

Liturgy for Maundy Thursday 2024

(based on Mark's Gospel Chapter 14¹)

1. **The Plot Thickens** (Mark 14:1-2)

It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus^[a] by stealth and kill him; ² for they said, 'Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.'

Opening Prayer:

In a week where passions run high – confusion, anger, fear, doubt ...

Help us, travelling Christ, to go with you on the road into the unknown night.

Give to us the Spirit of adventure so that where there is confusion,

Patterns may emerge.

Where there is anger,

Love may spring up anew.

Where there is fear,

Calm may prevail.

Where there is doubt,

We may find faith again. Amen.²

2. **In Remembrance of Her – an act of service and devotion** (Mark 14: 3-9)

³ While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴ But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her. ⁶ But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the good news^[d] is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

Prayer of Thanks:

Generous God,

We thank you for the example of an unknown woman's devotion, with her jar of perfume – we will remember her extravagant love.

We thank you for the example of service we see in Jesus as he washes the feet of his friends – we will remember his loving act.

¹ All Scripture Readings taken from NRSVA translation

² From 'Go Out Into the Darkness' by Janet Lees. Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK, 2020. P.2

Help not to condemn that which we do not understand, instead help us serve you and your world with the same love and generosity as this unknown woman.
Amen.³

3. **Betrayal** (Mark 14: 10-11, 18b-21, 42-45)

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. ¹¹ When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him...

...Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.' ¹⁹ They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, 'Surely, not I?' ²⁰ He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. ²¹ For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.'

⁴² Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.' ⁴³ Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' ⁴⁵ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him.

Prayer of confession:

Forgiving God,

We confess there are many times we have betrayed you, each other and ourselves.

We have put our benefit before the needs of others.

We have acted without thought of the consequences.

We have not trusted in your love for us.

We have pointed the finger at another or simply been cruel.

We have denied even knowing you.

It appears that integrity has just become a word for us.

We seek your forgiveness.

May the words of Jesus – Father, forgive them – ring in our ears and our hearts.

Amen.⁴

4. **The Last Supper** (Mark 14:15-18a, 22-25)

¹⁵ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' ¹⁶ So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

¹⁷ When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸ And when they had taken their places and were eating...

³ Prayer by Rev Cheryl Williams, March 2024.

⁴ Prayer by Rev Cheryl Williams, April 2021.

Prayer of Preparation

Lord Jesus Christ,

Because you broke bread with the poor,

you were looked on with contempt.

Because you broke bread with the sinful and outcast,

you were looked on as ungodly.

Because you broke bread with the joyful,

you were called a glutton.

Because you broke bread in an upstairs room,

you sealed your acceptance of the way of the cross.

Because you broke bread on the road to Emmaus,

you made scales fall from the disciples' eyes.

Because you broke bread and shared it,

we will do so too, and ask your blessing.⁵

... ²² While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' ²³ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴ He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

Communion is Shared

5. **Deserting and Denying** (Mark 14: 26-31)

²⁶ When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' ²⁹ Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' ³⁰ Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' ³¹ But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same.

Prayer:

O God,

So often we run and scatter because of fear.

So often we are silent when we should speak up.

Like Peter, we deny you and your love for us despite our previous promises.

Help us in the night-time of our fear.

Overcome our shadow sides with your love and light. Amen.⁶

6. **Gethsemane – stay awake** (Mark 14:32-41)

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' ³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴ And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to

⁵ Prayer from 'Bread of Tomorrow', ed. Janet Morley, p. 93

⁶ Prayer by Rev Cheryl Williams, March 2024.

death; remain here, and keep awake.’ ³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ He said, ‘Abba,^[a] Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’ ³⁷ He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸ Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;^[a] the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ ³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰ And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹ He came a third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Prayers for the World:

God of the universe,

Jesus asked his friends to watch and pray.

Tonight, we pray for the world:

We pray for peace in places of conflict – especially in Gaza, Iran, Myanmar and Ukraine.

We pray for sustenance where hunger and thirst prevail – especially in Gaza.

We pray for hope where people are disillusioned, anxious or afraid.

We pray for solace in the midst of pain and sadness.

We pray for integrity in our political and social systems.

For ourselves we pray for courage for the facing of this hour

In Jesus name we pray and will continue to watch and pray. Amen.⁷

7. **Arrested** (Mark 14:46:49)

⁴⁶ Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. ⁴⁷ But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? ⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.’

Prayer for Peace:

Prince of peace, you resisted violence. As we remember all victims and survivors of violence through war, domestic violence we pray for peace in your world.

Lead us from death to life,

From falsehood to truth.

Lead us from despair to hope,

From fear to trust.

Lead us from hate to love,

From war to peace.

Let peace fill our lives,

⁷ Prayer by Rev Cheryl Williams, April 2024.

Our world, our universe.

Peace. Peace. Peace.⁸

8. Fleeing (Mark 14:50-52)

⁵⁰ All of them deserted him and fled.

⁵¹ A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

Final Prayer:

Go out into the darkness:

Go out into the world.

Go out with Jesus Christ.

Into the night.⁹

⁸ Prayer *Universal Prayer for Peace* from the Iona Community

⁹ From *'Go Out Into the Darkness'* by Janet Lees. Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK, 2020. P.8