

Maundy Thursday

April 2, 2026 7:00 p.m.



“Lamb”

Francisco Zurbarán, 1638

Maundy Thursday marks the beginning of the climax of Holy Week, as Jesus shares his last meal with his friends before he is betrayed. The word “maundy” comes from the Latin word *mandatum* [novum], the first word of the Latin phrase meaning, “A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus says this in John’s Gospel shortly after he washes the disciples’ feet. Maundy Thursday is also the night that Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper with the words, “Do this in remembrance of me.” At the conclusion of the service, all worship articles and adornments are removed from the altar and chancel. This stripping symbolizes both the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples, and the stripping of Jesus by the soldiers before his crucifixion.

The congregation is asked to remain silent and honor the gathering as a time of prayer and meditation.

In respect, please silence cell phones.

GATHERING

OPENING VOLUNTARY

“Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ” BWV 639 (I Call to You, Lord Jesus Christ) Johann Sebastian Bach

Please stand, as able, at the sound of the chime.

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Return to the Lord, God of all mercies, for a feast of love has been prepared for his own.

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall be continually in my mouth.

O taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Happy are they who take refuge in God.

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt God's name together.

† HYMN 616 “Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast”

PROCLAMATION

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND PARDON

God of grace, you have come to us in our Savior Christ; but we have reviled him, denied him, even betrayed him with a kiss. We have not faithfully followed his commandment to love one another as he has loved us. Through this bread and wine reveal your love, which is constant in the face of our infidelity. Restore us by the power of your Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord,

Lord, Lord, have mer - cy.

Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ. But Christ suffered and died for us, was raised from the dead and ascended on high for us, and continues to intercede for us. Believe the good news: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Thanks be to God. Amen.

† PASSING THE PEACE *As a forgiven people, we greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

Be seated.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God our Father, your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end and drank the cup of suffering prepared for him: may we who share his table watch with him through the night of suffering and be faithful. Amen.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON I Corinthians 11:23-26

Paul recounts how “on the night he was betrayed” Jesus instituted the supper by which “as often as (we) eat the bread and drink the cup...we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand, as able.

† GOSPEL LESSON John 13:1-17; 31b-35

Knowing that God “has given all things into his hands” Jesus humbles himself by washing the feet of his disciples. He then gives them a new commandment: “Love one another, just as I have loved you.”

Now 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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” Jesus 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.” For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.” After 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? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you

also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Be seated.

MEDITATION

Pattye Hewitt

ANTHEM “Ubi Caritas”

Ola Gjeilo

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exultemus, et in ipso iucundemur.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.

Where charity and love are, God is there.
Christ’s love has gathered us into one.
Let us rejoice and be glad in him.
Let us fear and let us love the living God.
And may we love each other with a sincere heart.

—Latin hymn, c. 9th cent.

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

In times of suffering and in times of joy,
we lift our hearts to God.
Here and now, in this place and time,
we lift our hearts to God.
We praise the One who stoops low to carry the cross
and lifts us up in love.

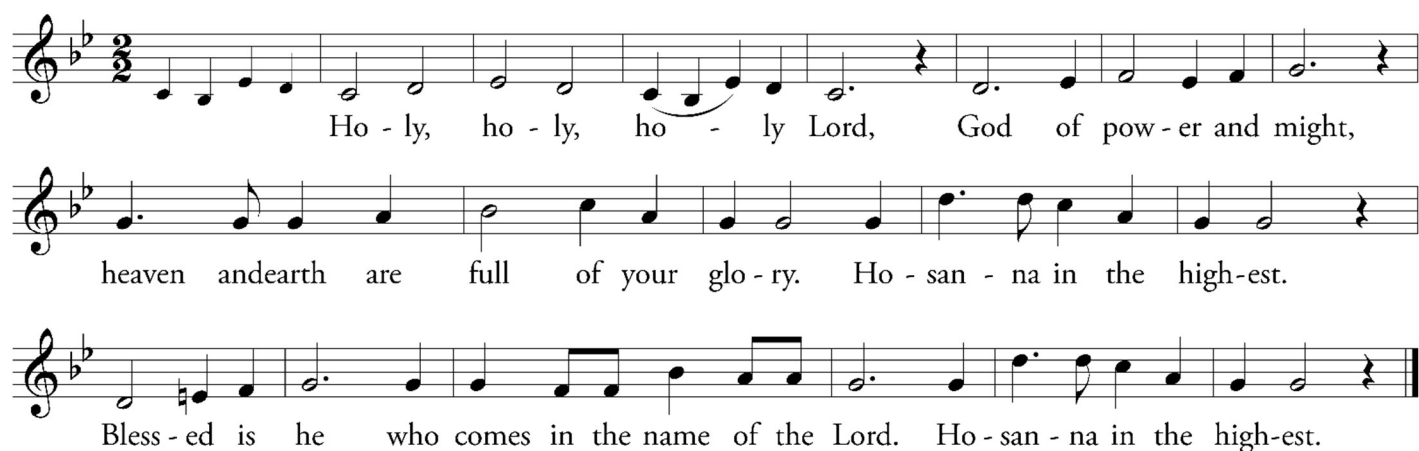
God of desert sands and lush oases; God of the narrow gate and the spacious place; God of the painful path and the joyful dance; God of the looming cross and resurrection hope: we worship and adore you.

We praise you for Jesus our brother, who fresh from the waters of baptism, was tested in the wilderness. In fasting, prayer and faithfulness, he discerned a vocation of self-giving and service that all might know your love.

We praise you that with a heart filled with compassion, he fixed his eyes upon you and set his face to Jerusalem, willing to give us his life in obedience and trust.

We praise you that by his love and faithfulness, barren land flows with milk and honey, rocks become springs withered ground becomes fertile soil, where the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations.

We praise you that through your Holy Spirit you journey with us through the shadows, and lead us to the light. So we lift our hearts in praise to you:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Jesus who had no bread in the wilderness, at the table, on the night of his arrest, took bread, gave thanks to you, and broke it, saying: “This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

He took a cup of wine, gave thanks to you, and offered it to his disciples, saying: “Drink from it all of you, for this is the blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Then darkness fell. Friends betrayed. The power of evil wreaked terror.

So as we remember that Jesus offered himself for us, we offer ourselves to God, travelling through the darkness into hope and light.

Send your Holy Spirit on these gifts and this gathering to strengthen and feed us with the body and blood of Christ, and may all glory and praise be yours, forever and ever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

O Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the world: have mer-cy on
us. O Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the world: have mer-cy on
us. O Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the world: grant us
peace, grant us peace.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The body of Christ, given for our wholeness.
The blood of Christ, poured out in generous love.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

All who love Christ are invited to receive communion. Unfermented grape juice is used. The choir will be served first, followed by the congregation starting from the back of the sanctuary.

THE CONTINUING NIGHT as proclaimed in the Gospel of Matthew

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' "But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even if all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

The choir sings as the first candle is extinguished.

'Tis midnight, and on Olive's brow the star is dimmed that lately shone; 'Tis midnight, in the garden now the suffering Savior prays alone. 'Tis midnight, and from all removed, the Savior wrestles lone with fears; e'en that disciple whom he loved heeds not his Master's grief and tears.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

The choir sings as the second candle is extinguished.

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.

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a rebel? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

The choir sings as the pulpit parament is removed. A black veil is draped over the altar cross.

O Love divine, what hast thou done! The immortal God hath died for me! The Father's co-eternal Son bore all my sins upon the tree. The immortal God for me hath died: My Lord, my Love, is crucified! Is crucified for me and you, to bring us rebels back to God. Believe the record true, ye all are bought with Jesus' blood. Pardon for all flows from his side: My Lord, my Love, is crucified!

Silence | Depart in silence and be mindful of those wishing to linger in prayer.

Communion Servers	Glennell Cottrill, Judy Foust, Charles Spencer, and Peggy Wooley
Liturgists	Reverend Brady Whitton, <i>Senior Pastor</i> Cherri Johnson, <i>Director of Spiritual Formation, Emerita</i>
Musicians	The Chancel Choir Lamar Drummonds, <i>Director of Music and Worship</i> Holden Miller, <i>Associate Director of Music and Organist</i>
Preaching	Pattye Hewitt, <i>Executive Director of Adult Education, Hospitality, and Care</i>
Soundboard	Jim Hewitt

The journey to the cross continues tomorrow.

Good Friday—April 3

The 12:00 p.m. sanctuary service will commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary. The evening service is an opportunity to worship with Wesley United Methodist Church (544 Government Street, 70802) at 6:30 p.m.

Easter Vigil—April 4

This gathering at 6:30 p.m. will explore the mystery of the light of Christ around a campfire. Email Katie Davis at kdavis@firstmethodist.org for the location.

Easter Sunday—April 5

The 6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service led by the youth at Rhorer Plaza behind City Hall (230 St Louis Street).

The 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. Services in the sanctuary. The Chancel Choir, Festival Brass, and Organ, will provide music at both services.

The 9:45 a.m. America Street Service will celebrate Christ's resurrection through word and music led by the America Street Band.

Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, marks the centennial of the completion and dedication of the Baton Rouge First United Methodist Church sanctuary. In celebration we will receive a special offering to launch the Century Fund. This new fund is part of our 100th year in the sanctuary and will help First UMC provide lasting support to local nonprofit partners in Baton Rouge. Thank you for praying about your Easter gift.