

**The First Baptist Church of Fitchburg**  
1400 John Fitch Highway Fitchburg, MA 01420 Phone# 978-345-5622  
Maundy Thursday Service - April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

*(A modern adaption of an Anabaptist Communion Liturgy adapted from a service by Rev. Dr. Frank Armstrong in 2015)*

**“One of the greatest witnesses of the church to the outside world is a strong, vibrant community life”**  
(Schultz, CFL, pg. 56).

**Gathering together of one mind and spirit:**

**Pastor:** Come! Weak-kneed and tongue-tied, come. All you who are feeling hassled and harried come. All you with shattered dreams and punctured hopes, come. For here is the water of life and the springs of joy.

**People:** We come as we are.

**Pastor:** Gather round; All you with lonely hearts and worried brows; All you fragile vessels bearing the hurt of the world, all you carrying the wounds of rejection, all you knowing the ambushes of life, come. For here is the love of a community gathered around a table.

**People:** We come with our needs.

**Pastor:** Come. Here is a banquet for your soul, a vision of peace and harmony, a feast of hope and healing. Come.

**People:** We come to be fed.

**Pastor:** Come close; gather in. God is here. Christ is present. Hear the whispers of grace. Feel the warmth of love. Know the healing of wounds. Sense the hope and embrace the joy.

**People:** We come together. God’s love makes us one.

**Hymn:** “*If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee*” by Georg Neumark (1621–1681). <https://youtu.be/OHAhiEwMc8I>

*1. If thou but suffer God to guide thee,  
and hope in God through all thy ways,  
God will give strength, whate'er betide thee,  
and bear thee through the evil days.  
Who trusts in God's unchanging love  
builds on the rock that naught can move.*

*2. Only be still, and wait God's leisure  
in cheerful hope, with heart content  
to take whate'er thy Maker's pleasure  
and all-discerning love hath sent;  
we know our inmost wants are known,  
for we are called to be God's own.*

*3. Sing, pray, and keep God's ways unswerving;  
so do thine own part faithfully,  
and trust God's word; though undeserving,  
thou yet shalt find it true for thee.  
God never yet forsook at need  
the soul that trusted God indeed.*

**The Pledge Of Love:** (Original *Pledge of Love* by Balthasar Hubmaier from the Middle 1600’s)

"Brothers and sisters, if you will to love God before, in, and above all things, in the power of his holy and living Word, serve him alone, honor and adore him and henceforth sanctify his name, subject your carnal and sinful will to his divine will which he has worked in you by his living Word, in life and death, then let each say individually:

**People: I will.**

"If you will love your neighbor and serve him with deeds of brotherly love, lay down and shed for him your life and blood, be obedient to father, mother and all authorities according to the will of God, and this in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down and shed his flesh and blood for us, then let each say individually:

**People: I will.**

"If you will practice fraternal admonition toward your brothers and sisters, make peace and unity among them, and reconcile yourselves with all those whom you have offended, abandon all envy, hate, and evil will toward everyone, willingly cease all action and behavior which causes harm, disadvantage, or offense to your neighbor; if you will also love your enemies and do good to them, and exclude according to the Rule of Christ all those who refuse to do so, then let each say individually:

**People: I will.**

"If you desire publicly to confirm before the church this pledge of love which you have now made, through the Lord's Supper of Christ, by eating bread and drinking wine, and to testify to it in the power of the living memorial of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ our Lord, then let each say individually:

**People: I desire it in the power of God.**

"So eat and drink with one another in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May God himself accord to all of us the power and the strength that we may worthily carry it out and bring it to its saving conclusion according to his divine will. May the Lord impart his grace."

**All: "Amen"**

#### **Sharing of the Word: *I Corinthians 11:23-26* (NKJV)**

*"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."*

*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."*

#### **Gathering Round The Table**

**Hymn: "Let us Break Bread Together"**

BREAKING AND SHARING: May we recite the mighty acts of God in creation and redemption, with special thanksgiving for this season, with the commemoration of the bread and the cup of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ" until He come". Lord we invite Your Holy Spirit, praying that what we do in obedience to Christ may be united to His perfect sacrifice and that we may be made one in Him and receive the benefits of His passion and victory" (Adapt. From *OBOP*, pg. 379).

#### **Offering the Bread and the Cup:**

On the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me." (*1 Cor. 11:24, Ceb*)

Let us lift up our bread, in remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Take, Eat.

He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me." (1 Cor. 11:25, Ceb)

As we lift up the cup, in remembrance of the new covenant we have received, through the shed blood of Christ, let us rejoice in the redemption provided to each of us and desire in our hearts to show ourselves as obedient to the will of God for our lives.

Take, Drink.

***Therefore we proclaim Jesus until His return.***

### **Great Prayer Of Thanksgiving:**

Almighty God, of infinite power and wisdom, we come before You seeking wisdom in this confusing time. May you remove our hindrances, fears and discouragement that we may continue on in faith, sharing Your Gospel with joy to those who are perishing without the knowledge of Your saving grace.

We ask that you will keep us from sin, and sickness; that no evil may befall us as we seek to keep from corruption in our lives. Lord let the labor of our hands and minds be fruitful so as to glorify You and be a blessing to others, as a witness of Your continuing Mercy and Grace.

Strengthen us Father, for the times ahead, that we may dwell in the safety of Your shadow, filled with the knowledge of Your Word, and the power of Your Spirit, as we offer all that You have provided us; our bodies, our souls, our talents, our characters, our successes, our families, our work, our present and our futures, at the feet of Your Son Jesus, who has given us Salvation and bridged the gap that our sin had caused between ourselves and You, our Loving Creator.

### **Dismissal Into the World, our Mission Field, as Laborers in Christ.**

May the Lord bless and keep you until His return. I look forward to the day when we will all be united again.

***Go in peace.***