

A Liturgy for Maundy Thursday

This is a simple structure for a Maundy Thursday service. It includes the four ancient worship experiences for the service: washing of feet, communion, veiling the church, keeping watch.

Churches may decide to use any or all of these experiences.

Call to Worship

Prayers of Confession and Repentance

Hymn / Song

Scripture Readings

Sermon / Reflection

Hymn / Song

The Washing of Feet

Possible closing prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.
Amen.

Intercessions

Possible prayer

Father, on this, the night he was betrayed,
your Son Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet.
We commit ourselves to follow his example of love and
service.

Lord, hear us and humble us.

On this night, he prayed for his disciples to be one.
We pray for the unity of your Church.

Lord, hear us and unite us.

On this night, he prayed for those who were to believe
through his disciples' message.

We pray for the mission of your Church.

Lord, hear us and renew our zeal.

On this night, he commanded his disciples to love,
but suffered rejection himself.

We pray for the rejected and unloved.

Lord, hear us and fill us with your love.

On this night, he reminded his disciples that if the world hated them it hated him first. We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith.
Lord, hear us and give us your peace.

Hymn / Song

The Peace

Possible words

Jesus says: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.'

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Communion

Hymn / Song

Either

Closing Blessing

People then leave quietly.

Or

The Veiling of the Church

This may be done with the lighting very low.

It may be done in silence, or with someone reading Psalm 88, or other appropriate psalms. The following verses from Lamentations are used, as a litany, in some churches.

How lonely sits the city that once was full of people!
How like a widow she has become,
she that was great among the nations!
She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks;
among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals;
all her gates are desolate, her priests groan;
her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter.
Her children have gone away, captives before the foe.
Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

From on high he sent fire; it went deep into my bones;
he spread a net for my feet; he turned me back;

he has left me stunned, faint all day long.
For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears;
for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage;
my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

All who pass along the way clap their hands at you;
they hiss and wag their heads at daughter Jerusalem;
'Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty,
the joy of all the earth?'
The thought of my affliction and homelessness is wormwood
and gall.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,
'therefore I will hope in him.'
The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that
seeks him.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the
Lord.
It is good for one to bear the yoke in youth,
to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it,
to put one's mouth to the dust (there may yet be hope),
to give one's cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults.
For the Lord will not reject for ever.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

Closing Blessing

People leave quietly.

The Watch

Following the close of the service, when all who are leaving have left, those who have chosen to stay and watch with Jesus will gather in the church. In this service, it is suggested that the watch is kept for one hour, rather than through the night, but churches and individuals may decide to watch through the night.

The following readings may be used. Silences may follow the readings.

John 13.16-30
Psalm 113

John 13.31 - end
Psalm 114

John 14.1-14
Psalm 115

John 14.15 - end
Psalm 116.1-9

John 15.1-17
Psalm 116.10-end

John 15.18 - 16.4a
Psalm 117

John 16.4b-15
Psalm 118.1-9

John 16.16 - end
Psalm 118.10-18

John 17.1-19
Psalm 118.19 - end

John 17.20 - end
Psalm 54

Matthew 26.30-46

Closing Blessing

People then leave quietly.