

Maundy Thursday Gatherings 2020

First Church Berkeley UCC



Feel free to adapt this template as desired. Do less, do different, let the Spirit guide you.

Materials needed: Some simple dinner (if and as you like); Basin of warm water, soap, towels, lotion (optional, or just a sink/bathtub!); this document printed or pulled up on your screen; computer/smart phone or device to connect via Zoom (optional, or use this as a template for your own home gathering).

At **6pm**, those who wish to do so will gather via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/882838382>

Or, feel free to dial in by phone if you prefer (or if your internet connection is or becomes spotty): +1 669 900 9128 US (Meeting ID: 882 838 382)

Gathering & Welcome

One: Welcome and blessings to you this Maundy Thursday. Tonight we gather as our First Church Berkeley community in homes across the East Bay, much as the original disciples did that holy night, in the intimacy of a home, to share food and conversation, to wash hands and feet, to remember and receive God's grace anew. And yet we gather in an altogether new way, sheltering in place against a pandemic, together while apart.

(If you'd like, you may also include additional background on Maundy Thursday:)

The word "maundy" comes from a Latin word meaning mandate, or "commandment." It refers to Jesus' words to his disciples during their final evening together: "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another. Just as I have

loved you, you should love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). While Maundy Thursday is most often remembered by Christians as the day that Jesus shared the Last Supper with the disciples, according to John's gospel account, the defining sacred moment was Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet, an act that has since become both sign and symbol of Jesus' love-one-another commandment. To this day, throughout the Christian faith, the image of a water basin and towel are highly symbolic of discipleship and servanthood. (Source: <http://www.ucc.org/whats-so-maundy>)

Blessing

One: Let us bless this time together.

Christ gave us the mandate to love one another.

Christ gave us the peace that we will never be left alone.

Christ gave us the picture that we are connected as vine and branches.

Christ gave us the assurance that no one will take away our joy.

God is with you!

ALL: God is with us all!

One: Open wide our hearts.

ALL: We open them to new possibilities.

From our dining room tables to our home offices.

this is the time to give God our thanks and praise.

Our homes may be filled with young voices,

or our homes may be filled with overwhelming silence.

Our sofas might be brimming with family,

or we may be sitting by ourselves at an empty table.

But our lives are never truly empty.

The silence will not be the last sound you hear.

Jesus the Christ has created a realm of love for each of us-

one in which we will be reunited with loved ones,

one in which we are assured of God's comfort.

It was a night filled with teachings and memories.

Undoubtedly, tears were shed and laughs raised.

This was the night before Jesus died.

Let us join with Jesus, and his friends,

in remembering how to show love for one another.

[Rev. Michelle Torigian, adapted]

Move into Zoom Breakout Rooms (For those joining via Zoom, we will split up into randomly assigned small groups for the remainder of our gathering time)

Deepening in Intimacy

As you share time — and maybe dinner! — together, go around the Zoom and share according to any of the following, or a prompt of your own choosing!

- A High & Low experience from the past week or so
- A strategy that is helping you cope in this time, perhaps a surprising one.
- Where have you *seen* God lately? (or *heard, smelled, tasted, felt, longed for...?*)
- Three fun facts about yourselves

Sing Together

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

Sing together a capella, or use one of these recordings & share your screen to sing along:

[A contemporary arrangement](#)

[A gospel arrangement](#)

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer

The Story John 13:1-17

Invite someone to read the story, or split it up and share it by sentence or section.

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.

Talk together about what stands out about the passage. What part seems the most meaningful to each of you. What seems the most challenging? How does Jesus’ model of love and humility speak to you in your life right now?

Sing Together

“Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant”

Sing together a capella, or use one of these recordings & share your screen to sing along:

[A more contemplative arrangement](#)

[A more contemporary arrangement](#)

Will you let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I might have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.

I will weep when you are weeping,
when you laugh I’ll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we’ve seen this journey through.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
we are trav’lers on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the
mile and bear the load.

When we sing to god in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we’ve known together
of Christ’s love and agony.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

Will you let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I might have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.

Hand and Footwashing

Begin the hand and foot washing. Those who are living alone wash their own feet or hands; those living in community take turns washing each others' feet or hands. It is important to wash each other's feet with intention, humility and love, offering a blessing like "may God bless these feet on the journey ahead."

Although this is an intentional and sacred ritual it does not need to be somber! Feet can be funny (and washing them can be ticklish!) so laughter is encouraged!

Once everyone has had a chance to wash and be washed, close with a prayer of thanksgiving or a moment of silence.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,
Time and space cannot take away our love for one another, or our love for You.
Gift through our touch and through our touch-screens
a peace that passes all understanding.
Hold us together while we are sheltering apart.
Carry us forward through death and into the hope of Easter,
whenever and however it will come this year.
Amen.

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When your Zoom breakout group concludes, you are free to "leave the meeting" and move into the shadows and blessings of the evening.

*But first, if you like, we invite you to **take a screenshot of your Zoom small group gathering** and share it to our Facebook Group:*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FirstChurchBerkeley/>

Please **ask folks' permission** to do so first, so they have the option to "Stop Video" or remove their names from the screen if they would prefer not to be in a photo. Thanks!

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And if you're in the mood for more community and song,
all are warmly invited to join Derek at **7pm** for a contemplative 30-minute Taizé sing-in via Zoom, as we move from Maundy Thursday towards Good Friday:

Maundy Thursday Taizé sing-in Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/232214791>