

Maundy Thursday- 9th April 2020

"On the night when he was betrayed..." With these words starts the Epistle Reading for today. Well known words. Normally we hear them in every service, spoken by the pastor over bread and wine in the service of the Holy Communion. They are the beginning of the so called "Words of our Lord" or "Words of Institution". In the service of Holy Communion these words mark in connection with the elements bread and wine the moment when our Lord Jesus Christ is *really* present among us. A miraculous moment, the greatest wonder we can experience in this time and world. The Lutheran Church sets value on saying these words of pure Gospel and words of our Lord without any introduction or leading words of the pastor:



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"Silence opens this (core) part of the service. The words of Christ sound suddenly." (The Rev Gert Kelter, translation by JRL) The Apostle Paul passes the Gospel on to us in the **1st letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 23-26, the Epistle Reading:**

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.

"On the night when he was betrayed..." These words show us the moment of the narrative where we stand in this Holy Week. With Maundy Thursday we enter the so called "Triduum Sacrum" (this is Latin and means something like "holy triad" or "holy trifold service") the most important and highest feast and service of the Christian faith, split in three liturgical parts: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Vigil of Easter (the service on early morning on Easter Sunday). On Maundy Thursday two different narrative threads come together showing the same message: the three evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke narrate the institution of the Holy Supper, the foremost topic for this day. The evangelist John adds the narrative of the "foot washing", taking place during the last supper of Jesus with his disciples. We hear about it in the **Gospel Reading, according to St. John 13, 1-15+34-35:**

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

“On the night when he was betrayed...” ... God’s real character becomes clear: serving love. In both cases, the foot washing and the Holy Supper, God shows His love to us. They are sensible signs of His care. We can feel His loving care on our skin, on our lips, on our tongue. And there is no precondition, nobody is standing before the door to decide if we are welcome inside or not. There is no hurdle we must take first. No number we must call beforehand to make an appointment. It is the other way around. Jesus takes every hurdle to come and serve us. He kneels down to wash us from our sins. The work of a slave. He shares His body and blood as a sacrifice for us. He gives himself to us. And he invites us at His table to eat and to drink and to celebrate with him the real life: each service with Holy Communion and once and forevermore in His kingdom in heaven. Where is a human being or even a Godhead in another religion who does everything for His friends? And we are God’s friends!

“On the night when he was betrayed...” ... Jesus celebrated the Passover feast with his disciples. The Passover is the highest feast for the Jews. On this day they commemorate the moment when they set off from Egypt out of slavery into the promised land. We read about it in the **Old Testament Reading** for today which is also the **passage for the sermon this year: Exodus 12, 1-4**

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.

3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

7 “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. 10 And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

The night when Jesus was betrayed was the night when the Israelites commemorated the death of the Lamb whose blood was the sign to spare them from God’s wrath. This leads us also to the message of Jesus Christ’s passion and death: He became the Passover Lamb for us, for all mankind, once and for always. His blood was shed for us. And when we celebrate Holy Communion it is a bit like painting our doors with this blood as a sign that we belong to the people of God, that we are free from the slavery of this world and on our way into the promised land: heaven. With Jesus’s blood, we do not must fear death anymore. Blood stands for life. This Gospel, the Holy Communion is the

message and celebration of life. This we celebrate and commemorate each time when we celebrate Holy Communion. And therewith, when we join the Holy Communion, it becomes real also for us – for me – individually.

Maundy Thursday reminds us that we belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, not as servants, not as employees – as His friends! We are welcome to join Him. Not just once a year on Easter, not just once a week on Sundays – each day of our lives, always. If we follow His invitation into His presence and community and especially to His table, we will be more and more filled by His peace and love and this will have an effect on our lives. The Bible is full of stories of people (and so there are many stories too from people of our days) who really didn't have easy, nice lives but were satisfied by God's blessing in following Him, His invitation, and His commandments. – Let's do the same! This year it is not possible to come together for services this special weekend. We won't have Holy Communion. Complained to God! But Jesus Christ is also available at your home, just a prayer away. Don't stay away from Him – for your life's sake.

Prayer for Palm Sunday (resource from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, www.lcms.org)

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Brief silence

Heavenly Father, on this holy night, we remember the Passover of Your ancient people, fulfilled in Your Son's gift of the New Testament in His blood. Be gracious to us and bless us. Remember not our sins and transgressions, for they have all been blotted out by the blood of Christ Jesus, our Passover Lamb. Forgive us, and create in us new and contrite hearts. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious Father, give wisdom, understanding and boldness to all preachers of the Word during these holy days and hard times, that their preaching and teaching would edify Your children and move them to faithfully meditate upon the Passion of Your Son, through which they have eternal salvation. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Merciful Father, strengthen all of our sister churches throughout the world who celebrate the mystery of Your Son's Passover and those Christians who are unable to gather together. Where there is distress, bring consolation; where there is strife, bring forgiveness; where there is suffering, bring help; and where there is persecution, bring freedom and joy. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Almighty Father, guard and defend the governments of Belgium and our home countries, along with all whom You have placed in authority over us. Give wisdom and charity to all who speak and act for the common good. Preserve our regard for human life, family and livelihood. Do not let fear or the concerns of this body and life keep us from the bread that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man alone gives us. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Compassionate Father, remember all who suffer in body or soul. Most especially do we implore Your mercy to stay Your hand and drive away plague and pestilence. Spare us and those for whom we pray: _____ and those whom we name in our hearts. [Pause] Comfort us in our trials, and enliven our faith in Christ, our only hope. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, Your Son instituted this most blessed Sacrament to eat and to drink, that what is promised in His testament may be truly received by His friends and heirs. Have mercy on all who are kept from Your table in extraordinary circumstances, and do not shut them out of Your Supper forever. Let the words of this testament echo in their ears and hearts and, in true faith, let them believe these words, trusting that they receive spiritually in faith exactly what Your Son has both won and declared: the forgiveness of sins. Stir up in us a desire to commune with our fellow Christians on Your true body and blood, and bring us soon to the table. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

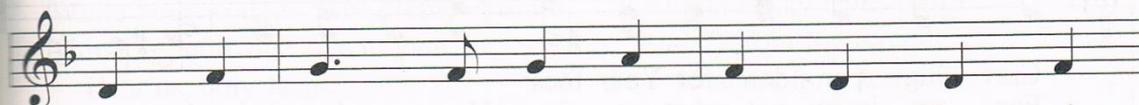
Heavenly Father, as Your Son took on the form of a slave and washed the feet of His disciples, so make us ready to serve our neighbours ahead of ourselves. Teach us to love each other and bear one another's burdens, and conform us to the image of Jesus. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious Father, Your Son's forehead was marked by bloody sweat as He contemplated what fulfilling Your will to save us involved. Nevertheless, He drank the cup of Your wrath and punishment down to its dregs, thus fulfilling Your will to save us with His holy and precious blood. In Him is salvation, life and resurrection from the dead. Grant this unto us all, O Father; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Hymns for Palm Sunday

Jesus, Greatest at the Table

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1 Je - sus, great - est at the ta - ble, The al -
 2 Mar - vel how their Lord and teach - er Gent - ly
 3 Je - sus took the role of ser - vant When up -
 4 Can we fath - om such deep mer - cy? Do we
 5 Je - sus gave to His dis - ci - ples A com -



might - y Son of Man, Laid a - side His out - er cloth - ing,
 taught them not to vie As He hum - bly knelt be - fore them,
 on that grue - some span, For all hu - man sin He suf - fered
 see what God has done? Who can grasp this great re - ver - sal:
 mand - ment that was new: "Show My love to one an - oth - er,



Poured some wa - ter in a pan; As the Twelve lay,
 Dust - y feet to wash and dry, By His ten - der
 As a vile and loath - some man; On the cross poured
 Love that gives His on - ly Son? Christ, the sin - less
 Do as I have done for you; All the world will



hushed in si - lence, He the ser - vant's task be - gan.
 touch ex - press - ing True com - pas - sion from on high.
 out like wa - ter To ful - fill the Fa - ther's plan.
 for the sin - ners, For the man - y dies the One.
 know you love Me As you love each oth - er too."

Hymn accompaniment: 511

Text: Stephen P. Starke, b. 1955

Tune: David McCarthy, b. 1931

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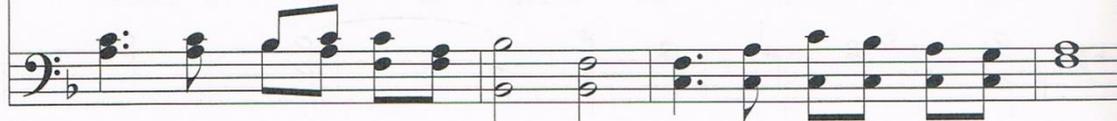
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1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
 2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
 3 Are we weak and heav - y lad - en, Cum - bered with a load of care?



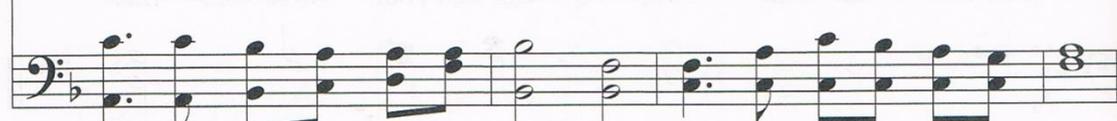
What a priv - i - lege to car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged— Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge— Take it to the Lord in prayer.



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; Oh, what need - less pain we bear—
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful Who will all our sor - rows share?
 Do thy friends de - spise, for - sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.



All be - cause we do not car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness— Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a sol - ace there.



Text: Joseph M. Scriven, 1819–86
 Tune: Charles C. Converse, 1832–1918; setting: *The Hymn Book*, 1971

CONVERSE
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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SCorW9r_Is

We are one in the Spirit (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGD_BFSf90c)

Strophen

Em



1. We are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord. We are
 2. We will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand. We will
 3. All ___ praise to the Fa - ther from ___ whom all things come, and all

Am Em



1. one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord. And we
 2. walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand. And to -
 3. praise to Christ Je - sus, his ___ on - ly ___ Son, and all

Am Em



1. pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored.
 2. geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land.
 3. praise to the Spi - rit who ___ makes ___ us ___ one.

Refrain

C Am D



And they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love, by our love, yes they'll

Em Am C Am Em



know ___ we are Chris - tians by our love.



This compilation comes from **All Lutheran Church of Brussel**, www.alcb.be a congregation of the Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in België, member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) represented by The Reverend Johannes Reitze-Landau, pastor@alcb.be for the "Lockdown" during SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, April 2020 the selection of the readings follows the German Protestant Series of the Biblical Readings for the Sundays and Church Feasts based on the "Ancient Church Series", last review in 2018 the Biblical passages are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) the scans of the hymns are taken from "Lutheran Service Book", Saint Louis 2006 the scan of the song is taken from "Come on and Sing 3", Groß Oesingen 2012.