

Ways to Celebrate the Great Three Days

Maundy Thursday

- ✦ Have a simple Maundy Thursday meal and suddenly break into communion using the bread and juice on the table from the meal.
- ✦ Invite people into an intimate Maundy Thursday communion service by admitting only 11 people at a time to a table in a candlelit room. Have them sit and serve one another around the table after appropriate words and prayers. This should take 20 minutes, and you can have people sign up for times throughout the evening beforehand.
- ✦ Do a footwashing service on Maundy Thursday, starting with the washing of feet (or hands) and then proceeding to the table, or, as it happens in the Gospel of John, just start washing feet in the middle of the meal (John 13:2).
- ✦ Strip the sanctuary of its meaningful symbols
- ✦ Have some kind of service with other churches in order to signify the oneness we have in Christ, for which Jesus prayed (John 17:21). Make the connection between the ecumenical worship/work and Jesus' prayer for unity explicit so people understand why we're doing this.
- ✦ This day celebrates Jesus' command that we serve one another as he served us when he washed our feet, which was the job of a slave/servant. Instead of doing a ritual footwashing, organize a "Servants' Service" whereby people sign up to serve others in the community by scrubbing floors, cleaning out gutters, weeding gardens, planting a community garden, doing whatever the community needs as a servant of Christ. At the end of your service, hand those for whom we've served a card with the Maundy Thursday scripture and something like the following printed on it:

Thank you for the honor of serving you today as Christ served his disciples by washing their feet:

During supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" . . . After Jesus 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? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and

Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. [John 13:2-15]

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Have the servant sign their name. On the back of the card, have the church name, address, phone number, web site, and worship times printed on the back. After receiving this, if they want to talk further, be available, but the purpose is sheer service with a servant's heart as a Lenten discipline in fulfillment of the Lord's commandment.

Good Friday

- ✦ Do a Good Friday Tenebrae service
- ✦ Do a Good Friday Service with Solemn Intercessions and Solemn Reproaches
- ✦ Do a Stations of the Cross Service
- ✦ Do a Seven Last Words from the Cross Service
- ✦ Strip the sanctuary of its meaningful symbols during the reading of the Passion Narrative. Process these items in on Easter morning along with a plethora of Easter flowers and replace them during the singing of the opening Easter hymn.
- ✦ Organize a prayer vigil from Maundy Thursday through Easter morning. Have various people sign up to pray throughout the Three Days, sitting with the Christ candle. Provide some instructions and a list of people and things to pray for, including the universal church, those who are preparing for baptism throughout the world, those who are sick who are known to us, those in special need around the world in various circumstances, those striving for freedom, those working for peace, those persecuted for the faith and doing good, etc.

Holy Saturday

- ✦ Hold an Easter Vigil, having different church groups responsible for various parts of the salvation story however they want to communicate their scripture. Travel to different places throughout the church and neighborhood for these various readings. For the traditional service of the East Vigil, see the *Book of Common Worship*, pp. 297-314.