

## Maundy Thursday Service

(Chairs in a circle)

(Tell anyone who is wearing panty hose to please remove them now before we do the foot washing ceremony. Otherwise, leave your shoes and stockings on till later.)

(Opening Prayer)

Looking at Leonardo Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, someone suggested that Jesus' final words spoken there were, "Everyone who wants to be in the picture, come to this side of the table."

(They would have all been seated on the floor, etc.)

This is Maundy Thursday. The word "Maundy" means "mandate." It refers to the new commandment given by Jesus that night to his disciples, and by inference to all of us: "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you." (Jn 13:34)

(AB exercise "What this commandment means to me, then ask for sharing)

Lets begin with a song (Let Me Remember)

On the night before his crucifixion, our older brother, Jesus, and his twelve disciples gathered to share the annual Feast of the Passover meal – the Seder.

Jesus purposely chose this time because it symbolized people's belief that a relationship with God called for sacrifice. He wanted to introduce them to a new covenant, a new agreement, one which showed that God never asks us for any sacrifice at all.

Four days later, after being tried, convicted, and crucified, he rose from the dead in the greatest demonstration of forgiveness the world had ever seen. He showed us all that there had, indeed, been no sacrifice at all because he wasn't hurt.

Nearly two-thousand years later, most of the world is still so ingrained in the concept that “sacrifice is love,” that this meal has come to symbolize sacrifice. The sharing of bread and wine, in what has come to be known as “The Sacrament of Holy Communion,” continues to commemorate Jesus supposedly “taking the sins of the world upon himself.”

He then supposedly suffered and died in our place – as if the only way God could forgive us our mistakes was to have someone suffer or be punished in our place.

Everywhere, millions of people try to alleviate the guilt they feel over believing they have killed the Christ in themselves by worshipping Jesus rather than believing what he said and following him. They see Jesus as the “great exception,” and not as the “great example.”

They think that when Jesus called himself “the Lamb of God.” He meant he would be slaughtered as a sacrifice. What he meant was how completely he followed the guidance of God in him, like a lamb follows its shepherd.

Any ritual has the potential of becoming an object of worship itself, replacing the original purpose with a new one. I believe that the true meaning of the “Communion” shared at that Passover Feast was a simple one -- the love shared among Jesus and his students, or disciples. He had been teaching them for three years. They had been through a lot together. They had been family.

Using figures of speech which everyone there would have understood, Jesus picked up a piece of bread and said, “This is my body.” That is, This represents my teachings--the substance, or body, of what I have shared with the world, and most of all with you.”

Then, taking the goblet of wine in his hand, he also said, “This is my blood,” which means, “This wine represents the essence of me, my example, my very life.”

He then continued, “Whenever you gather to celebrate the Passover--in fact any time you meet to share a meal like this, do not forget why we have been together.

Do not forget what this has all been about. Soon I will be leaving, and then YOU will be the lights, shining in a mostly endarkened world.

He was saying to them, “There will be lots of times when you will be tempted to forget all this when you are out there in the world on your own. I urge you to come together like this to support each other and to remind yourselves once again of your purpose, and the love we have all shared.

In John 6:35, Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.”

Wine also was used by Jesus (as in changing water into wine) to signify the kind of change we undergo as we are filled with the Spirit, as we are in-spirited. For example, at Pentecost, the disciples who were becoming apostles were so high that people thought they were drunk, even though it was 9 a.m.

Truly, Jesus’ example (his blood) and his teachings (his body) are still feeding us and satisfying our thirst 2,000 years later.

Song – (That’s What Friends Are For)

### **Bread and Wine Communion**

(Have each participant break off enough bread to share with several people, then do as a “mingling” exercise.)

(Put sayings on white board)

(Explain Christ teaching – Love, power, wisdom, life energy)

Each person says to partner, **“This bread represents the Christ teaching which I would (share?) (live?) with you.”** Then, give partner a hug and go to next partner. Do with 8 – 10 partners.

(Next give each participant a 4oz. clear plastic wine glass.)

As they continue to do the mingling exercise, each person says to partner, **“This wine represents the Christ example which I would share with you.”**

Then, give partner a hug and go to next partner. Do with 8 – 10 partners.

(Song – The Greatest Thing)

(Read from “Maundy Thursday” article)

### **Footwashing**

That same evening, he also shared with them another ritual, another symbolic act--one which has only recently begun to be practiced. It was the act of washing their feet. Earlier, they had argued among themselves as to which of them was the greatest of his students. He replied, “Whoever would be greatest among you is he who serves, gives, and extends his love the most.

In those days, everyone wore sandals, and the roads and paths were made of dirt or sand. People's feet were always dirty, and washing the feet of one's guests was a common courtesy, usually performed by the household servants.

Now, here was their teacher, their Rabbi, the one they had called the Messiah, the one they had hoped would take over as the King of Israel (By the way, Judas was probably still trying to manipulate that into happening—which could be why he

“betrayed” Jesus. He thought this would force Jesus’ hand.) Anyway, here was Jesus, wanting to wash their feet.

Peter, outspoken as usual, spoke the mind of them all when, aghast, he said, “You will never wash MY feet, Lord.” He was sure that, if anything, it should be the other way around. This kind of “menial” work, they thought, must surely be beneath the one who was leader.

Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, if you do not receive this act of love, you will have no part of me.” Jesus knew that he would soon be sending the disciples out into the world, not as disciples, not as students anymore, but as apostles, as teachers. He wanted them to understand that their leadership, their teaching, would be a different kind.

Theirs would be leadership by example, of serving their brothers and sisters by extending their love. It would not be, as was common among the religious teachers of the day, to share ideas or concepts that they had not lived and to feel that their position made them better than those they taught.

If Peter wasn't willing to be served by Jesus, his teacher, he would not be willing to follow Jesus' example and serve his students. Said Jesus, “Whoever among you would call himself the leader is not the one who feels BETTER than the rest of you, but, rather, whoever SERVES the most.”

Speaking on behalf of all the leaders at here at Unity of Charlotte, it has been our privilege to serve you.

Today, we are also going to re-enact the lesser known ritual of the last supper, by washing your feet.

Lura and I will first wash each other’s feet, as a symbol of serving and supporting each other’s highest good, which we do on a daily basis. We will then wash the feet of any board members who are here. They, in turn will wash the feet of any Volunteer

Ministry Leaders who are here. These leaders will in turn wash the feet of everyone else.

Each of us here is both a Truth student and a minister. Each of you has been a disciple--that is, you have submitted yourself to a discipline taught to you by teachers you have trusted.

Each of you is also learning to be an APOSTLE. An apostle is one who carries to others what he or she has learned. An apostle is a leader, an ambassador.

Jesus said, "Whoever would be my disciple, let him deny his own self, (his ego) take up his cross, (face himself, his shadow and his magnificence) and follow me."

As it has been our joy to serve you, we encourage you to go forth and to symbolically "wash the feet" of everyone in your life – to be a leader, a minister, by serving and by extending your love.

This is, by the way, the only way you will have the experience of "keeping" what you have learned and gained in your spiritual studies – to find some way to continually give it away. It is how you will fully CLAIM all you have learned.

The designations of teacher and student are temporary, and refer only to a particular field of study. They have nothing at all to do with "better than" or "less than." The true title of "teacher or "rabbi" belongs to those who are willing to be taught by everyone, those who expand their willingness to eventually see everyone on earth as reflections of their mind.

(Mingle: "You are my mirror. Thank you for showing me things I didn't know were in me.")

Teachers are people who are learning the difference between sacrifice and service, and who do their best to practice the concept that there is no difference at all between giving and receiving. Teachers strive to see everyone as their equal. Having practiced

seeing the magnificence in themselves, they strive to see that same grandeur in everyone else, as well.

We ask you at this time to remove your shoes and stockings.  
(Pause while they do this.)

As you have studied and grown, you have been learning to shift the perception you have of your body. Each part of your body has a function, and each part represents some aspect of your inner being. Your feet are the part of you on which you stand. They literally represent your inner quality of “understanding.” To understand means to know, in your heart and body, as well as in your head, that something is so.

Your beliefs about yourself, others, life, and God are what your entire life stands on, what causes or motivates you to act or react. Through the process of personal transformation, you have all been learning that the beliefs you had been standing on were upside down and backward from God’s reality.

For example, defenses really don’t make you safer. Only being vulnerable does that. Giving doesn’t result in you having less but more.

Through your participation in the church, you have been undergoing a process of deep mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual change. You have been clearing your heart and mind of “MIS-understandings” upon which you had based your entire life.

Through a willingness to hear, to feel, to change your mind, to practice what you were learning and to make lots of mistakes, you have begun to create a new foundation on which to stand, the solid foundation of the divine truth of your being.

You have begun to learn and to demonstrate eternal, unchangeable spiritual principles which work without regard to personalities. You have made this foundation yours by practicing it as a way of life and experiencing its results.

It is fitting today that we minister to and love your feet. They are the part of you which is most in touch with the earth, with physical reality. This church is devoted to the everyday practical application of spiritual principles. It is, after all, Practical Christianity.

You have been learning, to use Jesus' words, how to be very much **IN** the world, without being **OF** the world. You have been practicing how to bring your spiritual understanding to the world, rather than letting the world teach you what is the final truth. In other words, you have been learning how to be ministers, representatives of God on planet earth.

Jesus said something many years ago which we echo today: "There will be times when you will be the only one present who can see the truth. Especially at those times, remember what you have learned here, what you have practiced here.

Remember that you have seen the face of Christ, the innocence in someone, you have known the real truth beyond the appearance. You have felt the love.

You have experienced the difference between surrendering to the voice for God and selling out to the ego's fear, lack, and illusions of separation. You have seen the difference between expressing your power and being in control.

Keep teaching yourself the truth more and more deeply by seeing beyond the appearances and sharing what you know with others, in whatever way is appropriate.

Your feet are the part of you which carries you forward. Having released many MIS-understandings about who you are and what life can be, and having developed a new solid foundation of principles you know to be true because of your willingness to practice them, you are now in a position to move forward into a life of greater success, love, happiness, and fulfillment.

Like Jesus, and like Lura and I, you have but two things to share with the people in your life – your “body” and your “blood” – your understanding spiritual principles and the way you have applied them in your life.

“No one,” said Jesus, “lights a lamp and then puts a basket over it so that its light cannot be shared by the others in his or her life.”

The light that you are will continue to grow the more willing you are to share it with others, to serve them (to wash their feet).

The flame in your heart will continue to grow as you practice the principles you have claimed as your own, and as you extend the love that you are to others.

You really, literally, actually are the light of the world. You are the salt, or seasoning agent, of the earth. You have all been learning to be ministers, or representatives, of God.

We will now begin the washing of each other’s feet.

(Have each say, “Thank you for allowing me to serve you.”)

(Continue with music playing until everyone’s feet have been washed.)

Close – Meditation

Then, **It’s In Everyone of Us** – 2 Choruses