



Westminster United Church

Maundy Thursday Service

7:00 pm, Thursday March 30, 2018

Rev. Sherri McConnell, Minister

Don Menzies, Organist

Nathan Poole, Director of Music in Worship

Nicki Kirton, Soloist

Prelude

Words of Welcome and Introduction

Call to Worship*

At this time near the spring equinox
when day and night balance,
we hold our breath.

Fear and love balance for a time around the table
of the liberation feast.

Bread, cup, singing, praying, water, towel:
the spirit of God is here.

Bring your hunger for a world made different.

Bring your fears to have them eased.

Bring your patience with the fears of others,
that the love commandment may tip the balance,
as we worship God together.

Opening Prayer

Hymn VU 348 O Love, How Deep Vs. 1, 3-4

Prayer of Confession (unison)**

We come here this evening, Loving God, bearing the heavy burdens of our own sense of connection with this sad story. As we scoff at Peter's declaration that he would never betray Jesus, we remember those times and places of our own denials – denials that contributed to the end of relationships or the death of dreams. As we knowingly watch Judas squirm in his seat about to betray Jesus, we face our own moments of betraying trust or confidence. As we shake our heads at how the disciples ran away in fear, we reluctantly acknowledge those times in our own lives when we were too afraid to live as Jesus calls us to live, or lacked the courage or conviction to stand with those who needed our support. We are painfully aware there are no innocent bystanders in the story of the crucifixion.....

Moment of silence for personal reflection

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

The Assurance***

It is true. God's love is more powerful than we can ever imagine, more outrageous than we might feel we deserve. Holy Week reminds us we are blessed and made new by God's amazing, fathomless, unconditional love with every breath we take.

Thanks be to God!

Reading of Scripture

Exodus 12: 1-4, 11-14

Mark 14: 12-26

John 13: 1-17; 31b-35

Handwashing and Blessing

In remembrance of Jesus' loving act of washing the feet of his disciples, all who wish are invited to come forward to receive the gift of having hands washed and blessed.

Solo (VU 593) Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love
given by Nicki Kirton

by Tom Colvin

Remembering That Final Evening Together – A Liturgy

Footsteps could be heard running through the streets towards the high priest Caiaphas's lodging, but few homes heard them as the bitter herbs, radish, and celery of their Passover meals were tasted and enjoyed.

Soldiers' sandals sounded as they marched down the Jerusalem alleyways out of the city, in the way they always did – in intimidating lines of ten soldiers across, but this time with a purpose that was different. This time, they were marching to a Garden as the evening turned to night.

But no one's attention was drawn to them as roast lamb was cut with its slices of garlic for their Passover feast.

Earlier that evening, at another table, in an upper room, a betrayer was accused.

Earlier that evening, a Holy Man and his followers had faced one another down – and denial and blame and mistrust were shouted around the

room. But only two of them knew who was weak enough and fearful enough to do the deed of betrayal.... and only one of them would quietly leave the room very shortly.....carrying with him the burden of his own fears, and the toll of betrayal and broken friendship.

He would walk the cobbled street under the moonlight, passing candle lit windows, smelling wafts of roast lamb, turmeric and coriander as he quietly moved towards a secret meeting place among the trees and shadows.

Meanwhile, back in the upper room, around the table, the voices fell silent as the Teacher took some bread and, with a face drawn and tired, ripped it, and said, “This is my body that will be broken for you. Take and eat it, all of you.” The disciples looked at each other, with foreheads furrowed.

Meanwhile, back in the secret meeting place, twigs snapped under the trees as footsteps went scurrying towards the home of the high priest. Then the door to the Priest’ home slowly opened to betrayal, allowed betrayal to enter, and then quickly slammed shut against the night.

Back in the upper room, the remaining friends each ate a piece of the bread, chewing slowly, with many silent questions in their minds. And then their Teacher then took the cup of wine from their meal and, said, while staring at into it, “This is my blood, the sign of the new covenant. When you drink of it, remember me, all of you.”

As the whispers of betrayal were beginning to be heard around the city, and the religious leaders moved by stealth to meet with the one who had turned against his friend, the bewildered cluster in the upper room did drink.

And then Jesus said to those still with him, again in a tired voice, “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.” And then he gave them a new commandment, one final teaching, saying,

*“Love one another as I have loved you.
By this everyone will know
that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.”*

If only they had listened, maybe they would have heard what was happening in the streets and all around them. If only they had listened, maybe they would have heard what their teacher was saying to them. But their ears did not hear and their hearts did not understand. The world was turning against them and there was only One in the room who heard it, and knew what it would mean.

Organ Interlude

Service of Communion

Words of Introduction

*Prayer of Great Thanksgiving*****

The Holy One is here.

God’s Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up in love.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to offer thanks and praise.

*It is indeed good and right
to give you thanks and praise.....*

*... Therefore, with these and all our ancestors in the faith,
Both named and unnamed,
Who through the ages and all over the world
Have borne courageous witness
To the hope that you inspire within,
We sing your praise, saying:*

**Holy, holy, holy God,
Power of life and love!
Heaven and earth are full of your glory!
Hosanna through the ages!
Blessed is the One who comes to bring your
justice to earth!**

*On the last night he spent with his friends,
Jesus shared a meal with his friends... ..*

...remember me.”

*By remembering Jesus in this way now,
We claim our common heritage
As we proclaim the great mystery of our faith:*
**We remember Jesus’ integrity unto death.
We remember the Easter hope of resurrection.
We remember the promise of peace and compassion and justice.**

*Send, O God, your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here,
that we and these gifts, empowered by your Spirit,
may become signs of your peace
to one another and to all the peoples of the earth.
Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
All glory is yours now and forever.*

Holy God, hear us now as we say together the words Jesus taught us to pray, saying -

**Our father/mother, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Breaking and Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Prayer after Communion

Eternal and Gracious god, though we live in a world of need,
Here we have tasted your goodness and hungered for a world more just.

Though afflicted by brokenness and division,
here we have heard your call to be a people of healing community.

Though daily we touch our limits,
here we have received the fullness of your grace.

Send us forth, O God,
in faith, in hope, and in love.

Amen.

HYMN VU 147 What Wondrous Love Is This

Closing Words and Sending Forth

Postlude



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