

The background features a stylized design with three fish in grey and black outlines. The fish are arranged in a triangular pattern, with one at the top, one on the left, and one at the bottom. Red geometric shapes, including lines and a circle, are interspersed with the fish. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

ATHENS FIRST
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

Maundy Thursday

MARCH 24, 2016
7:00 p.m.

The Worship of God

Please Note

The service begins
in Hancock Hall.

THE WELCOME

Betsy Butler

THE PRAYER

Loving God, on the night Jesus was betrayed, He proclaimed to us a new commandment: "love one another as I have loved you." Bind us in that love and make us servants of each other. We gather in awesome wonder to behold your loving gift of Jesus Christ, who, coming to bring the world to wholeness, offered Himself to be broken by it. Yet by his death we live and know your unbreakable love. As we gather to remember his gift of fellowship at the table, and to recall our failings of devotion, pierce our hearts with a conviction of our own betrayals, reassure us of your abiding presence, and transform us by the Spirit of Christ, who teaches us to pray...

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

*THE HYMN

"Where Charity and Love Prevail" | ST. ANNE

**Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ's love, by love are we thus bound.**

**With grateful joy and holy fear God's charity we learn;
Let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in return.**

**Forgive we now each other's faults as we our faults confess;
And let us love each other well in Christian holiness.**

**Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
Be God's the glory that we seek, be ours God's holy peace.**

**Let us recall that in our midst dwells God's begotten Son;
As members of his body joined, we are in Christ made one.**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Martha Aenchbacher and Chuck Hodges

This night we return to an upper room when Jesus gathered with his disciples to celebrate the Passover and to share a meal of remembrance. Let us join with those first disciples and the church of all times and places to know Christ anew in the breaking of the bread and receiving of the cup.

The Prayer of Confession

In this Lenten season we have heard our Lord's call to struggle against sin and death—all that keeps us from loving God and each other. This is the struggle to which we are called at baptism. Within the community of the church, God never wearies of forgiving sin and giving the peace of reconciliation. On this night, let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor:

Eternal God, whose covenant with us is never broken: We confess that we have failed to fulfill your will for us. We betray our neighbors, desert our friends, and run in fear when we should be loyal. Though you have bound yourself to us, we have not bound ourselves to you. Have mercy on us weak and willful people. Lead us once again to your table, and unite us to Christ, who is the bread of life and the vine from which we grow in grace. As you have called us together around your Table, may we go forth to feed a world hungry, not only for food, but for that Spirit which brings peace and reconciliation. This we pray as servants of Jesus Christ, who came to serve us in life, in death, in resurrection hope. Amen.

Jesus spent his life teaching us the meaning of love. Through word and deed Jesus showed us how to love God and to love one another. He fed the hungry. He healed the sick. He invited the women and the children and the tax collectors and the sinners to come to his table. He broke bread with the least and the lost and shared the cup of redemption with them all. He crossed boundaries of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class. He challenged religious authority, and he scoffed at pomposity and self-absorbed grandeur. He called out the hypocrites. He admonished the scribes and the Pharisees for their hardened hearts. He brought a simple message: Love God, love yourself, and love one another.

We gather in the name of Jesus and remember the way that he showed us. We gather to remember not just his death, but his life.

The way of Jesus goes through the cross, but we are not there yet. It is close. We can see its shadow. We can feel the cold, dark night. We know that the enemies of God are conspiring. They have had enough of him. He threatens their comfort. He threatens their way of life. He threatens their power. They will come for him. First though, we will gather. We gather with Jesus and his closest friends. We gather with those that called him teacher, Rabbi, friend. We gather for the Passover meal, to remember that God saved the people from slavery. God saved once. God saves forevermore.

God saved the Israelites at Passover, and revealed that it is God who reigns, not the Pharaoh. Our God saved once. God saves forevermore.

Even as they were sharing this sacred meal together, the disciples were not of one heart. Jesus knew that he was asking much from these men, and he knew that they would fail him. Judas had already agreed to betray Jesus to the religious authorities. Was he angry at some slight? Was he disappointed that Jesus would not raise an army against the Romans? Was he upset with the value of the oil that the woman "wasted" when she anointed Jesus? We will never know Judas' heart, but Jesus knew that he would be betrayed. And what did Jesus do with the man that would betray him? He broke bread with him. All of the disciples were deeply saddened, and they asked:

I would never betray you, Lord. It's not me, is it?

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed by his friend, he took the bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to God, gave it to his disciples and said, "Drink from this all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink of 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.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and the cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by Christ's blood. By your Holy 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 Father, now and forever.

Amen.

The Receiving of the Elements of Communion

All are invited to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion around your table. All elements are gluten free. "The body of Christ, broken for you." "The blood of Christ, shed for you."

The Music During Communion

"Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley" | Hart Morris

Rung by the Alleluia Ringers; Serena Scibelli, violin

The Prayer after Communion

Holy God, we have feasted in memory of the night Jesus was betrayed and in the confidence that we will feast again with him in glory: we give you thanks for the gift of this meal, shared among friends. We give you thanks for the gift of Jesus' life, his body broken for us. Give us grace to feed the hungry in the name of the One who died and was raised from death, that the world might have life. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JESUS LEADS HIS DISCIPLES TO THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

When the holy meal had been shared, the disciples began to argue over which one would be the greatest. Even here, at the end of their time together, they did not seem to understand what Jesus had been teaching them all along. He reminded them that to be great in the Kingdom of God meant to serve. After Jesus' talk of betrayal, the disciples' argument, and Jesus' rebuke of them, the disciples seemed to be growing anxious. Peter proclaimed:

"Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

And Jesus replied, "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day until you have denied three times that you know me."

Afterwards, Jesus led his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane.

*THE PROCESSION TO THE SANCTUARY

*THE HYMN

“Go to Dark Gethsemane” | REDHEAD

**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.**

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES IN THE GARDEN

Beth Dickinson

There in the garden he asked them to pray for him, for he wanted to be alone. There, Jesus prayed. He asked his friends to keep watch, but they kept falling asleep. He prayed for another way out. He prayed in anguish. He prayed as a man who could feel pain, who would be hurt by betrayal. He prayed as a man who knew that if he followed God's will, he would be charged, convicted, mocked, humiliated, abandoned, and nailed to a cross. Knowing all of this full well he prayed, “Not my will, but yours.” Then he stood up for all that he had lived for. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”

Anthem Lyrics Translation

O Sacred banquet in
which Christ is received,
the memory of his
passion is recalled, our
souls are filled with
grace, and a pledge of
future glory is given
to us.

THE ANTHEM

“O Sacrum Convivium” | Kim Andre Arnesen

Sung by the Chamber Ensemble

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

“Spiegel im Spiegel” | Pärt

Jason Bennett, piano; Esther Tonea, cello

***THE BLESSING**

**This night is our calling to go into the world,
scattered to the ends of the earth
to love as Christ loved
and serve in the name of Christ.**

**It is our calling to remember,
even in our darkest hour,
who we are.**

We remember that Christ is always with us.

**And we remember that on this night,
we were taught how to love.**

**On this night, eternity begins
and the fullness of God’s Reign begins to spill into our lives.**

**So go into the world to give yourself for others,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Go into the world and love
in the name of the One who loved you until the end.**

It all begins and ends and begins again with Love.

That IS the story.

THE PROCESSION

“Stay with Me”

Sung by the Sanctuary Choir

You are welcome to stay and pray in the sanctuary. As you depart, please do so in silence.



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