

## Maundy Thursday

Worship at home re-creating community by bringing to mind those we normally gather for worship with.

Good evening and welcome to my home. My name is Richard, I am a Methodist presbyter minister working with colleagues lay and ordained in Coventry and South Warwickshire. This table in the conservatory is where our family and friends gather for meals and enjoyment of being together. Tonight I hope you will, by faith, feel connected with your family in Jesus by pausing to bring to mind those you normally worship with. The person you normally sit beside and the part of the chapel where you feel 'at home'. You might even bring to mind those who are in the communion of saints as well as those who are here to share love, care and fellowship with.

On this table I have set out some reminders of meals shared and centre piece is a plate with bread and a cup with wine. Jesus' last supper with his disciples was a Passover meal when he gave new and significant meaning to sharing bread and wine. You might want to pause the video so that you can fetch a piece of bread and a cup of juice, or wine or water. Whatever you have available in these difficult times. You may want to have a bowl of water, soap and a towel for hand washing.

Welcome back. Central to Christian worship is 'remembering' – bringing events of the past into this moment and anticipating what is yet to come. The Passover typifies that emphasis and is part of what some call "salvation history". At its best our faith grows out of a very personal belief in Jesus and relationship with Him which opens our eyes to see other humans with the motivating love the He shows us. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month we remember that we are one with Christians in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela and closer to home those in Cumbria as well as own church and circuit.

First a prayer to get us into the right place mentally and spiritually:

Lord, in these difficult days of 'self isolation' we ask you help us to pause and give thanks for our

sense of belonging to your family, the church. We sorely miss quality time with those with whom we share love in our homes and churches and ask you to remind us of your love for us.

*'Jesus, by your wounded feet, direct our path.  
Jesus, by your nailed hands, move us to deeds of love.  
Jesus, by your pierced side, purify our desire.  
Jesus, by your broken heart, knit ours to yours'*  
Richard Crashaw (1613 – 1649)

We now sing a hymn: StF 459 Captain of Israel's host and guide

**Captain of Israel's host, and Guide  
of all who seek the land above,  
beneath thy shadow we abide,  
the cloud of thy protecting love;  
our strength, thy grace; our rule, thy word;  
our end, the glory of the Lord.**

**By thine unerring Spirit led,  
we shall not in the desert stray;  
we shall not full direction need,  
nor miss our providential way;  
as far from danger as from fear,  
while love, almighty love, is near.**

In the upper room Jesus surprised his followers by turning a tradition upside down. Instead of a servant washing the guests feet, Jesus took water and a towel and washed His disciples feet. Peter was initially outraged but when Jesus explained what he was doing he willingly allowed the master to serve followers. Washing had become ritualised by Jesus' time but basic hygiene is what laid behind it. Our current health threat reminds us how important hand washing is. I will now wash my hands before touching food. You might want to join me. Remember 20 seconds! Rather than sing happy birthday maybe sing or say Psalm 23....

*Richard washes his hands*

On the table I have things you would see at a meal. Jesus last supper before his death and

resurrection was a Passover meal in an upper room prepared for the occasion.

First Reading: A selection of verses taken from Exodus chapter 12

*The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Egypt: <sup>2</sup>“This month is to be the first month of the year for you. <sup>3</sup>Give these instructions to the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month each man must choose either a lamb or a young goat for his household. <sup>4</sup>If his family is too small to eat a whole animal, he and his next-door neighbour may share an animal, in proportion to the number of people and the amount that each person can eat. <sup>5</sup>You may choose either a sheep or a goat, but it must be a one-year-old male without any defects.*

*<sup>8</sup>That night the meat is to be roasted, and eaten with bitter herbs and with bread made without yeast. <sup>10</sup>You must not leave any of it until morning; if any is left over, it must be burned. <sup>11</sup>You are to eat it quickly, for you are to be dressed for travel, with your sandals on your feet and your walking stick in your hand. It is the Passover Festival to honour me, the LORD.*

Thank you. It's important to remember who was at Jesus' table. I think women were there though the gospels do not mention them. If not round the same table I am convinced that they were in the room and participating. I have always been impressed by Jesus including Judas who he knew would betray Him. Peter who would deny Him and all the men who would desert Him. It was and should be an inclusive meal.

We will sing a hymn: StF 249 Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love.

*Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,  
show us how to serve  
the neighbours we have from you.*

**Kneels at the feet of his friends,  
silently washes their feet,  
master who acts as a slave to them. (Refrain)**

**Neighbours are rich and poor,  
varied in colour and race,**

**neighbours are near and far away. (Refrain)**

**These are the ones we should serve,  
these are the ones we should love;  
all these are neighbours to us and you. (Refrain)**

**Loving puts us on our knees,  
serving as though we are slaves;  
this is the way we should live with you. (Refrain)**

**Kneel at the feet of our friends,  
silently washing their feet;  
this is the way we should live with you. (Refrain)**

Sadly none of us fully live up to the standard of humility, goodness and love lived by Jesus.

Let us pray:

**Lord, you are steadfast in your love  
And infinite in your mercy;  
You welcome sinners and invite them to be your  
guests.  
We confess our sins, trusting in you to forgive  
us.**

We have yielded to temptation and sinned:  
Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy.**

We have turned from our neighbours in their  
need:  
Christ have mercy  
**Christ have mercy**

We have resisted your word in our hearts:  
Lord have mercy.  
**Lord have mercy**

**May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us  
our sins, and keep us in eternal life. AMEN.**

One of the few good things to come out of the current world wide health crisis is a reminder of how interconnected we all are and how interdependent we all are. Early this week I was talking (from a distance!) to a self-employed garage mechanic still at work prioritising repairs and maintenance for key worker's cars. He was compiling as full a list as he could for parts to save delivery drivers journeys. He told me how

appreciative he is, and we all should be of the whole range of “key workers”. NHS and grocery staff are right in the front line as well as some service sector people such as plumbers, electricians, postal and banking – you will think of others. In a few minutes we will say a prayer for them.

Social isolation is a must in these challenging times but it is so contrary to our normal behaviour and mentally healthy communities. My wife and I know just how fortunate we are living in the country. We have a field behind us to walk round and a garden to tend and sit in. I have planted early potatoes this week and we have sown vegetable seeds in trays to plant out in May. Phones and internet keep us in touch with family and friends but we really miss being together. But at least there are two of us living here. My heart goes out to the many who live alone. I hope this service helps you feel connected.

Normally Passover is a family meal. Jesus treated his followers as family teaching them to address God as “our father” not “my father”. I thought it important this evening to share this time with you from my home to you in yours. We cannot be in the same room but we are sisters and brothers in the world wide faith family. But it was not a perfect family. There had been and there would be disputes and rivalries. Those later in that same room(?) would refuse to believe the women’s testimony on Easter morning. Thomas doubted his peers after he was absent and missed an encounter.

This meal is loaded with symbolism as Jesus chose to redefine parts of it – he would be seen as the Passover lamb by some as they reflected on this supper. He took the very familiar symbols of bread reminiscent of manna and, for his followers, the feeding miracles calling himself “the Bread of Life” (John 6:31). And the cup of wine consumed in honour of the prophets would be remembered as His blood shed. No doubt the diners remembered the miraculous provision at the Cana wedding feast.

Maybe you want to pause the video at this point and think of the symbolism in the meal and remember special moments when you have been gathered at a table sacramental or with family, or friends. But first I wish you

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**And also with you**

It was a real meal with real people in a room charged with emotion. Jesus knew it was the last supper before His passion, his followers feared it might be and had yet to realise the full significance.

He took the bread, gave thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying “Take, eat. This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me”. Join with me and all who are watching or reading in eating.

At the end of the meal he took the familiar Passover cup and gave it new meaning by saying: Drink from this all of you; this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it in remembrance of me.

Join with me with whatever cup you have that we me one with each other in Christ.

Let us pray;

**Lord, we thank you that sharing these signs and symbols link us with you and all who believe in all generations. Amen**

For our second reading we hear some verses from John 13.

These verses come at the end of The Lord’s Supper story

*<sup>31</sup> After Judas had left, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man’s glory is revealed; now God’s glory is revealed through him. <sup>33</sup> My children, I shall not be with you very much longer. You will look for me; but I tell you now what I told the Jewish authorities, ‘You cannot go where I am going.’ <sup>34</sup> And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.”*

*Prayers of intercession*

We take a few moments in silence as we remember those we cannot be with, those who are sick and those who care for them. We remember to those who have lost loved ones and others who have lost their way. May we all be called to share in the meal that Christ renewed as a gift to the whole world.

*SILENCE*

We say together the prayer Jesus gave us;

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

For our final hymn we offer praise to God: StF 351

In Christ alone my hope is found  
**In Christ alone my hope is found  
He is my light, my strength, my song  
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm  
What heights of love, what depths of peace  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease  
My Comforter, my All in All  
Here in the love of Christ I stand**

**In Christ alone! Who took on flesh  
Fullness of God in helpless babe  
This gift of love and righteousness  
Scorned by the ones He came to save  
Till on that cross as Jesus died  
The wrath of God was satisfied  
For every sin on Him was laid  
Here in the death of Christ I live**

**There in the ground His body lay  
Light of the world by darkness slain  
Then bursting forth in glorious Day  
Up from the grave He rose again  
And as He stands in victory**

**Sin's curse has lost its grip on me  
For I am His and He is mine  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ**

**No guilt in life, no fear in death  
This is the power of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath  
Jesus commands my destiny  
No power of hell, no scheme of man  
Can ever pluck me from His hand  
Till He returns or calls me home  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand**

Thank you for joining me this evening and to all who helped create and distribute this service.

We will end by saying the grace together:

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us always. Amen.**