

◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

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◆ Thursday April 9, 2020 ◆
Maundy Thursday

MELROSE UNITED CHURCH

★ indicates a time to stand, if you are able
congregational responses are in **boldface type**

PRELUDE

★ OPENING HYMN --*An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare* VU 130

*1 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.*

*2 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.*

*3 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.*

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

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: We welcome Jesus Christ to our table of fellowship. The fact that we are not together face to face does not prevent us from being in **his** company. We carry on the tradition of enjoying breaking bread together as his disciples.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Who are we?

All: Does God really care?

One: Did Jesus really exist?

All: What about Jesus' death and resurrection?

One: When? Where?

All: Why? How? Who?

One: Our lives are filled with questions.

All: Some have answers.

One: Some don't. But there is one thing of which we are certain:

**All: Our life's journey is a place of exploration,
As God's people, we can journey together.**

One: In that togetherness, just as Jesus and the disciples gathered together in the upper room, with our questions and opinions, with our agreements and our disagreements....

All: We come to worship our God!

OPENING PRAYER (said altogether)

Creator God, we come today in gratitude for the wonderful love, tender and true, that comes streaming into us, into our hearts, into our souls, and into our lives, this wonderful love, brought to us by your son, Jesus Christ, through the gospels; this wonderful love that shares sorrows, bears all shame, seeks the lost, saves and redeems at measureless cost. Be with us this evening, we pray. Amen.

Reader: Tim Webb

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 116: 1-2 and 12-19

I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications.

Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD,

I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones.

O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds.

I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD.

I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,

in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

REFLECTION: "A Question of Repayment!"

Psalm 116: 1-2 and 12-19

With what shall I repay you? Brings to mind the country song that Kris Kristofferson made famous - Why me Lord? What have I ever done ...to repay even one ... of the blessings you gave? If you hear it for the first time with his pacing between phrases it sounds like it is going to be a complaint about "Why me" I don't deserve this bad treatment. But it is nothing like that, it is a song of praise for blessings unmerited.

As Christians we all come to the understanding that there is nothing we can ever do to repay God for our daily blessings. What we receive is totally beyond price, beyond what our richest amongst us could ever conjure up to give.

The circle of life demands that at one time or another we all find ourselves in a bad spot. None of us travel through our time here unscathed. What we have been able to count on is God's uncompromising, continuing faithfulness. It will not always be the answer that we have hoped for, but it will be a way of taking our experience of suffering and desolation and turning it into something positive and good.

How can we repay the debt of gratitude that we owe? Simply, we cannot. All we can do is offer our thanksgiving. We worship God because God is good.

Jesus said "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

We are to take this to heart. Loving one another flows from the love that was freely given to us. Our celebration of remembrance flows from that. The bread and the wine in our eucharist are our promises to work to live as thankful and unselfish people as Christ first modeled for us. Amen.

SHARING OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TABLE

One: Tonight, we commemorate and remember that last meal Jesus shared with his friends. They sat around a table, as we do now in our separate homes. They laughed and

talked and shared their stories. Most of them did not know that in a few short days their lives would be changed drastically. They would betray, run away in fear, deny, and abandon the One who gave their lives meaning. It is unlikely we would have done better.

All: Forgive us our friend and savior, before we approach your table of promise, we confess that at times we have not trusted that you wish to receive our suffering, our doubts, and even our anger. And yet, you got up from the table and bore these things to the cross, so that we could rise with you above them. So receive now, the honest confessions of our spirits.

(Quiet reflection)

One: Amen.

One: I have set up my table at home for 6 o'clock evening meal, so that we might share in our liturgy and then as families in our individual homes (if it works for you) eat our meals together at the same time, not as a common pot luck as we had hoped, seated in front of the altar at one long table, Instead, through the gift of technology, we are safely distanced in our homes, yet together in spirit.

I have asked you to place a roll or piece of bread and a glass of wine or juice in front of you. We each lift up the bread, break it, giving thanks as we do now.

All: This bread is broken in thanksgiving for the life of Jesus Christ. As we do this, we remember Him.

One: We each lift up the cup of blessing, in thanksgiving. Cups are raised.....

All: You, Lord, are Saviour, Redeemer, the Mighty Prince of Peace. We remember You.

One: We each take a piece of the bread and dip it in our glasses. We take it together. Then we say...

All: We eat together the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. He is the living bread and the true vine. In Him, we shall neither hunger nor thirst for He fills our Spirit. Amen.

One: Let us enjoy our supper meal separately. We thank God for providing us with food to satisfy our needs.

All: We thank all who have provided food for our tables and wait for the day when we will be together again to enjoy a meal in the fellowship of one another.

One: We ask blessings on all who are part of this shared time together, on those who could not be with us, and those who this day are lonely and unfed.

All: Tonight, we celebrate, and we remember. Amen.

** Had we been together, I would have instituted a symbolic foot washing following the meal where we dusted the shoes of one another. Jesus says. I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet. So you should also wash one another's feet. I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you. John 13:14-15