bob Root. Gathering, Lent, Easter/Pentecost 2008,  
page 36. Used with permission].*

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*Thanks you all for joining with us tonight. You may depart from here as soon as you are ready to do so. Please join with the rest of the community for Good Friday service tomorrow at Melfort Covenant Church @ 10:00 a.m.*

**PRAYER RESOURCES:**

*Seasons of the Spirit-Seasons FUSION Lent-Easter 2017; The United Church of Canada Lent, Easter/Pentecost 2008, 2012 & 2017 Gathering Resources for Worship Planners. Used with permission.*