



Thursday, April 2, 2026
Maundy Thursday

 BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org

This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world. Departing worship in solemn silence, we anticipate the coming days.

A COMMUNION DINNER

WELCOME AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

GATHERING

We gather in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: John 13:1-15, 34-35

¹Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord — and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set

you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

The word of the Lord.

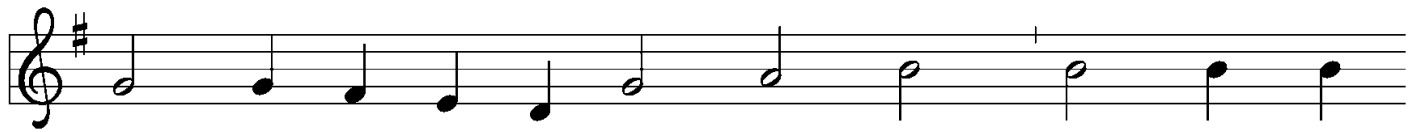
Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

HYMN

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

ELW 885



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all



crea - tures here be - low; praise God a - bove, ye



heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

THE MEAL IS SHARED

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Where Love Is Found

Text based on 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, 13

Tune based on Latin Chant *Ubi Carita*

Music by Dan Schutte

Members of Chancel Choir

THANKSGIVING FOR THE MEAL

We thank you, Creator and Sustainer of all, for the food we have eaten and the fellowship we have shared.

May it nourish and strengthen us for your service.

Let this meal be for us a sign of your abundant grace in Jesus Christ,
who feeds our spirits to fullness and fills our heart with his love.

As we now partake of your Son's bodily presence through the Communion meal,
unite us with him in a community of love and service, infused with your Spirit and sharing his eternal life with all.

JESUS SHARES A FINAL MEAL - MATTHEW 26:26-29

Hear the words of the holy gospel, according to Matthew.

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never drink again of this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who
sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

DISTRIBUTION

Gluten-free bread and grape juice are available at the altar. We will serve communion to each other around the table this evening. As the bread is passed to you, take a piece before passing the basket to the next person and saying “the body of Christ given for you” or similar words. When the small pitcher is handed to you, pour wine into your communion glass before passing it to the person next to you and saying “the blood of Christ shed for you” or similar words. While communion is shared, we sing.

HYMN

Eat This Bread

ELW 472

Eat This Bread *Jesus Christ, Bread of Life*

Refrain

“Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and nev - er be hun - gry.
OR Je - sus Christ, bread of life, those who come to you will not hun - ger.

Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.”
Je - sus Christ, ris - en Lord, those who trust in you will not thirst.

TABLE BLESSING

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Lord God, in a wonderful Sacrament you have left us a memorial of your suffering and death, and sustain us for service with your very presence. May this Sacrament of your body and blood so work in us that the way we live will proclaim the redemption you have brought; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

PROCESSION TO THE SANCTUARY AND STRIPPING THE ALTAR

We begin stripping the altar by first clearing the table from our shared meal, following the instructions given. We sing as this takes place and as we process into the sanctuary.

HYMN	Stay with Me	ELW 348
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Stay with Me

Stay with me, re - main here with me, watch and

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style with quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are placed below the notes.

pray. Watch and pray.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody from the first system. It also consists of two staves in the same key signature and clefs. The melody concludes with a final cadence. The lyrics are placed below the notes.

THE ALTAR IS STRIPPED

Stripping the altar is symbolic of Jesus' humiliation at the hands of Roman soldiers.

As Jesus died on the cross, he spoke the words of Psalm 22, a lament.

We contemplate the words of this ancient text and the action of stripping away.

The service ends when the Psalm is completed. You may remain in quiet meditation as long as you like. The Benediction is omitted to keep a sense of continuation with tomorrow's Good Friday liturgy. Please leave in silence.

BLC Pastors

The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

Chrisanne Gates

Kris Kerr

Nancy Price

Amy Walter-Peterson

Hans Walter-Peterson

David Wideman

Lent and Holy Week at Bethlehem

Holy Week and Easter

During Holy Week we follow Jesus' journey from his triumphal entry into the city to a desolate cross to an empty tomb.

Check out the weekly Star and Ready for Worship emails for more information about Holy Week worship.

Good Friday, April 3 at 7 pm (in person and livestream) – **Tenebrae Service**

Easter Sunday, April 5 at 8:55 am (in person and livestream) **and**

11 am (in person only)

Easter Breakfast served 9:45 – 10:45 am

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Dirty, but Not Defined by Dirt

When Jesus approaches Peter to wash his feet, Peter's reply is, "You will never wash my feet." Many will feel the same tonight. We struggle to confess that we have dirty feet, that we live in dusty homes and have messy lives. We would like people to see us with our shoes and socks on, neatly wrapped and presented to the world. In private though, we are painfully aware of our shortcomings. We can feel like miserable failures, hopeless cases, lost causes. We are none of the above. We are creatures of earth, living in earthy bodies and inspired with the breath of God. We are dirt, but we are not our dirtiness.

When Jesus knelt at Peter's feet to wash them, it was Peter who was affronted by the seeming impropriety of the situation. But to Jesus, who sees with God's eyes, it was a chance to wash the feet of a loved one—not unlike the feeling you might get touching the feet of an infant. We are children of God and, like any loving parent, God simply wants to give us a bath. Through the eyes of love God looks at us the way we might choose to look at our church, at our lives, at our feet—as things redeemable.

Our feet—stinky with decay, wrinkled with age, ugly from infection, bruised by labor, signs of our march toward death—our feet are not scary to the one who has bound us up into a new body, a body of life, a body we entered into through baptismal waters. God, who is not afraid to draw close to the decaying portions of our world, sees our feet and loves them, and we are given the new commandment to love one another as we are loved.