**Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ
Sayville, New York**

Readings

**Maundy Thursday Worship
April 13, 2017**

**8:00 PM**

**1. Meditation John 13:34**

Jesus said: “Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.”

**2. Call to Worship**

Leader: Christ set the example for his disciples:

**People: Wash the feet of your sisters; wash the feet of your brothers.**

Leader: Christ set an example for us, that we might also do as he has done.

**People: Let us love one another in Jesus’ name and the mighty God and Spirit who call us here, together, now.**

Leader: Come. Let us worship God.

**3. An Act of Hospitality and Service: The Washing of Hands John 13:3-5, 12-17**

Jesus knew that God had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, “Master, *you* wash *my* feet?”

Jesus said, “If you’ve had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you’re clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you’re clean. But not every one of you.” (He knew who was betraying him. That’s why he said, “Not every one of you.”) After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table.

Then he said, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Master,’ and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other’s feet. I’ve laid down a pattern for you. What I’ve done, you do. I’m only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn’t give orders to the employer. If you understand what I’m telling you, act like it—and live a blessed life.

**4. Agape Meal: The Sharing of the Bread and Cup Luke 22:7—22**

The Day of Unleavened Bread came, the day the Passover lamb was butchered. Jesus sent Peter and John off, saying, “Go prepare the Passover for us so we can eat it together.”

They said, “Where do you want us to do this?”

He said, “Keep your eyes open as you enter the city. A man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him home. Then speak with the owner of the house: The Teacher wants to know, ‘Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?’ He will show you a spacious second-story room, swept and ready. Prepare the meal there.”

They left, found everything just as he told them, and prepared the Passover meal.

When it was time, he sat down, all the apostles with him, and said, “You’ve no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It’s the last one I’ll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God.”

Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said, “Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I’ll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives.”

Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory.”

He did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you.

“Do you realize that the hand of the one who is betraying me is at this moment on this table? It’s true that the Son of Man is going down a path already marked out—no surprises there. But for the one who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man, this is doomsday.”

**5. The Shadow of Betrayal Luke 22:39—53**

Leaving there, he went, as he so often did, to Mount Olives. The disciples followed him. When they arrived at the place, he said, “Pray that you don’t give in to temptation.”

He pulled away from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, “Father, remove this cup from me. But please, not what I want. What do *you* want?” At once an angel from heaven was at his side, strengthening him. He prayed on all the harder. Sweat, wrung from him like drops of blood, poured off his face.

He got up from prayer, went back to the disciples and found them asleep, drugged by grief. He said, “What business do you have sleeping? Get up. Pray so you won’t give in to temptation.”

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than a crowd showed up, Judas, the one from the Twelve, in the lead. He came right up to Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said, “Judas, you would betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”

When those with him saw what was happening, they said, “Master, shall we fight?” One of them took a swing at the Chief Priest’s servant and cut off his right ear.

Jesus said, “Let them be. Even in this.” Then, touching the servant’s ear, he healed him.

Jesus spoke to those who had come—high priests, Temple police, religion leaders: “What is this, jumping me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I’ve been with you in the Temple and you’ve not so much as lifted a hand against me. But do it your way—it’s a dark night, a dark hour.”

**6. The Shadow of Denial Luke 22:54—65**

Arresting Jesus, they marched him off and took him into the house of the Chief Priest. Peter followed, but at a safe distance. In the middle of the courtyard some people had started a fire and were sitting around it, trying to keep warm. One of the serving maids sitting at the fire noticed him, then took a second look and said, “This man was with him!”

He denied it, “Woman, I don’t even know him.”

A short time later, someone else noticed him and said, “You’re one of them.”

But Peter denied it: “Man, I am not.”

About an hour later, someone else spoke up, really adamant: “He’s got to have been with him! He’s got ‘Galilean’ written all over him.”

Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about.” At that very moment, the last word hardly off his lips, a rooster crowed. Just then, the Master turned and looked at Peter. Peter remembered what the Master had said to him: “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” He went out and cried and cried and cried.

The men in charge of Jesus began poking fun at him, slapping him around. They put a blindfold on him and taunted, “Who hit you that time?” They were having a grand time with him.

**7. The Shadow of Condemnation Luke 22:66—71**

When it was morning, the religious leaders of the people and the high priests and scholars all got together and brought him before their High Council. They said, “Are you the Messiah?”

He answered, “If I said yes, you wouldn’t believe me. If I asked what you meant by your question, you wouldn’t answer me. So here’s what I have to say: From here on the Son of Man takes his place at God’s right hand, the place of power.”

They all said, “So you admit your claim to be the Son of God?”

“You’re the ones who keep saying it,” he said.

But they had made up their minds, “Why do we need any more evidence? We’ve all heard him as good as say it himself.”

**8. The Shadow of Accusation Luke 23:1-12**

Then they all took Jesus to Pilate and began to bring up charges against him. They said, “We found this man undermining our law and order, forbidding taxes to be paid to Caesar, setting himself up as Messiah-King.”

Pilate asked him, “Is this true that you’re ‘King of the Jews’?”

“Those are your words, not mine,” Jesus replied.

Pilate told the high priests and the accompanying crowd, “I find nothing wrong here. He seems harmless enough to me.”

But they were vehement. “He’s stirring up unrest among the people with his teaching, disturbing the peace everywhere, starting in Galilee and now all through Judea. He’s a dangerous man, endangering the peace.”

When Pilate heard that, he asked, “So, he’s a Galilean?” Realizing that he properly came under Herod’s jurisdiction, he passed the buck to Herod, who just happened to be in Jerusalem for a few days.

Herod was delighted when Jesus showed up. He had wanted for a long time to see him, he’d heard so much about him. He hoped to see him do something spectacular. He peppered him with questions. Jesus didn’t answer—not one word. But the high priests and religion scholars were right there, saying their piece, strident and shrill in their accusations.

Mightily offended, Herod turned on Jesus. His soldiers joined in, taunting and jeering. Then they dressed him up in an elaborate king costume and sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became thick as thieves. Always before they had kept their distance.

**9. The Shadow of Hatred Luke 23:13-25**

Then Pilate called in the high priests, rulers, and the others and said, “You brought this man to me as a disturber of the peace. I examined him in front of all of you and found there was nothing to your charge. And neither did Herod, for he has sent him back here with a clean bill of health. It’s clear that he’s done nothing wrong, let alone anything deserving death. I’m going to warn him to watch his step and let him go.”

At that, the crowd went wild: “Kill him! Give us Barabbas!” (Barabbas had been thrown in prison for starting a riot in the city and for murder.) Pilate still wanted to let Jesus go, and so spoke out again.

But they kept shouting back, “Crucify! Crucify him!”

He tried a third time. “But for what crime? I’ve found nothing in him deserving death. I’m going to warn him to watch his step and let him go.”

But they kept at it, a shouting mob, demanding that he be crucified. And finally they shouted him down. Pilate caved in and gave them what they wanted. He released the man thrown in prison for rioting and murder, and gave them Jesus to do whatever they wanted.

**10. The Shadow of Lament Luke 23:26-31**

As they led him off, they made Simon, a man from Cyrene who happened to be coming in from the countryside, carry the cross behind Jesus. A huge crowd of people followed, along with women weeping and carrying on. At one point Jesus turned to the women and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children. The time is coming when they’ll say, ‘Lucky the women who never conceived! Lucky the wombs that never gave birth! Lucky the breasts that never gave milk!’ Then they’ll start calling to the mountains, ‘Fall down on us!’ calling to the hills, ‘Cover us up!’ If people do these things to a live, green tree, can you imagine what they’ll do with deadwood?”

**11. The Shadow of the Cross Luke 23:32-43**

Two others, both criminals, were taken along with him for execution.

When they got to the place called Skull Hill, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left.

Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing.”

Dividing up his clothes, they threw dice for them. The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting, “He saved others. Let’s see him save himself! The Messiah of God—ha! The Chosen—ha!”

The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him, making a game of it. They toasted him with sour wine: “So you’re King of the Jews! Save yourself!”

Printed over him was a sign: this is the king of the jews.

One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him: “Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!”

But the other one made him shut up: “Have you no fear of God? You’re getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him—he did nothing to deserve this.”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom.”

He said, “Don’t worry, I will. Today you will join me in paradise.”

**12. The Shadow of Death Luke 23:44-49**

By now it was noon. The whole earth became dark, the darkness lasting three hours—a total blackout. The Temple curtain split right down the middle. Jesus called loudly, “Father, I place my life in your hands!” Then he breathed his last.

When the captain there saw what happened, he honored God: “This man was innocent! A good man, and innocent!”

All who had come around as spectators to watch the show, when they saw what actually happened, were overcome with grief and headed home. Those who knew Jesus well, along with the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a respectful distance and kept vigil.

**Words About This Maundy Thursday Service**

[Need to revise this…need some clarity]

Maundy Thursday is traditionally observed as the institution of the Lord’s Supper. This evening, the lessons are read to retell the last days of Jesus and to remember his words to his disciples, his suffering, and his crucifixion.

Following worship, we invite you to remain in the company of one another, continuing to share the evening. We suggest that at some time between this evening and the close of Good Friday that you find time to quietly reflect and meditate on meaning of these writings and these days.

You are invited to take this program with you.

Thank you for joining us.

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