

We have finally arrived at Maundy Thursday. Maundy Thursday is one of my favorite holy days in the Christian calendar. It is the night when we gather to commemorate Jesus' last supper with his disciples. Just picture it...the disciples are gathered in the upper room with Jesus. It's was a meal around the Passover. While at dinner, we see Jesus break the bread on the table, bless it, break it, and pass it to his disciples. He then fills the cup on the table with wine, blesses it, and passes it to his disciples. It's an intimate moment between friends. Every year, we gather as the church and have Communion together. This year, however, we aren't gathered as a church family in person this year. We have no common loaf and common cup to share this year. Maybe our family is gathered around our dinner table, or maybe, if you are like me, you are not living with anyone at all. This is probably the loneliest Maundy Thursday I've experienced. And yet, I know that when we gather as the Church in Jesus', whether it's on Facebook or on Zoom or over the phone, Jesus is there with us.

This year, I read a different passage from the same event on Maundy Thursday. Jesus is gathered with his disciples in the upper room. We read about Jesus washing the disciples' feet and Peter protesting Jesus doing the servants job. Jesus reminds Peter that his disciples are called to be servants. Peter then implores Jesus to wash his hands and his head as well. And then, a little bit later, we get the reason for the name Maundy Thursday. I give you a new commandment...love one another. Maundy is a translation of the Latin word Mandatum, which means commandment. We are commanded to love one another. It's not a suggestion. It's not a really good idea. It's a commandment: Love one another.

Tonight, I want to take a moment and talk about loving each other in this moment. A little bit later, I am going to encourage you to reenact the feet washing, but more on that in a few moments. Loving one another is the central theme of Maundy Thursday. It's in the name. We are living in unprecedented times for our country. Unemployment claims shattered records. People

are being laid off or furloughed. Places are shuttering their doors, worrying that they might never reopen. People are running out of money. People are getting sick and/or dying every day. And we are more isolated than ever before. It is scary. It is exhausting. I wake up tired and go to bed tired. Things have changed and I don't know if they will ever go back to the way things were before this happened.

How can we love each other in the midst of this global crisis? I've been asking myself that question since this all began. How can we serve and love each other when we can't even visit each other? And the answer is in the question, I believe. We can serve and love each other by not visiting each other during this crisis. It is an act of love and courage to stay away from people because we fear getting them sick. We can love and serve each other by calling people who might be lonely or stressed or anxious or by offering to pick up their groceries or medications. You can love and serve people by washing your hands and staying home. Communities can come together by staying home. Jesus commands us to love one another. We do not have the option to do otherwise. It is my hope that this Maundy Thursday, you contemplate and implement ways in which we can put more love out into the world. That is a good way to celebrate Maundy Thursday this year. Amen and Amen.