

# Maundy Thursday



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The Presbyterian Churches (PCC) of Victoria welcome you to a Service of Prayers, a common meal and of Hand Washing as a meditation on the events surrounding Jesus' Passover Meal with his disciples.

Before you begin, prepare the space in your home. You will want to sit at a dining type table in a typical chair. Go through the Order of service before hand so that it may proceed with limited surprises.

i) Choose your table and chair(s), one for each in your house. If you are alone, but have technology you can set up a phone or a tablet so you can worship with someone else. No matter your number at table, you may want to set an extra place for a guest. Your guests may be someone of whom you are thinking. It could be Jesus, it could be someone who you are missing. At each place setting, even for the guest, there should be a cup, a plate and a facecloth/drying cloth. If you are worshipping online with someone else, they can simply eat the elements as *if* you had served them and vice-versa. In the same way they will wash their own hands as you say the profession and vice versa.

ii) Ahead of time:

~ Prepare some bread and juice or wine as appropriate. A central vessel and a glass for each one gathered. Bread enough to share. Prepare hand washing elements as needed (see below).

~ Have a copy of the prayers and readings for each person. Either a tablet or printed material is fine.

iii) There are two ways to do the hand washing:

~ Have a facecloth on hand, one for each of you. Just before you are ready to begin, prepare the cloth(s) by running hot water over the cloth(s). The hot water should be as you can manage. Roll up the cloth(s) and place them on the table as you begin. If you are on your own, this is the best way to do it.

~ You can also have a vessel of hot water, with a bowl underneath and a drying cloth for each person.

iv) Leading Worship: You can break up the prayers into as many parts as you would like.

You may simply want to pass the leadership, clockwise around your table, switching after each paragraph or phrase. Or if you are very organized, use a highlighter or other ways to mark your parts. You can make some parts responsive or collective too, whatever works for your household. Some prayers will need a leader to 'break' the pause for silent prayers. *I have put these prayers in Italics.*

If you are worshipping alone, I encourage you to worship aloud.

You never know when you are entertaining angels, unaware.

Hymns: The hymns are optional. You can simply read them, have accompanied music (youtube perhaps) or just sing a cappella, which delightfully means "in the manner of the chapel", in Italian.

Additional: There is no prescribed time for this but I think if you start at 5pm or 6pm or 7pm, there is a

## Order

### Call to Worship

God who is always present, through the storm, through the moments that shake, through the joys and through the tears, through the night and in the morning: we greet you as you gather us around the tables of our homes in worship.

O God of our homes, spread your growing brightness into the shadows of our homes, the darkness of our neighbourhoods and the silence of our communities, that we might be encouraged, though the night approaches.

Shepherd us closely to yourself, that though we are apart, that may feel your presence in our common worship this night.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who always gathers his friends to himself.

Amen.

Hymn: O Love, that wilt not let me go

O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
that in thine ocean depths its flow  
may richer, fuller be.

O Light that follow'st all my way,  
I yield my flick'ring torch to thee;  
my heart restores its borrowed ray,  
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow thro' the rain,  
and feel the promise is not vain  
that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
and from the ground there blossoms red,  
life that shall endless be.

### Prayer of Confession

O God, hear this prayer.

Following you is difficult, falling and falling behind make the way difficult. Yet, part of following is being behind. Thank you.

Following you is difficult, running and running ahead make it difficult to see you. Yet part of following is waiting. Thank you.

Following you is difficult. Distraction takes away from focus from your goodness. Yet part of goodness comes in its remembering. Thank you.

Following you is difficult. Anger and unforgiveness builds walls of division. Yet what celebration comes as walls come down. Thank you.

*God hear this prayer of silence in which is shared a private confession that only you will hear ...*

*... God thank you hearing this prayer. Amen.*

### Assurance of Forgiveness

God, together with all the saints or all times and all places, I join my thanks for the way you have forgiven me. Help me now to forgive others. Amen.

### The Feast of bread and cup

*Because this is a presbyterian service which requires a minister to preside, we are going to call this a feast, using the same elements and remembering their meaning. In this we will share a common meal.*

...cont.

## Scripture Reading

Mark 14: 17-26

When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?" "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

"Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

## Hymn: Be Still and Know

Be still and know that I am God,  
Be still and know that I am God,  
Be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee,  
I am the Lord that healeth thee,  
I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,  
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,  
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,

## Prayer before the Feast

Jesus, your people have been to your table many times and in many places. In churches, at camps, in Cathedrals and chapels. Then and there you have welcomed your friends and have fed them at your table.

Jesus, tonight you are invited to this table in this home that we can share together this feast. Please be present here. Holy Spirit you are needed and welcome here. Come share the simple feast.

Come Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blest.

## Sharing the Elements

*If you are alone, serve your guest and yourself, remembering how your guest would have served you. Don't consume the element individually, but wait for everyone to be served. After you have bread, take the common plate and serve the person next to you, until the circle is complete. In the same way leave your glass filled, take the vessel and fill the next glass until the circle is complete. I've bolded the professions associated with each element if you would like to say them together.*

Here is the bread, let it be shared!

*The common plate is passed around.*

**In this bread we remember that Jesus' body was broken on the cross, and in his brokenness all are made whole.**

Eat Bread.

Here is the cup, let it be shared!

*The vessel with the juice or wine is passed around.*

**In this cup of promise we find ourselves adopted into the family of God.**

Drink the cup.

*If you are alone, leave the elements on your guests plate. Think upon how the person is present in the moment for you.*

## Prayer after the Feast

O God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ to eat at our tables. Thank you that you have offered each a place at your banquet table in your Kingdom. The invitation brings joy and hope, Amen.

## Scripture Reading

John 13: 1-17

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

## Before Hand Washing

O God, you came to Earth in Jesus, at a certain time and in a certain place.

At that time people were waiting for hope and with your presence and in your suffering and resurrection you brought hope in time.

That place can be hot and in that time the roads were dusty. It can be imagined how hot feet in sandals would be.

When ten to twenty hot and dusty travellers and their 20 to 40 feet came together under a low table, the smell could be well imagined.

It might have been impossible to eat. In response it became a ritual to wash the feet of guests when they entered for a meal. The foot washing was always done by the least, a servant.

This is why Simon Peter did not want to be washed by Jesus. Jesus, the Son of God and the King of Kings would not be washing his feet. Or so he thought.

Jesus responded to Simon Peter that he must receive the gift of the washing.

The washing was sacramental: something visible pointing to something invisible; something a person was doing that symbolized what God was doing. Something we can do only symbolically reminding us of what we cannot truly do for ourselves.

Jesus took an everyday event and made it a parable for for heaven. The washing of the feet symbolizes the forgiveness of sins. It is a mini-baptism.

We live in a different time and in a different place. Our roads are paved and our chariots are air conditioned.

In our day what harms the gathering cannot be smelled or even seen. What prevents the gathering is not related to etiquette or propriety. What separates is a virus.

This evening as hands are washed, there is a reminder that we hold one another's well being in our hands, just as Jesus holds the human soul in his own hands.

Even though separated tonight, there is still so much keeping the whole world together: washing, caring, refraining, discipline and connecting at a distance.

As a sign of what Jesus has done for the world and what the world must do for itself, let us wash hands together.

#### Prayer before Hand Washing

O God, you make humankind clean and fit for your presence in heaven.

O God, in this act of servanthood, what you are doing invisibly is made visible in the washing of hands.

O God, your Servant and Son, Jesus Christ humbled himself to wash the feet of his friends. Give each that same humbleness of heart in the giving and receiving of this hand washing. Amen.

#### Hand Washing

*The hand washing is done one at a time, one person washing the next one's hands. If you are alone imagine what it would be like washing your guest's hands and as you wash your own, picture them washing yours. If you are on line wish your own hands as the other makes the profession.*

*As you are washing the other's hands with a warm cloth say the profession. If you are pouring water over the hands into a bowl, wait to say the profession until you dry their hands with the cloth.*

*As hands are being washed, say...*

**In this washing we are reminded that Christ has fit us for heaven and we are made clean for the company of all saints.**

#### Prayer after Hand Washing

Thank you, O God, that you have come close to people through Jesus the Messiah. Keep us close that all may hear of your goodness, taste of you promises and feel your cleansing presence. Amen.

Hymn: I heard the voice of Jesus say

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
So weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
And he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
The living water, thirsty one,  
Stoop down, and drink, and live."  
I came to Jesus and I drank  
Of that life-giving stream;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
And now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's light;  
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
And all thy day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In him, my star, my sun;  
And in that light of life I'll walk  
Till trav'ling days are done.

#### Benediction

This night is our calling to go into the world,  
scattered to the ends of the earth  
to love as Christ loved  
and serve in the name of Christ.  
It is our calling to remember,  
even in our darkest hour, who we are.  
We remember that Christ is always with us.  
And we remember that on this night,  
we were taught how to love.  
On this night, eternity begins and the fullness  
of God's Reign begins to spill into our lives.  
So go into the world to give yourself for  
others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Go into the world and love in the name of the  
One who loved you until the end. It all begins  
and ends and begins again with Love.  
That IS the story. Amen.

— written by Rev. Shelli Williams, in *Benediction*