

DOWNTOWN UNITED

A Service of St. Paul's and Wilmot United Churches
Fredericton, N.B.

April 6th, 2023

Maundy Thursday

6pm

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

~ Psalm 27:1, 4

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(Responsive)*

As we gather at these tables,

Encircle us, O God, with your love.

In keeping you close to our hearts,

Keep the darkness at bay,

Keep our fears away.

In sharing this meal, we are filled with your love,

Fill each here with your grace,

Hold us safe in your embrace.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 26:17-19

HYMN: *An Upper Room*

VU 130

*An upper room did our Lord prepare
for those he loved until the end:
and his disciples still gather there
to celebrate their risen Friend.*

*A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:
to share his bread, his loving cup.
Whatever burdens may bow us down,
he by his cross shall lift us up.*

*And after supper he washed their feet,
for service, too, is sacrament.
In Christ our joy shall be made complete:
sent out to serve, as he was sent.*

*No end there is! We depart in peace.
He loves beyond the uttermost:
in every room in our Father's house
Christ will be there, as Lord and Host.*

OPENING PRAYER:

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 26: 20-25

REFLECTION: Have you ever wondered?

HYMN: *Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love*

VU 574 vs 1,3-4

*Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true, tender and true,
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.*

*Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam? why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.*

*Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!
Come and abide, come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be, seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.*

THE STORY BEFORE THE STORY: Matthew 26:2-16

REFLECTION: Why did you do it, Judas?

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: *(In Unison)*

Incarnate God, we yearn for Communion with you; for the hope of new life you offer, as we meet you face to face. Despite your open invitation, we find ourselves stumbling on our way. Forgive us, when we turn our back on you and when we seek our own vision instead of yours. You, Holy One, see our hearts and know us better than we know ourselves. In this silence, hear the prayers of our souls as we lift them to you. *(time of silence)*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

ANOINTING WITH OIL:

As you anoint the person next to you use the following words:

May Christ be a seal upon your heart, for love is stronger than death.

COMMUNION HYMN: *Bread of Life, Feed My Soul*

MV 194

*Bread of life, feed my soul,
As the presence of the Spirit makes me whole.
Bread of life, fill my heart
With the grace and mercy you impart.*

Chorus:

*I have heard your voice calling,
"Come, my friend, and share
In the feast that is laid out for you
To show how much I care."*

*Bread of life, help me live
A life as pure and true as Jesus did.
Bread of life, help me see
The boundless love of Christ for you and me. Chorus*

*Bread of life, feed my soul,
As the presence of the Spirit makes me whole.
Bread of life, fill my heart
With the grace and mercy you impart.*

INVITATION TO THIS TABLE:

PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING: *(Responsive)*

We thank you, God, Creator of us all; from the beginning, you made the world and all its creatures. You made people to live for you and for one another.

We praise you, O God.

You created Adam and Eve and gave them a garden; you showed Noah a rainbow; you gave Moses strength to free your people and taught Miriam to sing; you gave courage to Peter and loyalty to Mary Magdalene; you give us a voice to sing your praise, and light in our times of darkness.

We praise you, O God.

Yet, even the world turned away from you and forgot about you, as we often do too. But you did not forget. You sent Jesus to the world to show how much you love us and to bring us back to you again.

We praise you, O God.

He came as one of us, first an infant, then a child, later a youth, then an adult. He rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and wept with those who wept. To the despairing, he spoke a word of hope. To the sick, he gave healing. To the hurting, he was a friend.

We Praise you, O God.

Still, people turned away from you. They betrayed Jesus and nailed him to a cross. But he was lifted from the grave and restored to life, that he might be with us and we with him, alive forevermore! Therefore with all the saints of every time and place, we join the angels in their praise:

**Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest,
Blessed is the One who comes in God's name.**

INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVE: Matthew 26:26-29

... In our commitment to you, may our lives proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died
Christ is risen
Christ will come again.**

RESPONSIVE CHORUS:

*Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!*

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP (*Responsive*)

Come now for these are the gifts of God for the people of God

Thanks be to God

The body of Christ, through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ.

We remember, and share in his sacrifice. (all partake of bread)

The blood of the new covenant, through the cup of blessing, we participate in the new life Christ gives.

We remember, and are humbled by his great love. (all partake of juice)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: (*In Unison*)

Holy God, at your table, we have touched, we have tasted and we have heard the signs of your love for us. May this meal sustain us as we seek to follow in your way. Grant that we may go away from this table filled with love for you and overflowing with love for those around us and who share our lives. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

**HYMN: *Now Let Us from This Table Rise*
(Tune ~ VU 149)**

VU 483 vs1,2,4

*Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind and soul;
with Christ we die and live again,
his selfless love has made us whole.*

*With minds alert, upheld by grace,
to spread the word in speech and deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.*

*Then give us grace, Companion-God,
to choose again the pilgrim way
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 30-50

**HYMN: *Shadows Gather, Deep and Cold*
(Tune ~ VU 196)**

VU 134

*Shadows gather, deep and cold;
lamplight flickers, fades and fails.
Lord, you know what daybreak holds:
thorns and beatings, cross and nails.*

*You will be denied, betrayed
when the rooster wakes the sun.
Yet you kneel alone and pray,
'Not my will, but thine be done.'*

*In the watches of the night,
in the hour when darkness reigns,
in the grief that has no light,
in the time of fear and pain,
then we hold fast to your way,
to the victory you have won.
Jesus, teach us how to pray,
'Not my will, but thine be done.'*

COMMISSIONING & BLESSING: *(Responsive)*

We go into the night, knowing something has shifted

But our attention is still divided, we still do not truly see.

Like the disciples, we try to hear Jesus' hard words

I will be crucified, I am grieved, stay awake with me.

Still unaware and not fully believing, darkness falls.

As movement continues in the shadows, as plots unfold

we drift off to sleep believing tomorrow, this all will have been a bad dream.

Go into this night, this course-altering night, knowing that God is here!

**Please join us at Wilmot United Church on Friday April 7th at 11am for Downtown
United Good Friday Service.**

**Sunday Easter Sunrise Service will take place in the park near the Library at 7am on April
9th, with breakfast following at Wilmot.**

**Join us for Easter Sunday Service at St. Paul's on April 9th at 10:30am. Everyone is
Welcome!**