

The Last Supper

Bible Study

Read: Mathew 26:17-30 and John 13:1-20

What does the name mean?

The term “Maundy” comes from the Latin “mandatum;” it is from a verb that means “to give” or “to order” — command. What commandments does Jesus give his disciples in the accounts of the Last Supper?

The Last Supper

On the first Maundy Thursday, after they had eaten, Jesus gave the disciples his body and blood together with the bread and wine for the forgiveness of their sins. Called Holy Communion or the Eucharist, Lutherans believe this to be one of two sacraments — gifts from God. Most worship services focus on the meal and communion as a way to commemorate this day. What does Communion mean to you?

Sacraments are also sometimes called the Means of Grace. That is, in baptism and communion, we know that God acts through the physical elements and the spoken word to be fully present. These are God’s gracious gifts to us. The Word, read, spoken, prayed, and sung, is also a Means of Grace. In other words, we know in each of these three ways that God’s grace comes to us and meets us where we are. How do you experience God’s presence in Communion, Baptism and the Word?

Foot washing

The story of the Last Supper in John’s Gospel records a remarkable event that is not mentioned in the other Gospels — to illustrate humility, Jesus performs the duty of a slave, washing the feet of his disciples and urging them to do the same for one another. Some Lutheran congregations incorporate this act of humility into their Maundy Thursday services.ⁱ Have you ever had your feet washed or washed someone else’s feet? What was that experience like? Imagine the scene in the upper room with Jesus and the disciples. What are the sights and sounds you imagine? What are the feelings and thoughts going through your mind?

Life experience

Read the following article of a congregation that meets on the streets of Philadelphia.

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2012/03/special-welcome-cleansing-maundy-thursday/>

What stands out to you in the story? What is the transformation people experience because of communion and foot washing? What might that teach you about the transformation you could experience in the Eucharist?

ⁱ <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2013/04/three-days-traditions-maundy-thursday-good-friday-vigil-easter/>