



*Maundy Thursday*  
*Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church*  
*April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026*

In a room full to the brim with emotion, Jesus offers a tender, loving, and humble goodbye, stooping low to wash and caress his disciples' feet. Like the water splashing within the washbasin, his actions ripple out: "Go and do likewise. Just as I have loved you, love one another." This scene offers us a poignant and powerful image of discipleship. Our sub-theme is primarily inspired by Peter's experience and the way he initially resists Jesus' offer. How many of us resist vulnerability? How often do we resist receiving love, support, and nurturing from others? Jesus' command to go and do likewise is only possible for us if we, too, learn how to receive. We can't fully give without receiving also; love is designed to be shared. As was the case for Peter, receiving selfless, poured-out love fundamentally changes us. It's a profound act that shows us who we are. It's a practice of surrender and letting go. It reminds us of how God loves us. And so, this Maundy Thursday, take off your shoes. Remove the walls and protective layers you have built up. Allow yourself to be loved fully by God. Allow yourself to be filled to the brim so you can go out and fill others too.

## **Call to Worship**

We invite you to bring your body into the worship of God. You may do so standing or seated, by listening to your heartbeat or noticing the rise and fall of your abdomen with each breath.

A call to worship is a call to presence.

**We long to be fully present here, and to feel God's presence here.**

Notice the space around us, the way it looks, smells, and sounds.

**With all our senses, we recognize a sacred space and our belonging in it.**

We gather as good creation, wonderfully made.

**We join our bodies into one body as we remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

## **Opening Hymn**

*What Wondrous Love Is This (Vs 1)*

ELW #666

## **Opening Ritual**

In a few minutes, we'll hear the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet on the night of his betrayal and arrest. It is a story of deep intimacy and sacred connection. It is also a story about human resistance to God's grace and our discomfort with the ways that Jesus demands the disruption of hierarchies. In this story, Simon Peter first objects to Jesus's plan to wash his feet. Jesus does not rebuke him, but he does insist, for he knows what is to come. As we prepare to lay down our burdens before God in confession, we place our trust in God's desire to know us and be with us. As we enter into the sacred story of John's gospel, let us take a few moments to notice our feet. Take off your shoes if you wish. Wiggle your toes. Plant your feet firmly on the ground. As you experience these sensations, consider the wonder of God, who meets us not only from on high but also kneeling at our feet.

## **Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Forgiveness**

Confession returns us to our bodies by reminding us that God claims us, exactly as we are. Through repentance, we name that which we have left undone and ask for the help of God and our community to seek repair, restoration, and renewal. Let us pray together our prayer of confession:

**Loving God, you pour out grace upon us exactly as we are, but we confess we are suspicious and react from fear of scarcity. You invite us to take our shoes off and receive the care our bodies need, but we sit on our heels. We sort bodies into worthy and unworthy ones to mask our insecurities. We reject and punish bodies, even when these bodies are our very own. God, remind us that we are made in your image. Help us learn to receive from your abundance so we can share all that we have with others. Let us see that the cups we longingly hold out are already full. May they overflow so that all will have enough!**

As he does with Peter in the footwashing, Jesus transforms our confusion and rejection into joy and connection. With God's help and mercy, we can reciprocate abundance with one another and with Creation. In Jesus Christ we are loved and befriended by God.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Hymn**

*What Wondrous Love Is This (Vs 2)*

ELW #666

## **Reading: John 13:1-17**

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup> The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during

supper <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup> got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. <sup>5</sup> Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. <sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup> Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." <sup>8</sup> Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." <sup>12</sup> After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

### **Remembrance of Baptism**

With simple elements and simple acts, Jesus flipped the scripts of power to bring about new possibilities for God's love in the world. Before his betrayal and death, Jesus touched his followers and sealed their connection. Jesus taught us to wash one another's feet so that we might witness each other's goodness and be made clean. Through the waters of baptism, God claims us as God's own and marks the calling for our lives onto our bodies. Together, we will remember our baptisms. First, let us pray: God who poured forth water, God who formed each one of us, we give you thanks for the sacrament of Baptism. Allow the cool drip of water on our bodies to bring us closer to you so that we might live as your people, with justice, kindness, and humility. As we remember your promises to us, renew in us a heart of compassion for others and help us recognize your presence in all whom we meet. Amen. At this time, we invite you to come forward to receive anointing in remembrance of your baptism.

### **Offering**

Through the sacraments, God meets us in physical space, offering God's self to us again and again. In a spirit of grateful response, we offer what we have to meet the needs of our neighbors, to serve Creation, and to glorify God. Let us give our tithes and offerings.

### **Offering Song**

*Give Thanks*

Gray #170

### **Offering Prayer**

Extravagant God, **you have blessed us with the fullness of creation. Now we gather at your feast where you offer us the food that satisfies. Take and use what we offer here, come among us, and feed us with the body and blood of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

God be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

God who took on flesh and lived among us, we greet you in worship. We greet you as a Creator who made us good in our bodies; we greet you as a Redeemer who was perfectly divine and totally human; we greet you as a Sustainer, an advocate, a helper who surrounds us in all our ways and all our days. We come in our various bodies, so that we might join with your body as we encounter you tangibly, through bread and wine. Through this joyful feast, you fill our spirits to overflowing.

### Holy Communion

#### Words of Institution

**Pg. 207**

#### Lord's Prayer

**Pg. 208**

#### Invitation to the Table

The Table of the joyful feast is not our Table but God's. Nothing you do, nothing you say, nothing about you can prevent you from partaking, for in communion God reveals the wholeness of who we are together and with God. So as you receive this joyful feast, come exactly as you are. There is more than enough. Come, for all is ready.

**Communion Distribution** (All Are Welcome to Receive Communion Here at GA Church)

#### Post Communion Blessing

#### Post Communion Prayer

Holy Mystery, through communion we unite our bodies with your body, and in unity we gain strength and hope. We give thanks for your transforming love. Like the sacraments, we know that love is a doing, and so we ask for your help to turn this nourishment into love for all we meet. **Amen.**

#### Reading: John 13:33-35

<sup>33</sup> Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' <sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

#### Prayers of the People

L: God among us, When we cry out for justice, **C: you hear us.**

L: When we fall to our knees, **C: you witness us.**

L: When we lean into your comfort, **C: you hold us.**

L: When we lose our way, **C: you guide us. Hear our prayers. Stay with us here as we seek your way toward hope and wholeness.**

L: We name, O God, that at times it is hard to stay loving in the face of cruelty, neglect, and harm. Yet even when Jesus knew his friends would betray and abandon him, he showed us how to center our whole selves in your love instead of the hatred of people and the injustice of systems of power. **C: May we go and do likewise, as he called us to do, so that our love for others will be a testimony to all you have done in our lives.**

L: Through the life and ministry of Jesus, you taught us how to love fiercely, how to honor one another fully, and how to serve with humility and kindness. Through grace, you join us together as

one body. **C: Be with us today and every day as we seek to pour out love as disciples of Jesus. Amen.**

**Hymn**

*What Wondrous Love Is This (Verses 3&4)*

ELW #666

**Sending**

**Benediction**

L: Jesus chose to use his final hours to establish intimate and profound physical connections with his friends. In the midst of this connection, he offered a new commandment: to love others as he loves us. This is not an abstract, sentimental love. This is bread-breaking, foot-washing, messy love. We have visited the font, we have been nourished at the Table, and now we go out into the world to live out Jesus’s commandment. As we leave this place, may the presence of the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sustainer fill the nooks and crannies of our lives. Go in love!

**C: We go out together in love. Amen.**

**Stripping of the Altar**

"This act symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and the stripping of Jesus by the soldiers before his crucifixion. It represents the humiliation of Jesus and the consequences of sin as a preparation for the celebration of new life."

**Dismissal**

Leave the Sanctuary in Silence

Bulletin Donated:

Mission Statement of Gustaf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

To share the Good News of God’s Word and to serve the community and the world.

*Matthew 22:39* ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

*Matthew 28:19* Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

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We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord’s real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ’s name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament.

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