

St. John United Church of Christ
“In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve”

April 2, 2026

Maundy Thursday (A)

Rev. Karla Frost, Pastor

David R. Ekstrand, Dir. of Music

9:30 Zoom & In-Person Worship

9:30 Sunday School for Children

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Large print bulletins are available from the Ushers.

Bold italic denotes congregation reads or sings.

*Denotes all who are able, please stand.

WE COME TO WORSHIP GOD

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC AND BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

Bridge of Light

AnnaLee Ekstrand

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Exodus 12:1-14

pg. 56

HYMN

“An Upper Room with Evening Lamps”

#274

CALL TO WORSHIP & PSALTER READING

Psalms 51

We come this night to lament of our sins,

For we all fall short of the glory of God.

We come this night to lament the sins of the world,

***For nowhere on earth, or in history,
does righteousness and justice rule.***

Yet we come this night to find hope in our lives,

***For God has not forgotten us
and again creates new life.***

We come this night to remember

and renew the tradition passed from generation to generation,

For the psalmist still speaks through our hearts.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

***Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.***

***For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.***

Against you, you alone, have I sinned,

and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.

You desire truth in the inward being;

Therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;

let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins,

and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence,

and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,

and sinners will return to you.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
For you have no delight in sacrifice;

if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;

a broken and contrite heart, O God,

you will not despise.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

FIRST GOSPEL LESSON John 15:4-5, 8-14

pg. 103

SUNG RESPONSE *Let Us Break Bread Together*

Vs. 1 #699

Let us break bread together on our knees;

let us break bread together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

SECOND GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 26:26-30

pg. 28

SUNG RESPONSE *Let Us Break Bread Together*

Vs. 2 #699

Let us drink wine together on our knees;

let us drink wine together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY *El Shaddai*

RESPONSE ***“Let us Break Bread Together”*** Vs. 3 #699

***Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.***

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Merciful God, Judas agreed to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. If that was all it took for him, how much more do we value Jesus’ gift of life? While we are on our knees seeking mercy, we open our hearts to you and thank you for the gift of new life. May our generous gifts from the heart tonight reflect our gratitude as we share life with the children of Kindercottage and dedicate ourselves to true and faithful discipleship. Amen.

ANTHEM *Father, Give Me Strength* Chancel Choir
By D. Ekstrand

Flute Solo by AnnaLee Ekstrand, Vocal Solo by George Cochran
This music describes: In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is filled with deep sorrow as he faces what lies ahead. In his anguish, he prays for strength and guidance, showing both vulnerability and trust. Though troubled, he submits fully to God’s will, preparing for what is to come.

INVITATION AND COMMUNION PRAYER

BREAKING BREAD, POURING THE CUP AND PARTAKING

Family, Baptism Sponsor, Prayer Partner and our Confirmand, Brayden Fischer, come to the Table

The congregation will be served in the pews.

The inner circle of cups contain white grape juice. The outer circles contain wine. Please hold each element when served in the pews so all may partake together, remembering that in the upper room Last Supper Jesus said, “take this and divide it among yourselves.” (Luke 22:17b)

Altar Communion by intinction for those who come forward while the trays are being passed to the congregation.

(The United Church of Christ practices “Open Communion.”

All Christians are welcome to partake from the Table of the Lord.)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

HYMN

“The Old Rugged Cross”

Vs. 1 #260

***On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross,
where the dearest and best
for a world of lost sinners was slain.
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.***

DRAMATIC READINGS

TRILOGY¹

By Renae Meredith

Narrator – Betty Meszaros

Mary Magdalene – Karen Gaines

Peter – George Cochran

Centurion – Greg Young

ANTHEM

Agnus Dei

Chancel Choir

By D. Ekstrand

Flute Solo by AnnaLee Ekstrand, Vocal Solo by George Cochran

Latin Translation: Lamb of God, have mercy:

Father, have mercy. Merciful Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

This music describes: The sign that hung above Jesus' head, INRI, which comes from a Latin phrase: "Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum" which means "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." According to the Bible, during the crucifixion this inscription was placed above Jesus Christ on the cross by order of Pontius Pilate.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN NEAR DARKNESS

THE LIGHT OF HOPE RISES

*LEAVING IN SILENCE



¹*Trilogy* by Renae Meredith. Produced by special arrangement with Christian Publishers.

We thank the participants in the worship service tonight, including our liturgist Linda Mizell, drama readers, guest musician Annalee Ekstrand, and Chancel Choir.

Please remain seated throughout the service. The congregation will not be standing for the singing tonight.

In the spirit of Lenten reverence, please do not applaud music or readings. At the end, we leave in silence.

The Lenten Offering Envelopes and tonight's Maundy Thursday offering will be given to Kindercottage.

Sunday's special Easter envelope and regular offering envelope gifts have been designated for our General Fund and the support of our ministries.

As we leave in silence tonight, may we listen for the Spirit directing us to someone in need of special blessing. Please invite and bring them to worship with you so they may experience the new life of Easter morning.

9:30 a.m. Worship with Communion

 Sunday School for Children

10:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour sponsored by Council

Exodus 12:1-14

12 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² "This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴ If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷ They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ Do not

eat any of it raw or boiled in water but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. ¹⁰ You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn with fire. ¹¹ This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. ¹² I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from human to animal, and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

John 15:4-5, 8-14

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me...My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 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.

Matthew 26:26-30

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." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 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." When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.