



*Algonquin and Central United
Methodist Churches*

Sunday, April 2, 2026

With Pastor Marty Johnston

Mission Statement:

**Connecting all people to God by building bridges
of caring, outreach, and acceptance.**

Algonquin and Central United Methodist
April 2, 2025- 6:30 PM
Pastor Marty Johnston
Liturgical Color: Purple or Scarlet
Maundy Thursday

PRELUDE “By His Strips We Are Healed” Moore

Tonight we enter one of the holiest nights of the Christian year.

This is the night of the upper room. The night of bread and cup.
The night of the basin and towel. The night Jesus gave His disciples a
new commandment: that they love one another as He had loved them.

The word *Maundy* comes from the Latin *mandatum*, meaning
commandment. Tonight we remember that commandment not simply
as an idea, but as a calling.

We come to remember a love that serves. A love that stoops. A love
that feeds. A love that remains faithful, even in the shadow of
betrayal and the approach of the cross.

Before this service is over, the beauty of the table will give way to the
silence of grief. The sanctuary will be stripped. The lights will dim.
We will leave in quiet, carrying the weight of this night with us.

So let us worship Christ, who loved His own to the very end.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: On this night, Christ gathered with His disciples.

People: We come to gather with Him.

Leader: On this night, Christ took a towel and washed their feet.

People: We come to learn His way of humble love.

Leader: On this night, Christ took bread and blessed it.

People: We come to receive the gift of grace.

Leader: On this night, Christ gave a new commandment: love one another.

People: We come to walk in His love.

Leader: Let us worship the One who loved His own to the very end.

People: Let us worship Christ, our Savior and Lord.

HYMN: "Go to Dark Gethsemane"

UMH 290

GO TO DARK

GETHSEMANE

*PASTOR'S OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, on the night of Your betrayal, You gathered with Your friends, You broke bread and shared the cup, You knelt in humble service, and You gave a commandment that still calls Your Church today.

Draw us now into this holy mystery. Quiet our minds. Open our hearts.

Teach us again what love looks like when it takes flesh and moves toward suffering for the sake of the world.

As we worship tonight, make us grateful at Your table, honest in our confession, tender toward one another, and ready to follow You in the hard and holy way of love.

We ask this in Your holy name. Amen.

Introduction to Exodus 12

Tonight's reading takes us all the way back to the first Passover in Exodus 12. God's people are still in Egypt, still under Pharaoh's power, but change is at the door. In this passage, God gives Israel a meal to share, a story to remember, and a sign of deliverance to trust.

This is not just about what God did once long ago. It is about how God teaches His people to remember salvation with their bodies, their homes, and their worship.

That is one reason this text is so often read on Maundy Thursday. On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gathered with His disciples for a Passover meal. So when we hear Exodus 12, we are hearing the deep background of the Last Supper. The bread, the shared meal, the remembering, the covenant, and the saving act of God all echo forward into that upper room—and ultimately to the cross. Tonight, as we listen, we remember that God has long been in the business of delivering His people, and that in Christ, that story comes to its fullest meaning.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS: Exodus 12:1-14

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, **2** “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. **3** Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. **4** And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. **5** Your lamb shall be without[a] blemish, a male [b]of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. **6** Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. **7** And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. **8** Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. **9** Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. **10** You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. **11** And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your

feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the Lord's Passover.

12 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the Lord.
13 Now 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 the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

HYMN "When I Survey the Wonderous Cross" (v 1-2) UMH 298

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

Introduction to John 13

Our Gospel reading brings us more deeply into the meaning of this holy night. In John 13, Jesus gathers with His disciples on the eve of the cross and does something unforgettable: He kneels before them, takes their feet into His hands, and washes them. In that quiet, humble act, He reveals the heart of God more clearly than many expected—a love that does not cling to status, but pours itself out for others.

That is why this passage is so fitting for Maundy Thursday. Tonight is not only about remembering what Jesus said at the table, but also what He showed through His actions. He gives His disciples—and us—a pattern for living: to love one another with humility, tenderness, and grace. As we hear this reading, we are invited not only to admire His example, but to let it search our hearts and shape our lives.

John 13:1–17

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

2 And supper being ended, the devil having 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 to God, **4** rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. **5** After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. **6** Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part 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, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." **11** For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you [b]know what I have done to you? **13** You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, 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 should do as I have done to you. **16** Most assuredly, I say to

you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Invitation to Respond

Tonight we remember that Jesus did not merely speak about love. He embodied it. He wrapped it around His waist like a towel. He poured it out like wine. He broke it open like bread.

And then He said, “As I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

As we respond tonight, we do so not as spectators, but as disciples. We come to confess. We come to be fed. We come to receive grace. And we come to be changed.

Prayer of Confession

Let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Merciful Savior, on this holy night You knelt before Your disciples and called them to love one another.

Yet we confess that our love is often shallow and selective.

We want the bread, but not the serving.

We want the comfort, but not the cost.

We want to be near You, but not too near the suffering of others.

We have failed to love as You have loved us.

We have clung to pride when You called us to humility.

We have chosen convenience over compassion, silence over courage, self-protection over self-giving love.

Forgive us, Lord Jesus. Wash us again. Feed us again.

Shape us again into a people who bear Your love into the world.

Hear now our silent prayers of confession.

Silent Prayer

Words of Assurance

Hear the good news:

Christ does not turn away those who come with open hands and honest hearts. The One who washed dusty feet, the One who broke the bread,

the One who gave Himself in love, still offers mercy, grace, and peace.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

All: Glory to God. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

From the beginning, You made us for communion with You and with one another. When we turned away, Your love remained steadfast.

You delivered Your people from bondage, fed them in the wilderness, and taught them to remember Your mighty acts through bread and cup. And so, with Your people on earth and all the company of heaven,

we praise Your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are You, and blessed is Your Son Jesus Christ. On the night before He gave Himself for us, He gathered with His disciples in an upper room. He took bread, gave thanks to You, broke the bread, gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, He took the cup, gave thanks to You, gave it to them, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink 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:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out Your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and 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 His blood.

By Your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory
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. Amen.

Breaking the Bread

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

Giving the Bread and Cup

(The congregation comes forward as music is played during Communion)

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God, we give You thanks for this holy mystery in which You have given Yourself to us.

You have fed us with grace. You have reminded us of love. You have drawn us again to the table of mercy.

Now send us into the night with the mind of Christ, the humility of Christ, and the love of Christ.

Make us willing to serve, ready to forgive, and faithful to remain with You even when the road leads toward the cross.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

HYMN: "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

UMH

301

JESUS, KEEP ME NEAR THE

CROSS

Introduction to Matthew 26

Our closing reading takes us from the table to the garden. In Matthew 26, Jesus enters Gethsemane, a place of prayer, anguish, and surrender. Here we see Him not only as teacher and servant, but as the Son who lays His heart before the Father in the darkest hour. The meal is over. The footsteps of betrayal are drawing near. The cross now stands just ahead.

That is why this passage is such a fitting ending for Maundy Thursday. It carries us into the sorrow and solemnity of the night. As the service closes in silence, this reading leaves us with the weight of Jesus' loneliness, His faithfulness, and His willing obedience. We do not rush past the garden. We remain there for a moment, watching and praying, as the shadow deepens.

Matthew 26:36-46

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." **37** And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. **38** Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? **41** Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." **43** And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. **45** Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. **46** Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Transition to the Stripping of the Altar

Tonight does not end in triumph. Not yet.

The table of fellowship gives way to the loneliness of Gethsemane. The prayers of the upper room give way to the shouts of accusation. The One who washed feet will soon be betrayed, arrested, and led away.

As the altar is stripped, we remember how Christ was abandoned, how dignity was taken from Him, how the shadows deepened around Him.

We watch in silence. We remain in silence. And we prepare our hearts for Good Friday.

Stripping of the Altar

As you prepare to depart in silence, go in remembrance of the love of Christ, who knelt to serve, who gave Himself in the bread and the cup, and who prayed in the garden with sorrowful heart.

Go in solemn watchfulness, keeping this night in your hearts, until we gather again at the foot of the cross.

(The congregation departs in silence.)