

A Service of Song, Word, & Table
“Nourish”
April 17, 2025

* Please rise in body or spirit.

WELCOME

Passover, or *Pesach* (pronounced PAY-sokh) in Hebrew, commemorates the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt and their ultimate exodus to freedom. This story of redemption from slavery is the “master story” of the Jewish people that has shaped its values of religious freedom, caring for the stranger, and standing up to oppressive tyrants.

The story harks back 3,400 years to the family of Jacob, who fled their home in Canaan, or ancient Israel, in the face of a terrible famine. They made their way to Egypt where they were welcomed, and grew in population and in acceptance. But when a new pharaoh came to power in Egypt, he feared the growing Israelite population and enslaved them, oppression that continued for the next 210 years.

Moses, an Israelite baby who survived Pharaoh’s decree of Jewish infanticide and ended up growing up “half-Egyptian” in the palace itself, heard God’s call at a burning bush out in the desert to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. He negotiated with Pharaoh for the Israelite’s freedom. This led to a famous show-down between God, who demandd freedom for the Israelites, and Pharaoh, who symbolizes the hard-hearted forces of tyranny and enslavement. God breaks Pharaoh’s spirit by inflicting Egypt with 10 plagues.

During the night of the final plague, God “passed over” and protected the houses of the Israelites, giving the festival its name. Finally, with the Egyptian army chasing after them, God (symbolized by Moses’ outstretched arm) split the waters of the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to cross the sea on dry land and escape. Since they ran out of Egypt in a hurry, the Israelite slaves did not have time for their plain bread to leaven and rise, giving Passover it’s most famous symbol, matzah, which is Hebrew for “unleavened bread.”

Today the Jewish community holds the messages of this story more dear than any literal, biblical “facts.” Our perspectives have evolved but reading this episode as a historical metaphor can still lead to deep spiritual reflection. I hope you will find your own connection with the Exodus story during Passover!

PRELUDE For We Are So Preciously Loved Julian of Norwich/Carlotta Ferrari
Lore Alán, tenor & Marshal Hollingsworth, baritone

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

Just as the disciples gathered in a room with Jesus, so we gather in this place, ready to watch, listen, and pray on this Holy Thursday.

We come to remember and encounter Love Incarnate, who sets us free.

As Jesus kneels to wash the dirt from the disciples' feet, we join in their surprise; we've never seen a Savior who acts like a servant.

We come to remember and encounter Love Incarnate, who sets us free.

As Jesus calls the disciples to wash one another's feet, we receive with them a new commandment: to love one another as Jesus has loved us.

We come to remember and encounter Love Incarnate, who sets us free.

Beloved, come. Come to kneel as a servant, come to the table with your fellow disciples, and come to worship Love Incarnate, who sets you free.

We come to remember and to worship God who has loosed our bonds and set us free to love one another as God has loved us.

*** HYMN** The Servant Song (vs 1,2,3,6) 2222 TFWS

*** A READING FROM THE GOSPEL** John 13:1-17, 31b-35

This is the Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God!

MUSICAL RESPONSE Karitas Habundat Hildegard of Bingen/Carlotta Ferrari
Amanda Porter and Karah Ingraham, soprano

Translation: Love abounds in all,
From the depths exalted and excelling over every star,
and most beloved of all,
for to the highest King the kiss of peace she gave.

MESSAGE "Re-Membering our Community "

MUSICAL RESPONSE Love, Come Down Karen Marrolli
Amanda Porter, Karah Ingraham, Karen Marrolli, Lore Alán, & Marshal Hollingsworth

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Merciful, Mighty, Matchless One,
You have loved us to the end.
There was betrayal in our heart,
Yet you loved us anyway.
You knew we would deny you,
Yet you loved us anyway.
In our selfishness, we balked, we objected, we disapproved,
Yet you loved us anyway.
We sought to point the finger at anyone other than ourselves,
Yet you loved us anyway.
Forgive us, we pray.
Renew our healing convictions,
Restore our call to service,
Rekindle our flame for justice,
That we may once again become your people of peace.

Offer silent prayers of confession.

Receive the good news.

The One who created us has called us.

There is now no condemnation,

No shame at the table of God.

Only the love that makes us whole again.

Only the love we offer others.

In God's name, we are forgiven.

In God's name, we have been set free. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

REGATHERING HYMN They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love (vs 1) 2223
TFWS

INVITATION TO OFFERING & CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Merciful God, whose love knows no bounds, we bring our offerings as a reflection of your boundless grace. Throughout these Lenten days, remind us of the humility of Christ, who knelt to serve and commanded us to love one another. May these gifts be used to lift the lowly, to bind the broken, and to carry your love across every barrier. Empower us to stand together in service and love and to follow the path of Christ, who leads us to freedom and a new home in you. In his holy name, we pray. Amen.

OFFERTORY Ah, Holy Jesus arr. Dan Cummings Dr. Dan Cummings,
piano

*** DOXOLOGY** Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow 95 UMH

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (communion responses by Karen Marrolli)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

In the beginning, you hovered over the waters and
poured out your love over the formless void,
turning chaos into life.

You formed us in your image
and provided for us from the fruit of creation.

When we turned away, and our love failed,

Your steadfast love never failed.
You set the Israelites free and brought them through the waters.
When they doubted and complained,
You provided manna from heaven and water from a rock.
Even when we betrayed and broke covenant with you,
You never abandoned us.
And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ.
When we turned away from you and abused your gifts,
you gave us in him your crowning gift.
Divine Love poured out in human form,
Christ fed the hungry, healed the sick,
ate with the scorned and forgotten,
and taught us how to love by incarnating Love among us.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection,
you gave birth to your church,
delivered us from enslavement to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.
Pastor/layperson takes the towel and raises the pitcher of water while the celebrant says:
On the evening in which he gave himself up for us,
Jesus rose from the supper table and took a pitcher of water.
He poured it into a basin, knelt down, and began to wash the disciples' feet.
When he was finished, he sat down and spoke with the disciples, saying,
"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."
SHIFT TO COMMUNION TABLE

That same night, Jesus took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."
When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

As Christ, Divine Love poured out for us,
came to show us how to love one another,
pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood and called to
love one another as Christ loves us.

For it is by this love that everyone will know
We are his disciples.

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

LORD'S PRAYER

AMEN RESPONSE: Amen, amen. Hosanna in the highest.

MUSIC AT COMMUNION

INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

*** SENDING HYMN** Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross 301 UMH

*** BENEDICTION**

“Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem.” (Luke 9:51)

**Our Lord is on a journey,
and the way leads through opposition and misunderstanding.**

Jesus invites us to follow him.

**This journey leads through the shadows of betrayal,
the night of Gethsemane,
the afternoon darkness of Golgotha.**

“Then Jesus told his disciples,

‘If any want to become my followers,
let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For those who want to save their life will lose it,
and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” (Matt. 16:24-25)

Our Lord is on a journey.

**May we have the grace to follow this Christ,
and to give to him our very lives.
For in giving away our lives, we find them,
and in dying we live.**

POSTLUDE
Cummings, piano

Go to Dark Gethsamane

arr. Dan Cummings

Dr. Dan