



AT HOME LITURGY FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

WRITTEN BY SARAH ARE

*We invite you to implement this liturgy as-is, or adapt it for your context.
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ABOUT THE LITURGY

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. "Maundy" means commandment, referencing the new commandment Jesus gave his disciples on this day; for it was on this day that Jesus had his last meal with his disciples. Jesus broke bread, washed the disciples' feet, and hinted at his coming crucifixion and betrayal. At the time, the disciples did not realize the significance of this moment, but now we recognize how powerful and special this last supper was. As a result, it is our Christian tradition to celebrate this evening with the gift of worship and the sacrament of Communion, just as the disciples did on that night.

This year¹, many of us are unable to gather together in person to share in Communion, so we have crafted this at-home liturgy to serve as a reminder that God meets us at every table. Every meal we share is a reminder of the holy meal we share during Communion. May this liturgy be a source of reorientation to the sacredness all around us.

SUPPLIES

- Bread recipe and needed ingredients
- Oven
- Dinner table
- Candle
- Lighter/matches
- Optional for children: markers and printed copies of this [Lord's Prayer Coloring Sheet](#)

¹ This liturgy was created during Lent 2020, in the midst of the global pandemic caused by COVID-19.

LITURGY

POEM | "Bread" by Sarah Are

*Read the following poem a few times through as a centering prayer.
Circle words that stand out to you. Pay attention to what visuals come to mind.*

"After he had washed their feet . . . [Jesus] returned to the table." (John 13:12)
Jesus returned to the table, that simple common space,
Moving from water and undeserved grace
To bread that nourishes and sustains our place—
Two simple elements, no time to waste.

I should have known there would be water,
But of course there would be bread.
From the start of creation, God has tried to keep us fed—
Fed on bread and roses and love we don't notice.
I should have known there would be water,
But of course there would be bread.

I should have known there would be space
At the table for grace—
Space for nerves, and questions, and absent confessions;
Space for me and Elijah and Judas, without question.
I should have known there would be space,
But of course there would be bread—
For it started with manna, and all must be fed.

"This is my body, broken for you.
For you, five thousand;
For you, Israelite nation;
For you, child of the covenant;
Judas and Peter,
This is my body broken for *you*."

That simple phrase, paired with the food of the day,
Makes me human again—nourishes weak spots within.
It lifts me up and draws me back in—
Breathing life into bones that were weary and thin.

For it's easy to be so hungry for God
That God must appear in the shape of a meal,
Countering frailty, allowing me to heal.

So maybe that's why I come back to this space,
Because I know God will be here, offering grace.
And I need that bread in order to feel—
In order to see the kingdom revealed.

I should have known there would be water,
But of course there would be bread—
For I am hungry, and all must be fed.

PREPARATION | Bake Homemade Bread

On Maundy Thursday we remember Jesus' last meal by sharing Communion as a community. In this season, since we are not able to celebrate with Holy Communion, we invite you to do the next best thing: prepare a loaf of bread at home. We recommend Pamela's Gluten Free bread mix for a beautiful and light loaf of bread. However, the options are endless: Have a sourdough starter? Make sourdough! Missing yeast? Make muffins or scones! Have a sweet tooth? Make cookies! Don't want to go shopping? Use whatever ingredients you have!

It doesn't have to be perfect. God will show up anyway.

The point of this exercise is to be in the kitchen, to put your hands to work, and to allow your preparation process to be a prayer.

So get baking!

BLESSING | A Prayer to Bless the Bread

Before putting your bread or baked good into the oven, say this prayer:

Holy God,
Your last meal was an ordinary meal—
Simple bread and juice, nothing fancy;
And yet, it was holy.
It was holy because all were welcomed at your table—
Even the one who would betray you.

So today we prepare our own bread as a form of prayer.
And in our kneading and mixing,
In our measuring and waiting,
In our recipe-card-reading and taste-testing,
We remember you.

As these ingredients mix,
May our hearts mix with yours.
And as this bread rises,
May our awareness of you rise.
And as this bread is shared,
May your love be shared.

With hope and gratitude we pray,
Amen.

Tip for young families: Print out [this Lord's Prayer doodle page](#) and invite kids to color it while the bread is baking. Use these coloring pages as placemats for your dinner table.

LISTEN | Scripture Reading

Read Luke 22:7-23 out loud. As you read it, pick out a word, phrase, or emotion that stands out to you. Share that word, phrase, or emotion with those around you, or jot it down in the margins of your bible.

REFLECT | The Meal is Served

Once your bread or baked goods are prepared, gather around the table for a meal. If you have family with you, invite them to join. Light a candle in the center of the table as a reminder that this is a space set apart. This meal is a reminder of the promises made to us in the sacrament of Communion—that all belong to God, that God’s love is stronger than death, and that one day, all will be fed.

During your meal, reflect on the following prompts. You can either jot these down in a journal, mull them over in your mind as the bread bakes, or discuss them with family members present.

- 1) Reflect back to past meals and moments around table. What meals have been memorable? What gatherings made you feel welcomed? Have you ever had a memorable Communion experience? What made it memorable?
- 2) How does it make you feel to know that Jesus fed and shared a meal with all of his disciples, even Judas who would soon betray him? What does that teach us about God?
- 3) Jesus gives thanks for the bread before breaking it. What things do you give thanks for in your life? Make a quick mental list of 5-10 things you often forget to thank God for. Jot them down or share them with those gathered at the table.
- 4) Food is a common love language. Think back to a time when someone offered or prepared food for you as a sign of love. Do you think that Jesus was trying to express his love for his disciples in this last meal? How does that layer add to the story?

Tip for young families: Invite each child at the table to reflect on their favorite dinner blessing and sing/say it together. Point out that Jesus also offers a blessing to God for the bread before he and his disciples eat, so when we say grace, we are being like Jesus.

PEACE | The End of the Meal

Once you have finished eating and reflecting, offer peace to one another by saying, “The peace of God be with you.” If you are worshipping alone, offer a prayer of peace for someone you love.

Tip for young families: Invite each child to help clean up. As you clean, ask each other, “What was your favorite part of the liturgy and baking process?”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Sarah Are (she/her/hers) is the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas. She graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a degree in Social Work, and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Columbia Theological Seminary. Sarah loves to combine her love of all things creative with her passion for God. She believes that the Church has a responsibility to open every door to God, so that those of us who are visual, kinesthetic, or relational learners all have equal opportunity to engage God to the fullest of our abilities. Sarah feels called to live her life welcoming people into the church by using her energy and passion for beautifully scripted words, raw and relevant liturgy, and hands-on worship experiences to engage our longing for God and the need for justice in this messy world.

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God. Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.

