

Glebe-St. James United Church

Maundy Thursday

April 2, 2026

Movement One | Gathered By God

Call to Worship Recording of Birds chirping

<https://youtu.be/xyLmfuuyqSg?si=UzHyHd4kDB15gQdt>

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole

The birds announce God's glory! They remind us of the love of God we often don't pay attention to, but it is always there, singing for us. Welcome! Welcome to this place and to this community. Here we are reminded again that the love of God awaits you and that we are the expression of God's love for one another. We come to church to not forget this love. We are the love of God! When we feel we have nothing else, we can lean on the love of God.

As we gather today, we are called to listen to the new commandment by Jesus: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

To love is to listen – to listen to each other, to the signs of life everywhere. It is also to listen to the silence within us. Throughout this service we will learn how to sit in silence and listen. Listen to our hearts, listen to God's voice, listen to each other. Just as we listened to God's love through the birds, let us now listen to God's love through each other's voices.

Hymn As the Deer

VU 766, Psalm 42a

**1 As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you;
you alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.**

refrain

**You alone are my strength, my shield
to you alone may my spirit yield;
you alone are my heart's desire,
and I long to worship you.**

- 2 I want you more than gold or silver,
only you can satisfy;
you alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye. R**

- 3 You're my friend and you are my brother,
even though you are a king;
I love you more than any other,
so much more than anything! R**

Call to Healing

We come to worship feeling the burdens of life that only God knows. But we also come feeling weary, tired, sad, frustrated, angry, exhausted, spent, not knowing what to do, how to live our lives fully, or how to fix things. Our world is so confusing right now, and we are feeling lost. It is time to confess to God the things we carry and don't tell anybody, the things that we feel we can't speak, and the things we don't know how to speak.

Prayer for Healing

God of love,

We come to you feeling a thousand feelings. There is too much going on, and we don't know how to handle it all. We don't know how to put words to all that we are going through.

Hear our prayers.

God of love,

we come to you wanting total control over our lives, the stories we live, the people around us, and our own desires.

Hear our prayers.

God of love,
we also come to you feeling numb.

Hear our prayers.

God of love,
we come to you in silence.

Hear our prayers.

God of love,
we come to you because you are the source of life.

Hear our prayers.

Assurance of God's Love

Hear this good news: the God of love listens to you attentively. "As the eagle stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, as it spreads its wings, take them up and bears them aloft on its pinions: We are all listened to. We are forgiven.

Let us sit in silence. Perhaps in this time, you may contemplate the joy of being free.

Time of Silence

Hold silence for 3-5 minutes. Bell will chime to signal when silence is ended.

Movement Two | The betrayal and arrest of Jesus

Today is Maundy Thursday, the beginning of what in Christianity we call the Triduum, a period of three days that tells the story of the final days of Jesus' life.

On Maundy Thursday, we honour Jesus' last meal with his disciples and prepare for the three days ahead. And so, today, we will share Communion and wash each other's hands. On Good Friday, we remember Jesus' death. On Holy Saturday, the Saturday of Alleluia, we wait in the silence between death and resurrection. On Sunday, we celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Let us now turn to scripture, revisiting the events leading up to Jesus' final hours.

Reading Luke 22:47-53

While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as though I were a rebel? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness!”

Reflection on the Scripture

This text shows a very difficult moment when Jesus is betrayed and taken away. A time when shadows take over the life of Jesus and his disciples. We are living in a time when shadows have descended upon us. The whole world is in disarray. There are wars and genocides going on. Minorities are suffering the oppression of those in power. Immigrants are being demonized. Our democracy is being dismantled right in front of our eyes. The natural world is being consumed, and climate change is growing exponentially. Oh, we see injustices everywhere – even close to home. We are living in such a moment of violence and destruction that we want somebody, even Jesus, to tell us: “No more of this!” But we can’t wait for that; Jesus has already shown us the way. We have to learn how to stay present and stay strong! We need to lean on each other, sustain our communities, and keep going together! For such a time as this, we need beautiful things to heal our souls.

Music

Spiegel im Spiegel for Violin and Piano (1978)

Arvo Pärt

Time of Silence

Movement Three | Jesus washes the disciples' feet

Reading John 13:1-35

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. The devil had already decided that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus 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." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining close to his heart; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus

answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." Now no one knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival," or that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little 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.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Reflection on the Scripture

That night is very important because Jesus gave the disciples a very important symbol for the kin-dom of God: the towel! The towel is a revolutionary symbol of the Christian faith. It symbolizes service, care, and deep listening. Jesus took the place of a slave, washing the feet of the disciples. He said to them: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Therefore, the towel is like a sacramental object: it holds the grace of God. When we wash each other's feet, we restore people's dignity. When we dry each other's feet, we are listening to each other. Now we will move to washing each other's hands and we will do it in silence.

Hand Washing

Now we will move into a time of washing each other's hands. When you come forward, we encourage you to begin by looking at the person whose hands you will wash. Look into their eyes and see the image of God. Then, you may show the love of God by washing each other's hands.

Let us embody Jesus' new commandment, I invite you now to come forward and follow Jesus' example as we wash one another's hands, remembering the radical love of God that included even Judas.

Movement Four | Holy Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

God of love, you have listened to your people throughout history. You have given them light and shelter, warmth and nourishment. In Jesus, you have shown us how to love and care for each other, especially the most vulnerable. Today we want to listen to you as we listen to each other, especially the most vulnerable. Today we want to listen to you as we listen to each other.

Your glory shines everywhere and we are grateful!

We say, Glory! Glory! Glory!

Your ears are on the ground for those who have nobody!

We say, "Thank you, God! Thank you, God! Thank you, God!"

Your presence is never away from us, but moves within our Breathing!

We say, "Ahhh! Ahhh! Ahhh!"

The night before Jesus was arrested by the police of the empire, he washed the feet of his disciples and taught them to embody the symbol of the towel everywhere they went: offering care and love, being of service. As Jesus washed the disciples' feet, he listened to their words, sounds, and breathing.

God of silence and God of thunder, we listened to the birds, searching for your glory in the natural world. We listened to a son, searching for the beauty we humans can create. We listened to each other as we washed each other's hands, using the towel to restore and care for one another. We praise you for your steadfast love and your companionship. The world is so hard right now, but we have all we need! We have the towel, we have food, we have each other, we have your Spirit.

Because of your steadfast love, we have enough for everyone! And now we will feed each other with your food for us. In the name of the God of sustenance, there is enough bread for everyone here to eat.

Look friends! God has food for you and for me. As a sign of love, Jesus says “remember me” so no one goes hungry! Now look at the bread and for a brief time, contemplate all the ways we can work to make sure no one in this community will go hungry or unassisted.

Look friends, God has given us this cup to quench our thirst and find joy! As a sign of love, Jesus says, “remember me,” so no one goes without joy in their lives! Now look at the cup and for a brief time, contemplate all the ways we will strive to live God’s joy by spreading joy and laughter in this community!

Invitation to the Table

Friends, the food is before us. We have listened to God and to each other. Now we will feed each other as if God is feeding us. The world is too difficult, but the good news is: we are here for each other to share the love of a God who will never stop loving us.

We pray that God uses the gifts of this food to nourish our bodies, hearts, and souls. Bless this bread, bless these grapes, bless our people, bless our community, bless the world. Amen.

After the Meal

Hymn Shadows Gather, Deep and Cold

VU 134

**“Shadows gather, deep and cold;
Lamplight flickers, fades and fails.
Lord, you know what daybreak holds:
Thorns and beatings, cross and nails.
You will be denied, betrayed
When the rooster wakes the sun.
Yet you kneel alone and pray,
“Not my will, but thine be done.”**

**In the watches of the night;
In the hour when darkness reigns,
In the grief that has no light,
In the time of fear and pain,
Then we hold fast to your way,
To the victory you have won.
Jesus, teach us how to pray,
“Not my will, but thine be done.”**

Benediction

Today we have received a difficult commandment from Jesus Christ: to go out wash another's feet, to care for the vulnerable, and to offer our presence to our community. This is not easy, and alone we fail. But together, we will continue to serve each other and find strength. Together! Yes, together! May the love of God, the service of Jesus Christ, and the healing power of the Holy Spirit be upon us all now and forever. Amen.

Good Friday service: 10:30 am

Easter Sunday: 10:30 am

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