



Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA
Maundy Thursday - Holy Communion
April 2, 2026

Introduction

This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world.

Departing worship in solemn silence, we anticipate the coming days.

PRELUDE

BELL

Please stand as you are able

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

P: Come as you are into this holy house.

C: We come in need of clean hearts, O God.

P: Our God restores us to the joy of salvation.

C: Wash us, and we shall be clean.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P: Friends in Christ, in this Lenten season we have heard our Lord's call to struggle against sin, death, and the devil—all that keeps us from loving God and each other. This is the struggle to which we were called at baptism.

Within the community of the church, God never wearies of forgiving sin and giving the peace of reconciliation. On this night let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor, and enter the celebration of the great Three Days reconciled with God and with one another.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Most merciful God,

C: We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN: “Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak” (ELW 676)

- 1 Lord, speak to us, that we may speak
in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let us seek
your straying children, lost and lone.**

- 2 Oh, lead us, Lord, that we may lead
the wand'ring and the wav'ring feet;
oh, feed us, Lord, that we may feed
your hung'ring ones with manna sweet.**

- 3 Oh, teach us, Lord, that we may teach
the precious truths which you impart;
and wing our words, that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart.**

- 4 Oh, fill us with your fullness, Lord,
until our very hearts o'erflow
in kindling thought and glowing word,
your love to tell, your praise to show.**

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt.

***GREETING**

P. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy

Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Holy God, source of all love,

C: On the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts, and give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

FIRST READING: EXODUS 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14

Israel remembered its deliverance from slavery in Egypt by celebrating the festival of Passover.

This festival featured the Passover lamb, whose blood was used as a sign to protect God's people from the threat of death. The early church described the Lord's supper using imagery from the Passover, especially in portraying Jesus as the lamb who delivers God's people from sin and death.

¹ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²“This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴ If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. [⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷ 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 lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. ¹⁰ You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn with fire.] ¹¹ This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. ¹² I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from human to animal, 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 live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I

strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴“This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.”

NEW TESTAMENT READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

In the bread and cup of the lord's supper, we experience intimate fellowship with Christ and with one another because it involves his body given for us and the new covenant in his blood. Faithful participation in this meal is a living proclamation of Christ's death until he comes in the future.

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup also, 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.

GOSPEL: JOHN 13:1-17, 31b-35

The story of the last supper in John's gospel recalls a remarkable event not mentioned elsewhere: Jesus performs the duty of a slave, washing the feet of his disciples and urging them to do the same for one other.

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 put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. 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 the table, 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.” ⁹Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” ¹⁰Jesus 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.” ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.” ¹²After 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? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not

greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. ³¹“Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” The word of the Lord..... **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN OF THE DAY: “O Master, Let Me Walk with You” (ELW 818)

- 1 O Master, let me walk with you
in lowly paths of service true;
tell me your secret; help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.**

- 2 Help me the slow of heart to move
by some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.**

- 3 Teach me your patience; share with me
a closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong,**

- 4 In hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broad'ning way,
in peace that only you can give;
with you, O Master, let me live.**

Text: Washington Gladden, 1836-1918, alt.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

L: On this night when Jesus gave us a new commandment to love one another, let us bring our prayers before the One whose love knows no bounds.

A brief silence.

L: Gracious host, you knelt to wash your disciples' feet. Cleanse us from pride and self-centeredness, and teach us to love one another as you have loved us. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

L: Creator God, the earth is yours and everything in it. Awaken us to care for all you have made and conserve the rich diversity of your good creation. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

L: God of the nations, guide the world's leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Where they wield power unjustly, confront them. Where they are indifferent to suffering, awaken their conscience. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

L: Compassionate One, embrace all who are lonely or in captivity, comfort the grieving, and relieve those in pain. Draw near to all who suffer especially Jerry, Cheryl, Chris, Bruce, Kristy, Ricky, Larry, Joan, Dennis, Lois, Wayne, Dale, Bev, Gary, Shirley, Joyce, Reilly, Allison, Becky, Kim, Cadence, and Sara. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

L: Blessed redeemer, we give you thanks for this community of faith, and for all who gather around your table of grace. Unite us in love for you and for one another. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

L: Eternal God, we praise you for the great cloud of witnesses who now rest from their labors. At the last, gather us with them at your heavenly banquet. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

L: We entrust these prayers to you, O God, confident that you will strengthen us by your Spirit to love one another as Christ has loved us. We ask this in Jesus' name.

C: **Amen.**

Please stand as you are able

***NICENE CREED: (ELW pg. 104)**

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,**

**true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

***PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please be seated

OFFERING

*We thank you for our gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help this
congregation, to continue our ministry together, and to make Christ known in
our communities and the world.*

OFFERING HYMN: “We Come to the Hungry Feast” (ELW 479)

**1 We come to the hungry feast
hungry for a word of peace.
To hungry hearts unsatisfied
the love of God is not denied.**

We come, we come to the hungry feast.

**2 We come to the hungry feast
hungry for a world released
from hungry folk of ev'ry kind,
the poor in body, poor in mind.
We come, we come to the hungry feast.**

**3 We come to the hungry feast
hungry that the hunger cease,
and knowing, though we eat our fill,
the hunger will stay with us; still
we come, we come to the hungry feast.**

Text: Ray Makeever, b. 1943
Text © 1982 Ray Makeever, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

P: Dear God,

C: **As Jesus humbly served his disciples, so we humbly offer our gifts in service to you, our neighbors, and all creation. Accept these offerings and make them holy, that they might help to bring your transforming love to bear upon a suffering world. Amen.**

Please stand as you are able

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

***GREAT THANKSGIVING: spoken (ELW pg. 206)**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift our hearts to the Lord**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

***THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION: “Remember Now My Children” sung**

**The night of his betrayal, our lord took bread.
He broke it and he blessed it, and then he said,
“my body given for you is what this means,
Remember now my children what you have seen.”**

And then he took the chalice, and raised it high.

**“my body broken for you, a full supply...
A covenant, a promise, a cleansing stream.
Remember now, my children, what you have seen.”**

**We share this food together, remembering christ;
We share a common treasure and know the price;
We share it without measure, a gift of love;
We share our life forever, with god above.**

***LORD’S PRAYER:** *spoken*

**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 trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom
and the power,
and the glory,
forever and ever
Amen.**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION:**

P: Our servant savior, Jesus Christ, calls you now to feast in his name. Come to the table where Jesus meets us and nourishes us in bread and wine for the restoration of all. This gift is for you. All is prepared.

Please be seated

COMMUNION

The acolytes, ushers, organist and those assisting with communion should come forward at this time and receive communion. Following the assistants, we celebrate Holy Communion around the altar. The ushers will direct you. We welcome all to the Lord’s Table where we experience the unity that God intends for all people.

COMMUNION HYMN: “Will You Let Me Be Your Servant” (ELW 659)

- 1 Will you let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you?
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant, too.**
- 2 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.**
- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the nighttime of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.**
- 4 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.**
- 5 Will you let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant, too.**

Text: Richard Gillard, b. 1953

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COMMUNION HYMN: “Now We Join in Celebration” (ELW 462)

- 1 Now we join in celebration
at our savior's invitation,
dressed no more in spirit somber,
clothed instead in joy and wonder;
for the lord of all existence,
putting off divine transcendence,
stoops again in love to meet us,
with his very life to feed us.**
- 2 Lord, as round this feast we gather,
fill our hearts with holy rapture!
for this bread and cup of blessing
are for us the sure possessing**

**of your loving deed on calv'ry,
of your living self, our vict'ry,
pledge of your unfailing presence,
foretaste here of heav'nly gladness.**

**3 Lord, we share in this communion
as one fam'ly of god's children,
reconciled through you, our brother,
one in you with god our father.
give us grace to live for others,
serving all, both friends and strangers,
seeking justice, love, and mercy
till you come in final glory.**

Text © joel w. Lundeen, admin. Augsburg fortress.

Please stand as you are able

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:**

P: Lord Jesus,

C: **In a wonderful sacrament you strengthen us with the saving power of your suffering, death, and resurrection. May this sacrament of your body and blood so work in us that the fruits of your redemption will show forth in the way we live, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Please be seated

MARK 14:32-42

P: ³²They went to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³He took with him Peter and James and John and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴And he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." ³⁵And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me, yet not what I want but what you want." ³⁷He came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?" ³⁸Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ³⁹And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

PSALM 22: *Congregation reads the bold*

¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

²**My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer; by night, but I find no rest.**

³Yet you are the Holy One, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

⁴**Our ancestors put their trust in you, they trusted, and you rescued them.**

⁵They cried out to you and were delivered; they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

⁶**But as for me, I am a worm and not human, scorned by all and despised by the people.**

⁷All who see me laugh me to scorn; they curl their lips; they shake their heads.

⁸**“Trust in the LORD; let the LORD deliver; let God rescue him if God so delights in him.”**

⁹Yet you are the one who drew me forth from the womb, and kept me safe on my mother’s breast.

¹⁰**I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; you were my God when I was still in my mother’s womb.**

¹¹Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

¹²**Many young bulls encircle me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me.**

¹³They open wide their jaws at me, like a slashing and roaring lion.

¹⁴**I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; my heart within my breast is melting wax.**

¹⁵My strength is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; and you have laid me in the dust of death.

¹⁶**Packs of dogs close me in, a band of evildoers circles round me; they pierce my hands and my feet.**

¹⁷I can count all my bones while they stare at me and gloat.

18 They divide my garments among them; for my clothing, they cast lots.

19 But you, O LORD, be not far away; O my help, hasten to my aid.

20 Deliver me from the sword, my life from the power of the dog.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth! From the horns of wild bulls you have rescued me

22 I will declare your name to my people; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you.

23 You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's line, give glory. Stand in awe of the LORD, all you offspring of Israel.

24 For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face hidden from them; but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.

25 From you comes my praise in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied. Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of nations shall bow before God.

28 For dominion belongs to the LORD, who rules over the nations.

29 Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

30 Their descendants shall serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.

31 They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

ALL DEPART IN SILENCE

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson

Chris & Bruce Carter

Kristy Fyhrie

Larry Sather

Joan Burquest

Dennis Rosenquist

Lois Rosenquist

Ricky Hart

Sara Skoglund

Cheryl Farber – mother of Melissa Schlosser

Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner
Dale Flemming – father of Laurie Ratajesak
Jerry Pogose – father of Chuck Pogose
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Bev Lorine – mother of Mandy Arvidson
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons
Reilly McCormick – friend of Esther congregation
Allison Dotzler – friend of Kathy Mittag
Cadence Smith – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Becky Yttrie – friend of the Townsends
Kim Casavan – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Wayne Lund – uncle of Mike Townsend
Family and Friends of: Sarah Pomeranz, David Anderson, Ron Myren, Katie
Jahnke, Dave Bendix, Megan Sheen, Colleen Burquest, Chad Way, and Doug Tvedt

Thank you to Kristi Pederson for your beautiful music this evening!

THIS WEEK AT ESTHER

Thursday, April 2nd – Maundy Thursday

7 pm – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend

Friday, April 3rd – Good Friday

7 pm – Worship

Sunday, April 5th – Easter Sunday

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

7 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend

8 am – Youth Breakfast

10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend

2 pm – Worship at St. William's