



**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
CANTON CENTER, CT**



**Service of Communion and Tenebrae for
Maundy Thursday**

March 29, 2018 ~ 7:30 p.m.

This evening's service for Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper and the crucifixion of Christ, through the sacrament of Communion (The Lord's Supper) and the Service of Tenebrae.

The word "Maundy" comes from the Latin *mandatum*, meaning "commandment," recalling Jesus' words to his disciples, "This I command you, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:17)

"Tenebrae," also an old Latin word, means "darkness" or "shadows." During the Service of Tenebrae, candles are gradually extinguished as the story of the passion of Christ is read from Scripture. The increasing darkness symbolizes the betrayal and flight of the disciples. The moments of total darkness are symbolic of Jesus' death and time in the tomb.

The relighting of the Christ candle at the very end of the service symbolizes the hope of the coming Easter dawn and is a reminder of the light of Christ "that shines in the darkness and that no darkness overcomes." (John 1)

~ ORDER OF WORSHIP ~

All who are able, please stand. **Bold denotes unison voice.*

PRELUDE *“Holy Love”*

Pepper Choplin

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come tonight, in the week called holy...

to sit at Jesus’ table and journey to his cross.

We come tonight as a community of disciples...

to keep company with the one we follow.

We come tonight to sit in darkness...

to remember the light that endures even there.

We come tonight to remember what is holy in this week...

love that stays present, love that suffers, love that rises.

And so we turn our eyes, our hearts, and our spirits to Christ...

Bread for the world,

Vine for the branches,

Lamb for the end of time.

***HYMN** *“Christ at Table There with Friends”*

(see insert)

READING John 14 and 15, selected verses

PRAYERS OF RESTORATION

“...That you love one another, this is why I have called you,” Jesus says,
“this is the work I give you.”

Like Jesus’ first disciples, we who are now his body
betray the life to which he calls us.

Like the first disciples, we too fear and deny and flee.

**We fail to stay awake for the demands of love,
for the work of justice and mercy.**

Create in us clean hearts, O God.

Put a new and right spirit within us.

Let us now offer to God in this silence the confessions of our hearts:

(a silence is kept)

For the wounds of the world that have been our doing,
for all we have done and left undone
that has brought pain and brokenness to God's beloved creation,

**We ask forgiveness from our God and from each other.
Create in us clean hearts, O God.
Put a new and right spirit within us.**

(a silence is kept)

Hear the promise of the gospel, that anyone in Christ
is a new creation altogether .
In God's grace we are held,
in God's love we are redeemed,
in God's mercy we are healed, forgiven, and made new.

Thanks be to God.

SUNG RESPONSE *"Bless the Lord, My Soul"*

Sung repetitively and meditatively, in Taize style.

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a tempo marking of quarter note = 76 and a dynamic marking of *p*. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system's lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name." The second system's lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life." The score includes guitar chords: Dm, G, Dm, Bb, C, F, A in the first system, and Dm, G, Dm, Bb, C, Dm in the second system. The music is written in a Taize style, characterized by long, sustained notes and a meditative feel.

THE SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

This evening we will receive Communion by coming forward for intinction (dipping the bread into the cup and consuming immediately), beginning with the choir. Gluten-free bread is available. If you wish to be served in the pew, please raise your hand so a Deacon may bring the elements to you.

Invitation

In the city of Jerusalem, the Holy City, it is Passover;

and Jesus is there.

The people of Israel have once more come together to worship God, to mark their calling, to remember by the light of ancient story that they are the people of God;

and Jesus is there, with his disciples.

They come to a table in an upper room. And there, on the eve of Calvary, they share the Passover, the last one they will ever have with him... the last one, with a new instruction:

“Do this in remembrance of me,” he says, “in remembrance of me.”

From now on, mark your calling by the sharing of this meal, and whenever you do, I will be there with you.”

Broken, poured out. Given and shared. A new sacrifice, an ancient truth:

God saves. “Do this in remembrance of me.”

Beloved of God, let us come to this table tonight
in remembrance and in trust,
to receive the saving love of God.

Prayer of Preparation and the Lord's Prayer

... This we ask in Christ's name and spirit, as we also say together:

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 debts As we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Hymn *“Were You There?”*

First Stanza, sung by all:

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

Second Stanza, sung by choir.

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree...

Third stanza, sung by Jim Todd

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb...

EXTINGUISHING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

SILENT MEDITATION IN THE DARKNESS

RELIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

DEPARTURE IN SILENCE

Deacon readers

Bev Sealand, Dave Heyer, Karen Needham,
Charlie Hammond, Darryl Haberern, Andy Kerr

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

The Rev. Dr. Brenda M. Pelc-Faszczka, Pastor

