

A service of prayer for Maundy Thursday

This liturgy of prayer, silence and meditations is based on John 13 and recalls seven actions that are described in the narrative of the Last Supper. Each action is marked by the lighting of a candle. At the conclusion of the spoken words a watch of prayer will be kept until midnight and the candles will be gradually extinguished.

You are invited to remain, or return, to spend time in obedience to Jesus' words, "I am deeply grieved, even unto death; remain here, and keep awake...Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

Opening prayer:

Let us pray together:

All: **God of light and truth, grant us peace as we gather tonight. May we draw closer to you as we recall again the service and suffering of Christ, in whose name we meet and pray. Amen**

God of grace and truth, as we move from the brightness of the day's light to the enfolding darkness of the night-time, help us to know your light in our hearts, that in our need for forgiveness and strength your gracious word may be known.

And then help us to go from this place renewed in spirit. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen

[Prayer of confession and assurance](#)

Lord Christ, in the evening of this day, forgive us for our lack of attention to you, our absence of word and action in following you, and our denial of your place within our lives

Silence for personal confession

Help us to know your Spirit with us, your gracious forgiveness, and your strength in our hearts,

That we may more closely follow you. Amen

This evening we shall hear part of John's account of the last evening that Jesus spent with his friends before his arrest. Chapter 13 speaks of actions taken, and decisions made. Some were inspired by goodness, and others not. As the words are read we

consider where our place might be within the narrative, and we renew our hope, which is in Christ the light of the world, that through him we might come closer to God.

Action 1 – washing, John 13:1–5

Let us pray:

Tonight, O God, we recall that your Son arose from the table to descend to the floor. We rejoice that in his humility he left the things of heaven for the dirt and dust of this world. Give us humility, we pray, that we might discover and follow Christ's way and not our own. Lord, hear us.

Lord, fill us with your truth.

The first candle is lit, followed by pause for reflection

Action 2 – cleansing, John 13:6–11

Meditation

Let us pray:

Lord God, help us to accept love when it is shown, and your love as it is shown through Christ. Lord, hear us.

Lord, cleanse us through your grace.

The second candle is lit, followed by pause for reflection.

Action 3 – serving, John 13:12–17

Meditation

Let us pray:

Gracious God, teach us how to serve as we are served. Lord, hear us.

Lord, fill us with your humble love.

The third candle is lit, followed by pause for reflection.

Action 4 – betraying, John 13:18–30

Let us pray:

Loving God, we pray for those who are persecuted and betrayed for their faith. Lord, hear us.

Lord, fill us with your strength.

The fourth candle is lit, followed by pause for reflection.

Action 5 – leaving, John 13:31–33

Let us pray:

Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them.

In silence we remember those who have gone before us, who have brought the Gospel to us, who have

served Christ amongst us, and who now are in that place prepared also for us.

Silence

Lord, hear us.

Lord, fill us with your hope.

The fifth candle is lit, followed by pause for reflection.

Action 6 – loving, John 13:34–35

Let us pray:

Jesus commanded his disciples to love, even as he knew that betrayal and denial were close at hand. We pray for those who are rejected and unloved ...

We pray for those who are betrayed by those whom they love ...

We pray for those who deny their faith through fear ...

We pray for those who this night, and every night, fear for their lives ...

We pray for those for whom this night will be their last ...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, fill us with your compassionate love.

The sixth candle is lit, followed by pause for reflection.

Action 7 – denying, John 13:36–38

Meditation

Let us pray:

O God, you know that it is often easier and safer for us to remain silent when we might challenge. To speak with quiet voices when they need to be louder. Help us, we pray, re-call us to your service as Christ recalled your servant Peter by the lakeside, that we may be fed ... and then feed others.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, fill us with your courage, your love and your humility. Help us in the night-time shadows of fear to know the continuing light of your presence, that we may be seen and heard as your people. Amen

The seventh candle is lit, followed by the watch of prayer until midnight.

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