

Maundy Thursday Foot Washing Liturgy

Maundy Thursday is named from the latin “mandatum,” meaning “command.” It’s this day in the Passion Story that Jesus gives us the words of institution during the last supper (Mark 14:22-24), chooses to take the role of a servant by washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-17), and gives them and us a new command, to love others, as he has loved them (John 13:34). The first Maundy Thursday was not spent in a large church. It was spent in an upper room. Instead of pews, it was a table on the floor. Instead of a congregation, it was Jesus and His disciples. Our hope is that during this time of home church you would be able to gather your family and take part in a Holy Week worship experience that will leave a lasting impression as you connect to this story in new and intimate ways.

Some notes before you begin: We know that this activity may stretch some outside of their comfort zone. This activity is not designed to cause tension among family members. If there are people who do not want to participate, gently encourage them, but do not force the activity. For those who are unable to get up and down easily, or are not comfortable working with feet, we also recommend this activity using hand washing instead of foot washing. Lastly, we know that not everyone lives with others, so we’ve included another option for this activity for you below.

Preparation for Yourself and Your Space

- Gather your supplies: A bowl of water, a washcloth, and a clean towel.
- Prepare your space: turn off devices, choose a chair that will be used for the footwashing, turn on background worship music, you can use our playlist found here on spotify: <https://tinyurl.com/tu5ucnt>

Foot Washing Liturgy for Families & Roommates

- Gather together around the foot washing station.
- **Opening Prayer** (read together): *“God of love, as we gather today in worship, as we remember this night, guide our hearts to hear your command of love. Humble our hearts, and open our eyes to see who we are called to serve and love in this world, starting tonight in our own homes.”*
- **Liturgy:** Have one person at a time take the positions of foot washer and of receiver (receiver should be seated in a chair, foot washer should be kneeling or sitting in front of them). While you cycle through the foot washing experience recite this liturgy (either splitting the family into groups A and B, or having one person be A and the remainder of the family as part B).

- **A: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should wash one another’s feet.”**
- B: “Lord you have given us an example in how to love and serve each other.”
- **A: “A new command I give you: Love one another.”**
- B: “As I have loved you, so must you love one another.”
- Once everyone has had an opportunity to take part in the foot washing, say the below closing prayer together.
- **Closing Prayer** (read together): *“Lord we have been washed clean in our baptism, and joined with you both in your death and resurrection. Guide us in joining with you in love, humility and service as we live out our calling as your children in this place. Amen.”*
- Once you have finished, gather back together and resume the Maundy Thursday worship video.

Foot Washing Activity for single person dwellings:

- **Opening Prayer:** *“God of love, as I come to you today in worship, as I remember this night, guide my heart to hear your command of love. Humble my heart, and open my eyes to see who I am called to serve and love in this world, starting today in my own community.”*
- **Read:** John 13:1-17, 34-35.
- Wash your hands in the bowl of water, focusing on how the water feels on your hands, reflecting on your baptism in Christ. Think about who God is calling you to serve in this season.
- **Closing Prayer:** *“Lord I have been washed clean in baptism, and joined with you both in your death and resurrection. Guide me in joining with you in love, humility and service as I live out my calling as your child in this place. Amen.”*
- Once you have finished, resume the Maundy Thursday worship video.