

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Thursday, April 2nd, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Received and Given: Christ at the Table
Maundy Thursday
1 Corinthians 11:23-29

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Beloved in Christ, on this holy night we gather in the shadow of the cross, to remember love poured out in humble service.

We come to worship the One who loved us to the end.

Come, let us bow before the God of mercy, who calls us to love one another as we have been loved.

We lift our hearts in gratitude and awe.

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted; he saves those who are crushed in spirit. Come, let **us worship and adore him together.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Eternal God, holy and exalted,
source of all true love and boundless mercy,
you are worthy of our highest praise and adoration.
In your unchanging faithfulness you have bound yourself to your people forever;
your covenant love never fails,
and your compassion reaches to the lowest depths of our need.
We adore you for the depth of your grace,
revealed in humble service and self-giving love—
where the Almighty stoops to wash away our unworthiness,
kneels among us in lowliness,
and calls us into the fellowship of your Son.
On this night of remembrance we stand in wonder at your great love:
love that endures betrayal,
love that serves without reserve,
love that feeds and nourishes unto eternal life.
Come now, Holy Spirit,
and fill this place with your sacred presence.
Open our eyes to behold afresh the mystery of your redeeming love;
kindle in us the fire of true devotion and humble obedience;

unite our hearts in adoration and ready service.
 As we gather in this solemn hour around your table,
 prepare us to receive your grace with repentant and thankful hearts,
 to love one another as we have been loved,
 and to worship you in spirit and in truth.
 To you, O Father, with the Son and the Holy Spirit,
 be all honor, glory, and praise,
 now and forever.
Amen.

Call to Confession

Friends
 let us examine our hearts in the light of God's perfect love.
 We have often failed to love as we have been loved,
 served ourselves instead of one another,
 and turned away from the path of humility.
 With confidence in God's abundant mercy,
 let us confess our sins together.

Prayer of Confession

**Merciful God, whose covenant with us is never broken,
 we confess that we have not fulfilled your will.
 You bind yourself to us in love,
 yet we withhold ourselves from you and from others.
 We have not loved you with all our heart,
 nor loved our neighbors as ourselves.
 In pride we have refused your humble service,
 and in selfishness we have neglected the needs around us.
 Forgive us, gracious Lord.
 Cleanse us from our sins,
 renew our hearts,
 and lead us once again to your table of grace,
 where we may be united to Christ,
 the bread of life and the true vine.
 In his name we pray. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news of the gospel:
 Though we have wandered, God remains faithful.
 In Christ, who gave himself fully for us,
 our sins are forgiven, our guilt is washed away,
 and we are restored to fellowship with God and one another.
 Friends, believe the good news:
 In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
 Forever and ever, Amen.

Hymn #224: "An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare" (V 1,2,3)

An upper room did our Lord prepare
 for those he loved until the end:
 and his disciples still gather there
 to celebrate their risen friend.

A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:
 to share his bread, his loving cup.
 Whatever burdens may bow us down,
 he by his cross shall lift us up.

And after supper he washed their feet,
 for service, too, is sacrament.
 In Christ our joy shall be made complete:
 sent out to serve, as he was sent.

Responsive ReadingPsalm 116:12-19

¹²What shall I render to the Lord
 for all his benefits to me?

¹³**I will lift up the cup of salvation
 and call on the name of the Lord,**

¹⁴I will pay my vows to the Lord
 in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵**Precious in the sight of the Lord
 is the death of his saints.**

¹⁶O Lord, I am your servant;
 I am your servant, the son of your maidservant.
 You have loosed my bonds.

¹⁷**I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
 and call on the name of the Lord.**

¹⁸I will pay my vows to the Lord

In the presence of all his people,
¹⁹ **in the courts of the house of the Lord,**
In your midst, O Jerusalem.
Praise the Lord!

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Sermon

Why do we gather here together for Maundy Thursday? Why is this particular night set apart in the life of the church, year after year?

For most, the simplest answer is, ‘Because it was the night of the Last Supper.’ And that answer is absolutely true, however it does not delve deep enough into the meanings of this night.

Maundy Thursday is not merely a commemoration of Jesus’s final meal; it is the night when we remember how the entire story of God’s saving work is gathered up, reinterpreted, and embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. This night draws together covenant, sacrifice, love, betrayal, service, and hope, and places them all on a single table.

The deeper significance of Maundy Thursday lies in its roots in the Jewish feast of Passover. Passover itself reaches into the roots of Judaism, all the way back to the book of Exodus, where God delivers Israel from its time of slavery in Egypt. In Exodus, the people are commanded to take a lamb, care for it, sacrifice it, and mark their doorposts with its blood so that God’s divine judgement of death upon the firstborn would pass over their homes. This means that the Passover meal in Egypt was not simply about their survival; it was also about their identity as God’s people.

Passover was to be remembered and reenacted generation after generation so that God’s people would never forget who they were, where they came from, and how their salvation was accomplished—not by their own strength, but by God’s mercy on them.

This is the feast that Jesus and his disciples have gathered to commemorate. They have come to Jerusalem, as have all faithful Jews, to remember God's deliverance from Egypt and how God's divine judgement had passed over them. But on this particular night, Jesus does something utterly unexpected.

He does not simply participate in the Passover meal as a remembrance of the past, instead he transforms it into something far greater.

Instead of pointing back only to the lambs that were sacrificed in Egypt, Jesus points forward to himself as the one true lamb of God. He takes the bread and cup, traditional elements of the Passover meal and using them, declares that he himself is now at the center of God's saving work.

He will become the true Passover Lamb, whose body will be broken and whose blood will be poured out, not to spare a single nation from judgement as had happened in Egypt, but to redeem all of God's faithful in this world.

Yet Maundy Thursday is not only about sacrifice; it is also about servanthood.

John's Gospel tells us that during supper, Jesus rises from the table, lays aside his outer garments, wraps a towel around his waist, and washes his disciples' feet.

This is not just a symbolic gesture detached from real life. In the ancient world, foot washing was the work of servants, quite often the lowest servants in a household. Roads were dusty, sandals offered little protection, so feet quickly became filthy. To wash someone's feet was to take the lowest place in society. And yet here, on the night before his death, Jesus chooses to reveal the true nature of his kingship in an act of humility by washing the feet of his disciples.

And it is this act of foot washing that we need to use as a lens to interpret what happens in the meal that follows. The bread and the cup are not signs of power or dominance; they are signs of a sacrificial and self-giving love.

Maundy Thursday takes its name from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning 'command' or 'mandate,' drawn from Jesus' words later that evening: 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you.' And in the events of the night we see that before love is commanded, it is demonstrated. Before the disciples are told what to do, they are shown who God is.

This night, then, is not about sentimentality or ritual for its own sake, it is about remembering what kind of covenant we are part of and what kind of people we are called to be.

The new covenant is established not through force, but through sacrifice; not through status, but through service.

And Maundy Thursday serves as a reminder to the church, and to all of God's people, to sit with this truth a few moments before rushing ahead to the cross on Good Friday, or the empty tomb on Easter Sunday.

Here, when we look back upon that table that night, with bread broken and feet washed, we learn what love looks like when it takes on flesh—and what servanthood means in the kingdom of God.

In 1 Corinthians 11:23 Paul says...

'For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you' (1 Corinthians 11:23a)

Paul begins by grounding the Lord's Supper not in a minister's personal creativity or a church's religious traditions, but in divine reception and faithful transmission.

This language matters. Paul uses the technical vocabulary of tradition—language that would have been immediately recognized in both Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts as referring to the careful handing on of something sacred and authoritative, something to be respected and revered in both act and memory.

Paul is saying, in effect, that the church does not invent the meaning of this meal; it receives it from God.

The Lord's Supper is not shaped by preference, culture, or even pastoral instinct—it is shaped by Jesus's revelation to all of us on that fateful night. And that has everything to do with servanthood. A servant does not improve the master's command; a servant simply receives and obeys.

Paul models for us what faithful ministry looks like: not originality, but faithful obedience and reverence. Not innovation for its own sake, but stewardship of what Christ has already given.

This also serves to remind us that the church itself is a servant of the Gospel, not its owner.

We are not free to turn the Table into a tool of exclusion, self-expression, or social status—as the Corinthians had done.

Instead, we are called to receive what Christ gives and pass it on unchanged: Christ himself, given for sinners.

The true role of the church at the Table is not to control Christ's presence, but to bear witness to Christ's promise. In that sense, every time we come to the Lord's Table, we are confessing again that salvation is not something we achieve, but something we receive. It is that posture of humility and reception that is the beginning of true servanthood.

Paul then continues

'On the night when he was betrayed' (1 Corinthians 11:23b)

Paul deliberately anchors the Supper in the darkness of betrayal.

This meal is not instituted on a night of loyalty, courage, or understanding, but on the night when Jesus is handed over—first by Judas, and ultimately by the will of the Father. The Greek word *paradidōmi* carries both meanings: human treachery and divine purpose.

Jesus is first betrayed by one of his own, even as he willingly prepared to give himself up for the sake of the world. That tension is crucial. It tells us that the new covenant is not established because humanity finally gets it right, it is established because God remains faithful even when his people fail.

This is where Maundy Thursday becomes painfully honest.

The disciples at that table are not heroes. One will betray Jesus for silver. Another will deny him three times. The rest will scatter in fear before the night is over.

And yet Jesus serves them anyway. He does not wait for repentance before giving himself; he gives himself in order to make repentance possible.

Ignatius of Antioch called the Eucharist ‘the medicine of immortality,’ and that image fits precisely here.

Medicine is given not to the healthy, but to the sick. The Table is set not for the righteous, but for those who know their need. Servanthood, in the kingdom of God, always moves toward the undeserving, because that is exactly how Christ has moved toward us.

Next Paul says,

‘And when he had given thanks’ (1 Corinthians 11:24a)

Paul tells us that Jesus ‘gave thanks’ before breaking the bread.

The word he uses—*eucharisteō*—is the root of our word *Eucharist*.

This detail is extraordinary when we pause to consider it. Jesus gives thanks not after the resurrection, not after the victory is visible, but on the very threshold of suffering.

He gives thanks knowing what lies ahead: betrayal, abandonment, humiliation, torture, and death. This is not denial, and it is not naïve optimism. It is a sign of His deep trust in the Father’s will. Thanksgiving, in this moment, is an act of obedience and faith.

In ancient Jewish practice, blessing and thanksgiving were always directed toward God, not toward the food itself.

Jesus is thanking the Father for the redemption that is about to be accomplished, even though that redemption will pass through his own broken body and shed blood.

This teaches us something essential about servanthood under the New Covenant: gratitude is not dependent on circumstances. It is rooted in confidence that God is faithful, even when obedience is costly.

The servant trusts the goodness of God not because the path is easy, but because the Father is good. When the church gives thanks at the Table, it joins Christ in this posture of trust, learning again that God's purposes are sure even in the valley of the shadow of death.

Paul continues,

'This is my body, which is for you' (1 Corinthians 11:24b)

Jesus' words over the bread are striking in their simplicity and depth: 'This is my body, which is for you.'

Paul does not attempt to explain how Christ is present in the bread.

Instead, he tells us why Christ gives himself. The emphasis falls squarely on those final words: *for you*. This is covenant language. This is substitutionary language. This is gift language. Whatever theological differences Christians have debated across the centuries about the nature of Christ's presence in the Supper, the heart of the matter is this: Christ gives himself for us.

The bread Jesus breaks is Passover bread—unleavened, flat, marked by stripes and pierced by holes in the baking process. The symbolism would not have been lost on Jewish eyes. The bread of haste, humility, and deliverance becomes the sign of a sinless body broken under judgement.

John Calvin insisted that while Christ's physical body remains in heaven, believers truly receive Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit at the Table. Not symbol alone, but real participation. Not physical consumption, but genuine communion. And that communion shapes us into servants. To receive Christ's body 'for you' is to be drawn into the pattern of Christ's life—broken, poured out, and given for the sake of others.

And we are to,

'Do this in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:24c)

Biblical remembrance is never mere mental recall.

The Greek word *anamnesis* carries covenant weight. To remember, in Scripture, is to re-enter a reality and live accordingly.

When Israel remembered the Exodus, they did not simply think about it; they shaped their lives around it. When God ‘remembered’ his covenant, he acted to save. In the same way, when the church remembers Christ, it is not engaging in nostalgia or ritual—it is participating in a living reality.

Augustine captured this powerfully when he told communicants, ‘Be what you see, and receive what you are.’ In other words, the church receives the body of Christ in order to become the body of Christ.

Remembrance leads to re-formation. It reshapes your identity.

At the Table, the church remembers not only that Christ died, but that his death defines who we are. A people forgiven, gathered, and sent. Servanthood flows directly from this remembrance. We do not serve in order to earn grace; we serve because grace has already claimed us. The memory of Christ’s self-giving becomes the pattern of our life together.

Then there is the blood,

‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood’ (1 Corinthians 11:25)

With the cup, Jesus explicitly names what is taking place: the establishment of a new covenant.

This language reaches back to Exodus 24, where Moses sealed the old covenant with the blood of animals, and to Jeremiah 31, where God promised a covenant written not on stone but on human hearts.

Jesus declares that this promise is now being fulfilled in his own blood. The new covenant is not a revision of the old, but its fulfillment. What the law could not accomplish because of human sin, Christ accomplishes through perfect obedience and sacrificial love. The cup Jesus lifts is most likely the Passover ‘cup of redemption.’

By identifying it with his blood, Jesus declares that true redemption will come not through political liberation or moral reform, but through his own self-offering.

This covenant changes everything. It establishes forgiveness, inner transformation, and restored relationship with God. And it does so through servanthood. The covenant is sealed not by power, but by sacrifice and to drink this cup is to accept both the gift of forgiveness and the call to live as a covenant people shaped by Christ’s humility.

Paul concludes with,

‘For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup’ (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Reminding the church that the Lord’s Supper is not a private spiritual exercise. The word Paul uses for ‘proclaim’ is the same word used for preaching the Gospel.

Every celebration of the Last Supper is a sermon—a visible proclamation of Christ’s saving death and promised return. The church preaches not only with words, but with bread broken and wine poured.

This proclamation looks in three directions at once:

It looks backward to the cross, where Christ gave himself for sinners.

It looks inward, forming the church as a community of humble service rather than self-interest.

And it looks forward, toward the day when Christ will come again and host the great banquet of the kingdom.

Martin Luther once said that at the Table, Christ preaches to us through his promise. And that promise sends us out as servants. Having received Christ’s self-giving love, we are now called to embody it—washing feet, bearing burdens, and loving one another as he has loved us.

Maundy Thursday leaves us no room for abstraction.

This night insists that theology take flesh.

The Table teaches us who God is: not a distant ruler, but a Servant-King. Not a God who demands loyalty before giving grace, but a God who gives himself in order to create a faithful people. In bread and cup, in towel and basin, Christ shows us the heart of the new covenant—a covenant sealed in blood and expressed through love.

Tonight, before we are asked to serve, we are reminded that we have been served. Before we are commanded to love, we are shown what love looks like.

And only then do we hear the *mandatum*: ‘As I have loved you, so you also are to love one another.’

This is the way of the new covenant. This is the shape of Christian servanthood. And this is the life we are invited to receive—and to live—at the Table of the Lord and carry forth into this world as the Salt and Light of God’s Word.

Let us pray,

Lord our God,
 you have made us for yourself,
 and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.
 Grant us grace to receive what you freely give,
 to be healed where we are broken,
 and to be made whole by the body and blood of your Son.
 As we have been fed at your table,

shape us by your love,
 that we may become what we receive—
 the body of Christ,
 given for the life of the world.
 Teach us to love as we have been loved,
 to serve as we have been served,
 and to walk humbly in the way of Christ,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, forever and ever.

Augustine of Hippo

Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

Dear friends in the Lord, as we now gather to celebrate the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ on this Maundy Thursday, remember how the Apostle Paul urges everyone to examine themselves carefully before eating this bread and drinking this cup. The benefit is great if we receive it with true repentance and living faith—we spiritually feed on Christ’s flesh and blood; we dwell in him and he in us; we are one with Christ. But the danger is great if we receive unworthily: we become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; we eat and drink judgment on ourselves, not discerning the Lord’s body. We provoke God’s wrath and risk various plagues and kinds of death.

So if anyone here is a blasphemer of God, an opponent of his word, an adulterer, or harbors malice, envy, or any serious sin: mourn your sins and do not come to this table, lest after receiving the holy bread, Satan enter you as he entered Judas, filling you with wickedness and leading to destruction of body and soul.

But if you are repentant and contrite, come. This sacrament is medicine for sick souls. Lift your hearts by faith to heaven, where Christ sits at God’s right hand. Do not seek him physically in the elements, but receive him truly by faith in your hearts. We affirm no local presence, but true spiritual communion.

Therefore, all who trust in Christ alone and desire to live in love as he commanded, come to this table.

Great Thanksgiving

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

O Father of mercy and God of all comfort, as all creation acknowledges you as Lord and King, we your redeemed people come to give you thanks. For creating heaven and earth, and your wonderful providence over all things:

We give you thanks, O Lord.

Above all, we thank you for your immeasurable love in redeeming the world through our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sake was delivered to death, and who gives himself to us as necessary food and nourishment unto everlasting life. For the means of grace, and for the hope of glory:

We give you thanks, O Lord.

You have granted to us miserable sinners so excellent a gift: receiving us into the fellowship and company of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. In this holy sacrament, we spiritually feed on him by faith, dwelling in him and he in us.

We give you thanks, O Lord.

Give us true gratitude for all your mercies, that our hearts may be sincerely thankful, and we may show forth your praise not only with our lips but in our lives— by offering ourselves to your service and walking in holiness and righteousness all our days.

We give you thanks, O Lord.

To you, O Father, with your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, world without end.

Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, shed for the forgiveness of the sins of many. Drink from it, all of you.

Communion

Take, eat: this is the body of Christ, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, shed for the forgiveness of the sins of many. Drink from it, all of you.

Prayer After Communion

Most merciful Father, we offer you all praise, thanks, and glory for granting us, poor sinners, such an excellent gift: receiving us into fellowship with your dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord. You gave him up to death for us and now give him to us as essential food and nourishment for eternal life. We ask you, heavenly Father, never let us become so ungrateful as to forget these priceless benefits. Instead, engrave them deeply in our hearts, so we grow daily in true faith, active in every good work. Strengthen us especially in these dangerous times and the rage of Satan, that we may stand firm in confessing Christ, to the glory of your name, who are God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn #208: "In Cross of Christ I Glory" (V 1,2,4)

In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me:
lo! it glows with peace and joy.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

Pastoral Prayer

Almighty and most merciful God,
we thank you for gathering us this night
in the remembrance of your great love shown in humble service.
Strengthen us by your Spirit to love one another
as Christ has loved us,
bearing one another's burdens
and serving in lowliness of heart.
Watch over your church universal,
unite us in faith and charity,
and keep us steadfast amid the trials of this world.
Comfort those who suffer,
heal the broken,
and draw near to all who walk in darkness this night.
As we depart from this holy gathering,
guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Grant us peace that passes understanding,

and grace to follow faithfully
until we feast with you in your eternal kingdom.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Benediction

Go forth in the peace of Christ,
who loved you and gave himself for you.
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
And may the blessing of Almighty God—
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—
be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**