

First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



Our Purpose Statement

It is our purpose to joyfully celebrate Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives; to respect one another in love, actively seeking and embracing those who wish to grow with us in faith, hope and love; to follow the example of Jesus, as we minister to the spiritual and physical needs of the community.

Through service we flourish.



The First Congregational Church in Worcester

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Maundy Thursday

April 6, 2023

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

Beloved People of God, we are gathered to recall the story of the night in which Jesus Christ was betrayed. Are you prepared to come to the table of Jesus Christ, whose life was poured out for you?

By the grace of God, we are.

Are you able to watch with Jesus at prayer in the garden, indeed, to struggle yourselves to be in unity with God's will? Will you follow Jesus even into the night of betrayal?

By the grace of God, we are and we will.

Then let us remember and worship, even in this hour of darkness!

By the grace of God, we enter this night.

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

Our Father, 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 that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*Opening Hymn - #158

Go To Dark Gethsemane

Go to dark Gethsemane, ye that feel the tempter's power
Your Redeemer's conflict see, watch with Him one bitter hour
Turn not from His griefs away; learn of Jesus Christ to pray

See Him at the judgment hall, beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned
O the wormwood and the gall! O the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; learn of Christ to bear the cross

Calvary's mournful mountain climb; there, adoring at His feet
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete
"It is finished!" hear Him cry; learn of Jesus Christ to die

Gospel Reading

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Meditation

Do Good

Rev. Josh Fitterling

*Hymn - #209

Abide With Me

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide; the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see. O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour. What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and strength can be? Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless, ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes. Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee; in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Sharing the Lord's Supper

As we gather in the shadow of the cross, we again remember many things.

We remember Gethsemane. We remember how Judas betrayed him.

We remember how Peter denied him. We remember the mocking, the beating, the scourging.

We remember his pierced hands and feet. We remember his thirst.

And tonight, we remember the Lord's Supper.

So let us come to the table of communion, not because we must, but because we may.

Let us sit together in humility and thanksgiving rather than in pride or possessiveness.

Let us confess, not that we are righteous, but that we love Jesus Christ and desire to remember him.

Let us come, not that we are strong, but that we are in need; not that we have any claim on Christ, but that he invites us to receive his grace and experience his presence.

Let us worthily partake and remember.

On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus gathered with his friends to share a meal. After supper, Jesus took bread; gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take this and eat; this is my body which is given for you, do this in remembrance of me."

Taking a cup, again he gave thanks, shared the cup with his disciples and said: "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Drink from this, all of you, this is poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins."

Let us pray.

Loving God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be for us the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. Pour out your Spirit on us, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed through his love, serving and reconciling all people to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Through the broken bread, we share in the body of Christ.

Through the cup which is poured out for us, we share in the blood of Christ.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

(Communion will be shared by intinction. You are invited to come forward, receive the bread, dip it into the cup of grape juice, and eat. If you prefer to receive a blessing instead, simply come forward with your hands over your heart. If you are unable to come forward, communion will be brought to you.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All gracious and merciful God, we give you thanks that you have fed us and nourished us this night at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith as we continue to journey this Holy Week, increase our love for one another, and send us always into the world with courage, seeking your peace, through the power and guidance of your Holy Spirit. Bless us as we journey on into this night. Amen.

*Hymn- #163

Ah Holy Jesus

Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended, that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted!

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee!
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.

For me, kind Jesus, was thy incarnation, thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation;
thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion, for my salvation.

Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee, I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee,
think on thy pity and thy love unswerving, not my deserving.

The Service of Tenebrae

Shadow of Betrayal	Matthew 26:20-25	Shadow of Desertion	Matthew 26:31-35
Agony of the Soul	Luke 22:39-44	Unshared Vigil	Mark 14:32-41
"Father, the hour is come"	John 17:1-6	"That they may all be one"	John 17:15-22
Arrest in the Garden	John 18:1-5	Shadow of the Cross	Mark 15:16-20
	The Word was God	John 1:1-4, 14,10,12,3:19	

Final Prayer

Extinguishing of the Christ Candle

As the sound of thunder fills our sanctuary, the communion table will be stripped. You are invited to sit in the darkness and meditate on the passion of Christ. When you are ready, please leave the sanctuary in reverence and silence.

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*\*Please stand in body, or in spirit.*

*While we go forth in the darkness, remember that our service has not ended, but continues tomorrow with Good Friday and Easter morning!*

**Good Friday Service - Tomorrow, April 7<sup>th</sup> - 7pm**

Join us as we remember the crucifixion of Jesus and the darkness which fell over the land.

**Easter Sunday - April 9<sup>th</sup> - 10am**

Come celebrate the light which bursts forth from the darkness! We will rejoice in the power of love as we proclaim, "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"