



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CANTON CENTER, CT

Service of Communion and Tenebrae March 28, 2024 ~ 7:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday is also known as Holy Thursday, Covenant Thursday and Thursday of Mysteries. It commemorates the Last Supper with Jesus and His disciples. All four Gospels describe the Last Supper with specific reference to Jesus instituting a new covenant in regards to his body and blood as a living sacrifice for our sins. The word “Maundy” comes from the Latin *Mandatum*, meaning “commandment.” In John 15:12-14 we hear Jesus say to His disciples, *this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.*

This evening's Maundy Thursday service observes two central events:

The Sacrament of Communion and The Service of Tenebrae

The Sacrament of Communion or The Lord's Supper commemorates the night where Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples. We will reenact this final meal with Communion where Jesus tells His disciples, *Do this in remembrance of Me* and establishes the foundation for Christian fellowship and love.

The Service of Tenebrae is a solemn ancient service during Holy Week. Tenebrae, an old Latin word means “darkness” or “shadows”.

Following each scripture reading by our Deacons, a candle is extinguished as we continue with the passion story until the Christ Candle is extinguished. The growing darkness symbolizes the disciples' despair and abandonment of Jesus. Moments of complete darkness reflect his death and entombment. A final reading from scripture is read, relighting the Christ Candle symbolizing the hope of Easter morn, as we read from John 1:5, *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.*

~ ORDER OF WORSHIP ~

PRELUDE

The One

Craig Courtney

CALL TO WORSHIP

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

We bring to God our worship and praise.

Our trust is in the mercy and love of God.

We experience God's grace and goodness day by day.

Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another."

As Jesus loved us, we also should love one another.

HYMN

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

*O sacred head now wounded with grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns thine only crown,
How pale Thou art with anguish with sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish which once was bright as morn!*

*What thou, my Lord, hast suffered was all for sinners' gain;
Oh mine was the transgression but thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior 'Tis I deserve thy place;
Look on me with thy favor vouch safe to me thy grace.*

*What language shall I borrow to thank thee, dearest Friend;
For this, thy dying sorrow thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to thee!*

GATHERING PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Loving God, how quick we are to claim Your grace and forgiveness, and yet quickly forget to forgive others. Open our hearts and minds to all that Jesus said and did that special night. Remind us that Jesus took bread and wine and gave these common physical elements a new meaning and spiritual significance. Remind us that Jesus took a basin and towel to demonstrate humble service washing the disciple's feet. He expected the disciples and all of us to follow in His humility. Remind us that we are called and commanded to love one another as Jesus has loved us. Bless us, Gracious God, as we continue our journey with Jesus to the cross, Amen.

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.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION



ANTHEM

Remember Me
Senior Choir



Deborah Govenor

THE SERVICE OF TENEBRAE

Matthew 26:17-30

First candle is extinguished

Matthew 26:31-46

Second candle is extinguished

Matthew 26:47-68

Third candle is extinguished

Matthew 26:69-75, 27:1-10

Fourth candle is extinguished

Matthew 27:11-31

Fifth candle is extinguished

Matthew 27:32-44

Sixth candle is extinguished

Matthew 27:45-50

Seventh candle is extinguished
(Christ candle is extinguished)

Matthew 27:51-54

Christ candle is relit

Hymn (First verse: Congregation; Second verse: Choir; Third verse: Jim Todd, solo)

Were You There?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

**SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION,
REFLECTION & MEDITATION IN THE DARKNESS**

Rest in God's peace as you release concerns, doubts, fears and failures to an all-forgiving and loving God.

DEPART IN SILENCE

~A tremendous thank you to our Diaconate~

Deacons:

Tim Lundgren, Cora Mutch, Phil Doyle
Bev Sealand, Kristin Oswald, Eric Herbek