

# starters for Sunday

## **Maundy Thursday**

**24 March 2016**

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev Dr Clare McBeath, Co-Principal of Northern Baptist College and Rev Tim Presswood, Transitional Regional Minister, North-Western Baptist Association, both members of Christian Aid's Worship and Theology Collective, for their thoughts on Maundy Thursday.

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## Quick Guide...

Helping people prepare for reading the Bible in worship can make a real difference. Overcoming nerves, reading in ways suitable to the text, speaking clearly etc.

You may wish to email these three links to the people reading Scripture on Sunday to support them in their involvement in worship: [Managing your nerves](#); [Creative readings](#); [Worship at the Lectern](#)

### [Exodus 12](#)

The ordaining of the Passover meal centres around the “household.” Each household is to take – or share with neighbours - a pure lamb and after spreading some of its blood on the door frame, eat it roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

But these ‘households’ are not ‘safe’ homes. The people are in captivity. They must eat, loins girded, sandals on feet and staff in hand. They are to eat hurriedly, ready for the Lord to pass over so they can escape.

### [Psalm 116](#)

The middle Psalm of *Hallel* – Psalms 113-118. These are expressions of thanksgiving and joy for divine redemption, chanted in the synagogue on major festivals including the first day of Passover.

Psalm 116 is individual – but the Psalmist is probably speaking on behalf of the nation

“I will lift up the cup of salvation” – no cup in the Exodus story – but Passover Meal (Seder) contains four cups to commemorate the four sayings of “I will bring you out” “I will deliver you” “I will redeem you” “I will take you.”

### [1 Corinthians 11](#)

Jesus has no safe home in which to celebrate Passover. Instead, on the night when he was betrayed he ate a last meal with his friends. In bread is he remembering the Paschal lamb? In wine is he remembering the Cup of Salvation from Psalm 116 – which, of course, will have been chanted earlier in the evening.



## [John 13](#)

This reading doesn't fit. Its focus is not the Passover meal itself, but rather Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet, for which the meal is just a backdrop.

But again, the sense of insecurity of a man who knows he is about to be betrayed is clear.

It is often asserted – on what historical evidence I don't know – that foot washing was a part of the ancient Jewish tradition. A servant, it is asserted, would have washed the guests' feet as they entered the house.

John 13: 4 clearly states that Jesus “got up from the table...” He took off his outer robe in the middle of the meal and tied a towel around himself. This is no ordinary commemoration. This is an extraordinary intervention into the traditional Passover commemoration. Foot washing is not mentioned in the Exodus story – indeed the people are specifically told to eat with their sandals on.

### **Ideas for Sermon**

If your tradition allows, it may be that Maundy Thursday lends itself to exploring God's Word in ways other than a traditional sermon.

Our first three readings all centre on the Passover or Seder meal. Many churches have developed a tradition of eating together on Maundy Thursday (See [Time with Children](#) below). A service could be 'shaped' around a three-course meal.

One common theme in all our readings is insecurity. The Exodus is, of course, set against a background of exile and captivity. The people must be ready to escape as they eat. The Psalmist looks back on this time with gratitude for the deliverance of God. The church at Corinth is anything but secure with its factions and disputes. Paul urges the believers to focus their hopes on the person of Jesus. And finally, Jesus, the homeless teacher of John's gospel looks forward to his own betrayal and death in his washing of the disciples' feet. However in that act he points beyond death to the security of the coming Kingdom when teachers will wash the feet of their pupils. This theme is picked up in Christian Aid's [Count Your Blessings](#) resource which this week focuses on those who lack safe homes.



In Exodus, God commands the people to perform a religious ritual, which has formed the basis of Jewish religious life ever since. The Psalmist is clearly looking back to this part of the tradition. Paul is also very clearly writing to the church at Corinth to order their religious remembering.

You may wish to explore the ways in which our rituals help us to remember God's goodness through the ages – perhaps connecting this with times of sharing food (Marcel Proust's Madeleine cake, springs to mind!).

However, uniquely among the evangelists, John is not interested in the Last Supper or the Passover. John's narrative focuses upon the remarkable story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Not only does Jesus humble himself, taking on the role of a servant, but he does so in the middle of their religious ritual, using it as both a means of predicting his own betrayal and death, and also a way of enacting the values of the Kingdom by which the disciples are to live.

## **Time with Children**

It is not necessarily easy for children to engage with the themes of Maundy Thursday. It is usually a quiet and even sombre time of reflection.

Rather than having a specific "children's time," try to make the whole service "All-age."

The Jewish Passover Meal (Seder) lends itself to this. The tradition is that the children ask the 'Four Questions' of Seder, but even if no child is present, the questions must still be asked. In this tradition, you might wish to invite children to read, to pray and even, if your tradition allows, to serve the Eucharist.

We offer a 'menu' for such a service.



## Eucharistic Meal for Maundy Thursday

### Set the scene

Set out the room with tables for a meal.

You will also need some bowls of water and towels.

You may want to find some appropriate pictures for each section to display on a projector.

Set up a small tent at the side of the room (if you don't have a tent make a den with blankets, chairs and clothes pegs)

### Appetiser

Come in, come in

you are welcome

make yourselves at home

greet your neighbours

and your friends

only don't take off your coats

or your shoes.

come in, come in

you are welcome

make yourselves at home

greet your neighbours

and your friends

only we might need to eat

quite quickly

come in, come in

you are welcome

make yourselves at home

greet your neighbours

and your friends



only we might have to leave  
before we finish

[song or hymn]

### **Starter**

for tonight we remember  
the story of Passover  
where home was not  
a place of safety  
where the people lived in fear  
and were not free

for tonight we remember  
the story of Passover  
where home was not  
a place of safety  
where at any moment  
you might have to up and flee

for tonight we remember  
the story of Passover  
where home was not  
a place of safety  
quick, grab what you can carry  
and go

[Reading – Exodus 12: 1 – 4, (5 – 10), 11 – 14]

[Brief reflection on Exodus reading]



and as we remember  
we pray for those today  
who have to grab what they can  
and go  
for those fleeing war and violence  
only to arrive at closed borders

and as we remember  
we pray for those today  
who have to grab what they can  
and go  
for those making treacherous journeys  
carrying children and plastic bags

and as we remember  
we pray for those today  
who have to grab what they can  
and go  
for those who are out in the cold  
making their home in a city of tents

[Reading – Psalm 116: 1 – 2, 12 – 19]

[brief reflection on the Psalm]

[song]



## Main

Paul picks up the story of the last supper

[Reading 1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 26]

[Brief reflection on 1 Corinthians 12]

[Song]

And so we too are gathered  
on this evening in Holy Week  
we have looked back to Passover  
and remembered those  
who have to grab everything  
and go  
and now we meet  
as a new kind of community  
a community where all are welcome  
and all have a place to live safely  
a place to take their shoes off  
where even the feet of Judas  
are washed

for Judas leaves the meal  
and betrays the one  
who washed his feet  
and broke bread  
and shared wine  
with him



and starts a train of events  
that lead Jesus  
through the garden of Gethsemane  
to a cross outside the city walls  
as Jesus pays the price  
for daring to live  
God's vision of shalom  
of healing and peace  
here on earth

for this is my body  
broken for you  
[break bread]  
for this is my blood  
poured out for you  
[lift cup]  
do this  
in memory of me

[share bread and wine]

for this is the bread of life  
and the wine of the new kin-dom  
a new kind of community  
a community where all are welcome  
and all have a place to live safely  
a place to take their shoes off  
where even the feet of the refugees  
are washed



And so as we are gathered around this table  
in this place of warmth and shelter  
we offer our prayers for each other and for our world

[invite people to name situations and places they wish to pray for]

[Song]

## **Dessert**

John does not tell us  
the story of the last supper  
instead the foot washing  
looks forward  
to a new kind of community  
a community where all are welcome  
and all have a place to live safely  
a place to take their shoes off  
and even the feet of Judas  
are washed

we invite each other to re-enact an event  
that is unusual in our culture  
as we take a bowl of water and a towel  
and we wash each other's hands/feet

but before we do  
let us listen to John's telling  
of the story of Jesus  
washing the disciples feet

[Reading – John 13: 1 – 17, 31b – 35]



[Brief reflection on John 13]

[washing each other's hands or feet either in silence or to some quiet music or while singing a song]

## Coffee

As we prepare to leave this place  
of warmth and safety  
we may want to do something practical  
to begin to build the new community  
which Jesus calls us to be

so there is a tent  
a symbol of those who have no home  
but who long for safety and peace  
ready to receive any donations  
as we count our blessings  
to help Christian Aid.

So may the blessing of the God who calls the people out of Egypt  
call us out from our comfort and our safety  
to embrace a journey of challenge and risk

May the blessing of the Son who kneels and washes our feet  
call us out from our comfort and our safety  
to embrace and serve those we meet on the journey

May the blessing of the Spirit who weaves dreams of a new community  
call us out from our comfort and our safety  
to provide welcome and hospitality to strangers as well as friends.



## Prayers

### A Gathering Prayer

As we meet in the gathering gloom  
To commemorate the extinguishing  
Of your light  
We offer you our praise  
That you, who was born of light,  
Embraced the darkness of our world  
Shared the insecurity of homelessness  
And walked with those who live in fear.  
As we meet in the gathering gloom  
May our prayers be the shelter  
In which your hope lives.

### A Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of the Exodus  
You journeyed with your people  
In good times and in bad  
You travelled with your people  
In freedom and in captivity  
You voyaged with your people  
In faithfulness and infidelity  
And you are with us now.

Forgive us  
That we still set nation against nation  
Forgive us  
That we still allow children to be killed  
Forgive us  
That we still refuse to accept the outsider  
and hold your security tight.



[Silence]

God of the Exodus

You journeyed with your people

In good times and in bad

You travelled with your people

In freedom and in captivity

You voyaged with your people

In faithfulness and infidelity

And you are with us now.

### **A Prayer of Intercession**

[Name situations and places]

Footwashing God,

We have named those names on our hearts

We have spoken those situations out loud

And we look forward

To the time when all will know the shelter

Of your coming Kin-dom.

As you have washed our feet

May we wash the feet of those

Who stand in need of your love,

Your peace

Your healing

Until your shalom is known

On earth

As it is in heaven.





In addition to the above prayers, prepared by our contributor, other prayers may be found in *Living Stones* which is the theme for this year's Pray Now. It was also the theme for Heart and Soul 2015. *Living Stones* is available from [St Andrew Press](#)

## Suggested songs

CH4 198/ CG 4	Let us build a house where love can dwell
CH4 685	For everyone born, a place at the table
CH4 694	Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You
CH4 655	For your generous providing
CH4 656	I Come With Joy, A Child of God
CH4 362	Heaven Shall Not Wait
CH5 495	Yesu, Yesu (Jesu, Jesu/ Jesus, Jesus)
CH4 374	From Heaven you came, helpless babe
CH4 763	God bless to us our bread



## Additional Resources

### Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

### Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [Living Stones](#) is available from [St Andrew Press](#).



### Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music pages [Different Voices](#).

### Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

### Scots Worship Resources

[The Kirk's Ear](#) - Scots in the Kirk series for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and other times of the year

[Wurship Ouk bi Ouk](#) - Metrical psalms, hymns, prayers and words for worship

[Scots Sacraments](#) may give you helpful material if you are celebrating Communion or have a Baptism.

*The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to express its thanks to Rev Dr Clare McBeath and Rev Tim Presswood for providing us with this Sunday's material.*

*Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.*

