

Laura Welcome / Land Acknowledgement

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have walked on this land – a relationship at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional and unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən and the WSÁNEĆ. We acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages. As we pray, reflect, and celebrate in this place, we do so as guests lamenting the injustice in our history. We ask that the God of love and justice lead us along the path of reconciliation – inspiring new relationships of respect and solidarity.

Laura PWS&D Message *Supportive Classmates Make a Difference*

Joseph showed up to school one day, not quite himself. The 10-year-old's parents had been up fighting all night. When morning arrived, he hadn't wanted to disturb them in order to get ready for school.

Some of Joseph's classmates had been mentored in a Children's Corner, a program provided by the Livingstonia Synod AIDS Programme (LISAP) in northern Malawi. (PWS&D works with this organization, which provides support and educational opportunities to young people.) When they asked him what was going on, Joseph told them, *"My father and mother shout at each other and fight almost every week. Sometimes my father calls us bad names and chases us out of the house at night for no reason."*

Because the children had learned about their rights at the Children's Corner, and where to turn if something was wrong at home, Joseph's friends told him he should speak to a Child Protection Worker. The Child Protection Worker met with Joseph's family and provided them with tools to resolve their challenges, including financial strain, which was at the root of frequent verbal and physical abuse. Working collaboratively has helped Joseph's parents begin building a more peaceful home.

This Lenten season, let's be grateful that we can help ensure access to services that advocate and educate children and adults about their rights.

Laura PWS&D Lenten Liturgy

Written by Jim Goring & the Rev. Ian Fraser (Pointe Claire, Quebec)

Just as the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness,

the Spirit sends us into places of uncertainty where we confront our weakness & insecurities.

On his last night, Jesus showed us what love in action looks like.

It looks like kneeling and serving.

It looks like dealing with the dirt from our travels.

It looks like washing clean what we prefer to avoid.

Even knowing that death was near, Jesus asked for no special favours.

He humbly served his friends in love.

When we are tempted by privilege and entitlement, believing we deserve more,

let us remember what love looks like: kneeling, serving, caring.

➤ *Lord, whose love (verses 1-3)*

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Laura Symbols of the Passion: A drama for Maundy Thursday

Imagine that this is the garden of Joseph of Arimathea – the place of the tomb where Jesus lay. It is here that the despair of the cross is replaced by the new life and hope of the risen Christ. We have gathered to hear a story – a story told by some of the symbols of the events that took place. It is good that you are here.

❖ **The basin** (*April with a towel over their arm brings a basin forward, fills it with warm water, **then sets it on the stool**, leaving the towel nearby.*)

Mitch

I am the basin Jesus used to wash the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. I'm like any other basin in any other home in the Middle East. The roads are dusty, and people travel mostly on foot in Jesus' time. I'm always being used to wash the feet of guests as they enter the house.

I didn't know what was going on in the upper room that night, until someone came to get me from my corner by the door. With firm, brown hands, they filled me with water, and began to wash the people's feet.

"Master, this isn't proper," one of them named Peter said. "I can't let you wash my feet. It's a servant's job."

"Peter, I will wash your feet and later I will explain," Jesus said.

"No, Master," Peter said.

"Peter," Jesus said, "if I do not wash your feet, you cannot be one of my disciples."

"I want to be your disciple more than anything. Here, wash me all over."

"Just your feet," Jesus smiled.

Jesus finished washing everyone's feet and put me away in the corner.

"Sometimes you call me 'Teacher' or 'Master,'" Jesus said, "and that's all right, for I am those things. But when I washed your feet, I showed you that I am also your servant. You must be servants, too. That's how it is in God's world - we are to serve one another."

Mitch Washing

Cathy, Joan, Laura assist

Jesus set an example for us – to care for and serve one another. You are invited to come forward and dip your hands into the basin – to have them dried and then to dry the hands of another – to serve and be served. Remember your baptism and give thanks.

➤ *Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love*

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❖ **The money bag** *(Patrick brings forward the money bag, allowing it to jingle, **then sets it on the lectern.**)*

Marianne

I am the bag that held the 30 pieces of silver that Judas was given by the religious leaders. I remember that night so clearly. "What will you give me if I betray Jesus to you?" Judas asked. The leaders listened to him coldly, and they haggled back and forth with Judas, finally making a deal.

Thirty pieces of silver.

But the coins were heavy, more than Judas could carry.

Everyone looked at one another and shrugged, until someone reached into their robe and drew me out. "Here, take this," they said, flinging me at Judas' feet. "Don't bother to return it." Judas picked me up and, one by one, slowly dropped the coins inside. Then he rushed outside into the night.

❖ **The chalice** *(Anne brings forward a chalice and holds it up, **then sets it on the communion table.**)*

Joan

The disciples were gathered for their Passover meal. They had all eaten well and, while eating, they had talked, as people will, about all that had happened that day and of what they hoped for tomorrow. But a silence fell on them as Jesus stood to offer the blessing that was always said over the bread and wine. Jesus took a loaf of bread, broke it into pieces, and gave it to them saying, "Take and eat, this is my body."

The disciples looked confused as they ate. What did Jesus mean, "this is my body"?

Then Jesus picked me up. Again, he gave the usual blessing, and passed me to each one of them saying, "Drink this, for this is my blood shed for you." More confused than ever, the disciples slowly drank the wine.

Jesus tried to explain to them, "from now on, when you eat and drink, you will remember the words I have said. And you will remember this new covenant, the promise God has given you. Live the way I have shown you - God's way - and people will know that you are my disciples." Then they got up and went out.

Cathy Invitation to the Lord's Table

Jesus said: *"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."*

Cathy Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of Exodus, who wills liberation for all people, we gather at this table with hearts overflowing.

We give thanks for your love, shown to us in the marvels of creation – in the gifts of grape and grain.

We give thanks for your love, shown to us in the history of our faith: your call to our elders, Abraham and Sarah, giving them new life and a new journey.

Your call to our children, Miriam and David, one to protect a baby, one to sing your praises; Your call to outsiders – to Ruth, to Nineveh, showing us that no one is beyond the reach of your heart.

We give thanks for your love, shown to us in Jesus, our friend, our Christ, who came to preach good news to the poor and proclaim release to the captives; who touched the leper and the unclean woman; who turned water into wine and a small child's lunch into great abundance.

We give thanks for your love, shown to us in Jesus, our friend, our Christ, who tells us to sell all we have and give it to the poor, who tells us that those without sin may cast the first stone, who calls us to be, like him, friend of the poor and threat to the powerful.

We give thanks for your love, shown to us in Jesus, our friend, our Christ, whose friends, like us, did not understand him.

Whose friends, like us, sold out, sold him out.

Whose friends, like us, scattered like sheep and ran.

Whose friends, like us, betrayed Jesus.

We give thanks for your love, shown to us in Jesus, our friend, our Christ, who, on the night he most needed love, held the beloved disciple to his chest; who, on the night he most needed love, took the bread, thanked you for the bounty of the earth, broke the bread, and said to his friends: *"Take this, and share it. This is the bread of new life. Whenever you share bread, remember me."*

And later, he took the cup, and said: *"Take this and share it. This is the cup of the new covenant. Whenever you share it, remember me."*

Grain and grape, fruit of the earth. Bread and wine, fruit of our faith

Here is that bread, broken. Here is that wine, poured out. Come, let us share our meal.

Amen

Cathy, Joan, Mitch and Laura serve communion together and to one another.

➤ *What wondrous love is this*

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Joan † Prayer after Communion

On this holy night, O God, your good gifts catch in our throat – the bread tastes of exile, the wine of betrayal. And, yet, you love us! And, yet, you call us to be the Body of Christ! And, yet, you trust us to wash feet and turn tables.

O God, you come near to us as the taste of bread in our mouth – the coursing of blood through our bodies – the moving of holy imagination that dwells within our spirits. May your loving closeness enable us to be generous and helpful of heart and hand. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

❖ **Lantern narrator** *(Kittie brings forward a lantern, lights it, and holds it up, then sets it on the steps.)*

Ruth

I am the lantern whose light shone in the Garden of Gethsemane. One of the soldiers snatched me off the wall in the barracks and ran out, joining a group of soldiers. They were all carrying swords.

We entered a garden where the perfume of night flowers mingled with the odour of burning torches. The figure of a man loomed in front of us, and the one who was leading us went up and kissed him on the cheek. We heard the murmur of voices, something about "kiss" and "betray." The soldier carrying me lifted me high, so my light shone fully on the man's face. You could see great pain, and yet also inner peace and - yes, even love - as he gazed upon those ready to lead him away.

The officer in charge gave a command – the soldiers led Jesus away. It was quiet, and still.

❖ **Rooster narrator** (*Bruce brings forward a pottery rooster, holds it up, **then sets it on the pulpit.***)

Jerry

I am the rooster that crowed that morning in the courtyard outside the High Priest's house. It was almost dawn. Most people were still asleep. But something was in the air. I could feel it. Across the way from my roost, I could see some people moving about, talking and shouting, carrying lit torches. I moved closer, and I noticed this great, burly fellow who had come into the courtyard to warm himself by the fire.

I began to crow. The man - Peter, I think - jumped, and looked in my direction. Even as he looked, I saw someone approach and say something to him, pointing toward the palace. Peter got very angry. Again, I crowed my welcome to the morning.

Peter stopped shouting and turned abruptly.

As I crowed once more, Peter stumbled across the courtyard and, as he passed me, I could hear sobs so powerful his whole body shook.

❖ **Crown of thorns** (*Lilian brings forward a crown of thorns, holds it up, **then sets it on the communion table.***)

Marianne

I was once a clinging rose, growing on the palace wall, with fragrant blossoms and strong, sharp thorns. I will never forget that early morning when Jesus was brought before Pilate.

Pilate only wanted to be rid of this “nuisance” named Jesus. Pilate probably would have let him go, but the crowd kept crying, “Crucify! Crucify!”

The soldiers whipped and mocked Jesus, saying “Hail, King of the Jews.” One of them climbed the wall, picked me, and made a spiky crown. They placed me on Jesus’ head, pressing me until the blood flowed. But instead of crying out, Jesus looked with compassion on the vengeful crowd around him.

➤ *The Ballad of the Carpenter by Phil Ochs*

Steve Sturgess

❖ **The cross** (*Jerry and Dorothy drag a cross to the front and **leaned on the steps in front of the communion table.***)

Ruth

I am perhaps the most familiar, most despised, and most beloved symbol of Easter. As a tree, I used to dream of what was in store for me. I never dreamed of this.

I was cut into two simple pieces of wood, and the carpenter carried me to a courtyard. An officer glanced at me and said, “it will do.” He ordered two guards to carry me through the streets, pushing through crowds that had grown in the square, until they stood in front of Jesus, beaten and bent in pain. The guards thrust me at him, but another called out, “No! We barely got him this far. He’ll never be able to carry this. We’ll be here all day. You, hey, you, pick this up and carry it. By order of the emperor.” A person from the crowd called Simon picked me up and began to carry me followed by the crowd, out of the city to a place called Golgotha.

Only then did I realize the “useful” thing I had become. They laid me on the ground and placed the tired and beaten Jesus upon me, pounding nails through his hands and feet. The guards groaned as they hoisted me up and set me into the earth.

(Silence – Pause)

❖ **The flower** (*Marianne brings forward a flower, holds it up, **then places it on the steps near the cross.***)

Laura Richards

Once long ago I bloomed here in this garden. It was a quiet evening when they came, Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, bringing the body of Jesus. They carefully wrapped a linen sheet around the body and carried it into the tomb, a

cave freshly carved into the hillside. A rock was rolled in front of the tomb, and then the others left. Silence returned...

But I am not a symbol of sadness; I am a symbol of hope. Because, you see, the story is not over yet. There is more to come. And I will wait here by the entrance to the tomb in hope, and as a reminder of God's promise always to bring new life out of death.

➤ *Bless the Lord (repeat several times)*

As you are ready, please leave the sanctuary in silence.

ⁱ Adapted from "The Whole People of God" Clergy Pak 1995/1996, © 1995 Wood Lake Books. Used with permission.