

Blessings to you and yours!

*Welcome to this self-guided time of worship.
Please have a piece of Bread and a small drink ready.*

*Move at your own pace - and know that
God is with you - and listening.*

Please turn the page.



The Garden of Gethsemane
Maundy Thursday

Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Welcome in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

*Welcome to his table! You have come to a time of
private meditation, prayer and communion.*

*You may follow your own leading in this, or you may
use this guide of spiritual meditation.*

... please turn the page

Scripture tells us that more than 2000 years ago Jesus and his disciples met in a small room built on the roof of a house in Jerusalem and shared a meal.

To help you recall the events of that momentous Thursday evening, please read the **Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 26, verses 17 – 30**. As you read them, remember Christ himself is at this table with you.

The Passover with the Disciples

¹⁷ On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸ He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.' " ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰ When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve disciples, ²¹ and while they were eating he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." ²² And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" ²³ He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!

It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”²⁵ Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”

The Institution of the Lord’s Supper

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”²⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you,²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

²⁹ I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰ When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

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There is one basic difference between the Last Supper and the sacrament of Holy Communion. The Last Supper was a real meal: in fact it was the law that the whole Lamb and everything else must be eaten, and that nothing be left. This was not the eating of a cube or wafer of bread and drinking a sip of grape juice or wine. It was a meal for hungry men. We might well say that what Jesus was teaching people is not only to assemble in church and eat a ritual and symbolic feast: He is telling us that every time we sit down to satisfy our hunger, the meal is in memory of him. For Jesus is not only Lord of the Communion Table: He must be Lord of the dinner table also.

The passage you just read (Matthew 26:17-30) concludes by saying that when Jesus and his disciples had finished their meal, they sang a hymn before going out to the Mount of Olives. An essential part of the Passover ritual, which Jesus and his disciples were observing, was the singing of the Hallel. (Hallel means 'Praise God') and the Hallel consists of Psalm 113-118 which are praising psalms. At different points of the Passover Feast, these psalms were sung in sections: and at the very end of the meal there was sung the Great Hallel, which is Psalm 136.

Now read over **Psalm 136** and follow it with your own prayer of thanksgiving.

Psalm 136 God's Work in Creation and in History

- ¹ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- ² O give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- ³ O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁴ who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁵ who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁶ who spread out the earth on the waters,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁷ who made the great lights,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁸ the sun to rule over the day,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁹ the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁰ who struck Egypt through their firstborn,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹¹ and brought Israel out from among them,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹² with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹³ who divided the Red Sea in two,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁴ and made Israel pass through the midst of it,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁵ but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

¹⁶ who led his people through the wilderness,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who made water flow from the rock,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
¹⁷ who struck down great kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
¹⁸ and killed famous kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
¹⁹ Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
²⁰ and Og, king of Bashan,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
²¹ and gave their land as a heritage,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
²² a heritage to his servant Israel,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

²³ It is he who remembered us in our low estate,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
²⁴ and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
²⁵ who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

²⁶ O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

...please turn the page

Following their final meal together, Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives and the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus, knowing what was ahead of him and overwhelmed with sorrow, prayed that tremendous prayer of submission, 'yet, not what I want, but what you want.' This was followed by Jesus' arrest and the temporary desertion of his disciples.

Spend a period of time thinking about these events of more than 2000 years ago and about what they mean to you.

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Pray either your own prayer or follow the directed prayer below.

Pray, for the church of Jesus Christ,
For Your congregation,
For your ministries,
For peace in the world,
For the leaders of governments,
For those in trouble,
For the sick in mind and body,
For the sorrowing,
For the lonely,
For those who suffer from natural
or manmade disasters,
for anyone you wish to mention specifically,

... please turn the page

Pray also for yourself:

That you may love God above all,
That you may have a spirit of neighborliness,
That you may live love at home, at school,
In your community, in your church,
That you may be adequate for what life
brings your way,
that you may delight in simple things,
that you may be open to the ideas of others,
that you may have help in your daily living,

pray also a prayer of confession, opening yourself before
God in repentance, that you might be granted
forgiveness.

... please turn the page

Before you, on the table, are the Communion elements of Bread and Juice.

Take and eat the Bread, the symbol of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was broken for you.

May it remind you of the forgiveness that is yours for the asking, and may it also remind you of the life eternal that is kept for you.

Take and drink the cup of juice, as a symbol of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you.

May it strengthen and sustain you as you live for him.

... please turn the page

Now, read again Psalm 136, verses 1-9 and verse 26.

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for his steadfast love endures forever.

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⁹ the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

²⁶ O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

You may spend time in meditation for as long as you wish.