

Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church
South Avenue United Methodist Church
Russel W. Shuluga, Pastor



Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2024
7:00PM

GREETING

This is the night of darkness before the world changed; not only for the disciples, but also for all of us. But first Jesus invites us to gather at His Table of Love. May we prepare our hearts for this holy night.

PRELUDE AND BRINGING FORTH THE LIGHT

'Variations on the Chorale' "Soul adorn thyself with gladness" J.C. Walther

LITANY OF PREPARATION

(People's Response will be sung to #530)

Pastor: You who call upon the name of Christ, we are gathered to recall the story of the night in which Jesus Christ was betrayed. Are you prepared to come to the table of Jesus Christ, whose life was poured out for you?

People: **"Lord, we are able. Our spirits are thine. Remold them, make us, like thee, divine. Thy guiding radiance above us shall be a beacon to God, to love and loyalty."**

Pastor: Are you able to watch with Jesus at prayer in the garden, indeed to struggle yourselves to be in unity with God's will?

People: **"Lord, we are able. Our spirits are thine. Remold them, make us, like thee, divine. Thy guiding radiance above us shall be a beacon to God, to love and loyalty."**

Pastor: Will you follow Jesus even into the night of betrayal?

People: “**Lord, we are able. Our spirits are thine. Remold them, make us, like Thee, divine. Thy guiding radiance above us shall be a beacon to God, to love and loyalty.**

Pastor: Then let us praise God, even in this hour of darkness!

People: **God of all grace and steadfast love, greatly is your name to be praised in all the earth!**

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord our God, tonight we gather to remember our Savior Jesus and his sacrifice of love for us. We pause to remember his last meal with his closest friends and disciples. We pause to remember the betrayal he would suffer. We pause to remember the pain that would be His to bear. We gather to bear witness to our Savior. We gather to grow in our faith and be renewed once again by the Story of mystery, Story of the Resurrection. Send your Spirit to be with us this night till Easter morning. In Christ we pray. Amen.

INTROIT

‘Spirit of the Living God’

No. 393

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on e.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

REFLECTIONS

CONFESSING

CALL TO CONFESSION

On these days of emptiness and death before the Resurrection we begin tonight to offer our confession

GENERAL CONFESSION

We confess tonight that we are like those who crucified our Lord. We are like those who denied Jesus—refusing to claim him as Lord of our whole life. We are like those who have mocked him—forgetting his power in this world. We are like those who made him a crown of thorns—diminishing his authority in our lives. We are like those who hung him on a Cross—choosing the allure of violence and fear rather than justice and peace. We are like those who turned away their gaze—afraid to enter into the suffering of this world. Forgive us. Have mercy upon us.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Pastor: Even in the darkness of this night, even in the emptiness of these hours that stretch out before Easter morning the promise of the Resurrection is still at hand.

People: **It is a dim light, and yet to the light we cling.**

Pastor: Give us grace to receive this assurance of your love.

People: **Grant us peace on this night. Amen.**

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

“Amazing Grace”

No. 378

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.*

JESUS SHOWS US THE WAY

Pastor: Jesus spent his life teaching us the meaning of love. Through word and deed Jesus showed us how to love God and to love one another. He fed the hungry. He healed the sick. He invited the women and the children and the tax collectors and the sinners to come to his table. He broke bread with the least and the lost and shared the cup of redemption with them all. He crossed boundaries of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class. He challenged religious authority, and he scoffed at arrogance and self-absorbed grandeur. He called out the hypocrites. He admonished the scribes and the Pharisees for their hardened hearts. He brought a simple message: Love God, love yourself, and love one another.

All: We gather in the name of Jesus and remember the way that he showed us. We gather to remember not just his death, but his life.

HYMN

'Jesus, Jesu

No. 432, Vs. 1 & 4

REFRAIN:

***Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.***

***Kneels at the feet of his friends
silently washes their feet,
master who acts as a slave to them.***

REFRAIN

***Loving puts us on our knees,
serving as though we are slaves,
this is the way we should live with you.***

REFRAIN

Pastor: The way of Jesus goes through the cross, but we are not there yet. It is close. We can see its shadow. We can feel the cold, dark, night. We know that the enemies of God are conspiring. They have had enough of him. He threatens their comfort. He threatens their way of life. He threatens their power. They will come for him. First though, we will gather. We gather with Jesus and his closest friends. We gather with those that called him teacher, Rabbi, friend. We gather for the Passover meal, to remember that God saved the people from slavery. God saved once. God saves forevermore.

All: God saved the Israelites at Passover, and revealed that it is God who reigns, not the Pharaoh. Our God saved once. God saves forevermore.

HYMN

'Why Is This Night Different?'
(Sung to the tune "We Gather Together No. 131")

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

***"Why is this night different from all of the others?"
This night we remember how God set us free.
This night we remember our fathers and mothers
Whom God reached out to save from harsh slavery.***

***We eat bitter herbs to recall how they suffered;
The salt water tells of their tears and their cries.
The lamb is the sacrifice each household offered;
The matzo is the bread with no time to rise.***

*Haroseth reminds how the people long labored
In making the mortar; what weary, worn slaves!
And yet in its sweetness is hope ever-savored,
And in each cup of wine, the promise: God saves!*

*Through symbols we share here, your story is spoken;
God, help us to know that it's our story, too!
For as we are saved we are sent to the broken,
Till all know peace and joy, till all are made new.*

(Silence)

THE SACRED MEAL

The Passover with His Disciples

READING

Matthew 26:17-25

¹⁷ On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

¹⁸ He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."

²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

²³ Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ 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."

²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so."

HYMN

To the Tune Of "Where You There

No. 288

*Were you there when he gathered with his friends?
Were you there when he gathered with his friends?
O, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when he gathered with his friends?*

(Silence)

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Even as they were sharing this sacred meal together, the disciples were not of one heart. Jesus knew that he was asking much from these men, and he knew that they would fail him. Judas had already agreed to betray Jesus to the religious authorities. Was he angry at some slight? Was he disappointed that Jesus would not raise an army against the Romans? Was he upset with the value of the oil that the woman "wasted" when she anointed Jesus? We will never know Judas' heart, but Jesus knew that he would be betrayed. And did Jesus do with the man that would betray him? He broke bread with him. All of the disciples were deeply saddened, and they asked:

All: I would never betray you, Lord. It's not me, is it?

HYMN

To the Tune of "Were You There"

No. 288

*Were you there when he gave them bread and wine?
Were you there when he gave them bread and wine?
O, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when he gave them bread and wine?*

(Silence)

SACRAMENT OF HOLY EUCHARIST

Pastor: On the night in which Jesus was betrayed by his friend, he took the bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to God, gave it to his disciples and said, "Drink from this all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink of it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and the cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by Christ's blood. By your Holy Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father now and forever.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES FEET

John 13:1-8

13 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. ²The devil had already decided^a that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then 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. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."

HYMN

⁵
To the Tune of "Were You There"

No. 288

*Were you there when he knelt and washed their feet?
Were you there when he knelt and washed their feet?
O, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when he knelt and washed their feet?*

(Silence)

THE DISCIPLES ARGUE

Pastor: When the holy meal had been shared, the disciples began to argue over which one would be the greatest. Even here, at the end of their time together, they did not seem to understand what Jesus had been teaching them all along. He reminded them that to be great in the Kingdom of God meant to serve. After Jesus' talk of betrayal, the disciples' argument, and Jesus' rebuke of them, the disciples seemed to be growing anxious. Peter proclaimed:

All: "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

Pastor: And Jesus replied, "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day until you have denied three times that you know me."

HYMN

'Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley'

TFWS No. 211VS. 1 & 3

*Jesus waked this lonesome valley;
he had to walk it by himself.
Oh, nobody else could walk it for him;
He had to walk it by himself.*

*You must go and stand your trial;
you have to stand it by yourself.
Oh, nobody else can stand it for you;
You have to stand it by yourself.*

(Silence)

IN GETHSEMANE

READING

Matthew 26:36-45

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners."

*Were you there when he knelt and prayed to God?
 Were you there when he knelt and prayed to God?
 O, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble'
 Were you there when he knelt and prayed to God?*

(Silence)

THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST

READING

Matthew 26:47-56

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do."^[a] Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant^[b] of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" ⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

HYMN

To the Tune of "Were You There"

No. 288

*Were you there when his friends betrayed and ran?
 Were you there when his friends betrayed and ran?
 O, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when his friends betrayed and ran?*

(Silence)

PETER'S DENIAL

Pastor: There was a brief skirmish at the arrest, but his disciples quickly scattered. Peter, who had only hours before promised to go with Jesus to prison, even death, followed from a distance. During the trial, Peter remained hidden in the shadows. First a servant girl saw him and said, "This man was also with him."

All: "Woman, I do not know him."

Pastor: A little later someone else, on seeing him said, "You also are one of them."

All: "Man, I am not."

Pastor: Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man was with him; for he is a Galilean."

All: "I do not know what you are talking about. I do not know Jesus."

Pastor: At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him, and he wept bitterly.

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh-oh-oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

*Were you there when they nailed him to a tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to a tree?
Oh-oh-oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they nailed him to a tree?*

*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh-oh-oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

At this conclusion of the service, the congregation leaves in silence.