

ITEMS IN THE CENTER OF EACH TABLE

- Candle with matches
- Towel, empty bowl, small pitcher of water
- Pita bread, cup of grape juice
- Bowl of earth with small stones
- Large nail
- Small bowl of scented oil (frankincense and myrrh)



ROOM

- Consider offering this service in the round with the tables around a large cross in the center and plenty of room for folks to pray at the cross.
- The service begins with the cross covered. We used a large piece of black fabric.

SERVICE PROGRAM

- One at each place setting
- The program includes the order of worship with lyrics for each song and some simple instructions

FULL SCRIPTS

- As persons arrive, ask them if they would be willing to do a reading. If they say yes, exchange their program for a full script.
- Each reading part is highlighted in a different full script
- The Narrator may be the same person throughout the entire service or change with each scene of the story
- Persons stand and read from where they are seated



WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER

Modeled after a Jewish Sabbath prayer

PASTOR

Please light the candle in the center of your table. Look at the candle as we pray. Repeat after me.

Merciful God, our Rescuer and Redeemer

Open wide our minds, to receive your Holy Word *sweep hands around to forehead*

Open wide our hearts, to receive your saving love *sweep hands around to chest*

Open wide our spirits, and fill us full of light *sweep hands around to cupped position*

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

based on John 13:1-17, 34-35 (NIV)

SOLOIST OR ALL SINGING: *The Servant Song, The Faith We Sing #2222, verse 1*

*Brother, sister, let me serve you
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.*

NARRATOR

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

SOLOIST OR ALL SINGING:

*Brother, sister, let me serve you
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.*

NARRATOR

Jesus poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,

SIMON PETER

Lord, are you going to wash my feet?

JESUS

You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.

SIMON PETER

No! You shall never wash my feet.

JESUS

Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.

SIMON PETER

Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!

JESUS

A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean.
And you are clean, though not every one of you.

NARRATOR

For Jesus knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.
When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

SOLOIST OR ALL SINGING:

*Brother, sister, let me serve you
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.*

JESUS

Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

WASHING ONE ANOTHER'S HANDS

*As a sign of Christ's love at work in us, we serve one another and are vulnerable to one another
Option- offer a foot washing instead of washing hands. Instrumental music during the washing*

THE LAST SUPPER

PASTOR:

After the meal, Jesus prayed a prayer of thanksgiving. Please repeat after me:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
Who has saved our ancestors from Egypt
and who is saving us.
May your will be done
so your name is glorified in all the earth
and so all people may be moved to worship you with one accord.

Speaks while picking up a piece of bread

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
Who brings forth bread from the earth.

Speaks while picking up some grapes

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.

Amen. (end echo)

Then Jesus took the bread, broke it, gave it to those seated around the table and said, "Take, eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave it to those seated around the table and said, "Drink from this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant. Poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me."

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us gathered here
And on these gifts of bread and wine
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world, the Body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

HOLY COMMUNION

One person at each table lifts the pita bread as the pastor does. One person lifts the cup as the pastor does. Following the consecration, share the bread and juice with each other at the table.

CONGREGATION- *What Wondrous Love is This, United Methodist Hymnal #292 (vs 1-2)
or a solo/ensemble selection of your choosing*

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.*

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, that caused the lord of life to lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
to lay aside his crown for my soul.*

BOWL OF EARTH

Share, touch and smell the bowl of earth with each other. Take a stone and hold it during the next reading.

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

Matthew 26:36-45 NRSV

NARRATOR:

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated.

Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

CONGREGATION- *What Wondrous Love is This, United Methodist Hymnal #292 (vs 3-4)
Or a solo/ensemble selection of your choosing*

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing,

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.

*To God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM, while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme I will sing.*

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.

*And when from death I'm free I'll sing and joyful be, and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and through eternity I'll sing on.*

THE ARREST AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

based on John 18-19 NRSV

NARRATOR: The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Saint John.

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them,

JESUS: "Whom are you looking for?"

ALL READERS: "Jesus of Nazareth."

JESUS: "I am he."

NARRATOR: Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them,

JESUS: "Whom are you looking for?"

ALL READERS: "Jesus of Nazareth."

JESUS: "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."

NARRATOR: This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus.

JESUS: "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

NARRATOR: So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter,

WOMAN: "Are you not also one of this man's disciples?"

PETER: "I am not."

NARRATOR: Now the slaves and the officials had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered,

JESUS: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."

NARRATOR: When he had said this, one of the officials standing nearby struck Jesus on the face

OFFICIAL: "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

JESUS: "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

NARRATOR: Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him,

OFFICIAL: "Are you not also one of his disciples?"

PETER: "I am not."

NARRATOR: One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked,

SLAVE: "Did I not see you in the garden with him?"

NARRATOR: Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said,

PILATE: "What accusation do you bring against this man?"

OFFICIAL: "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

PILATE: "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law."

OFFICIAL: "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

NARRATOR: This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him,

PILATE: "Are you the King of the Jews?"

JESUS: "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

PILATE: "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

JESUS: "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

PILATE: "So you are a king?"

JESUS: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

PILATE: "What is truth?"

NARRATOR: After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them,

PILATE: "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"

ALL READERS: "Not this man, but Barabbas!"

NARRATOR: Now Barabbas was a bandit.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe.

Pause while someone presents a crown of thorns and/or purple robe to the congregation.

They kept coming up to him, saying,

SOLDIER: "Hail, King of the Jews!"

NARRATOR: and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them,

PILATE: "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him."

NARRATOR: So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them,

PILATE: "Here is the man!"

NARRATOR: When the chief priests and the officials saw him, they shouted,

ALL READERS: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

PILATE: "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him."

OFFICIAL: "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

NARRATOR: Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus,

PILATE: "Where are you from?"

NARRATOR: But Jesus gave him no answer.

PILATE: "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?"

JESUS: "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

NARRATOR: From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out,

OFFICIAL: "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

NARRATOR: When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon.

PILATE: "Here is your King!"

ALL READERS: "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!"

PILATE: "Shall I crucify your King?"

OFFICIAL: "We have no king but the Caesar."

NARRATOR: Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

THE CROSS IS UNCOVERED

Pass the large nail to one another during the next reading

NARRATOR: So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,

OFFICIAL: "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'"

PILATE: "What I have written I have written."

NARRATOR: When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another,

SOLDIER: "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it."

NARRATOR: This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother,

JESUS: "Woman, here is your son. Here is your mother."

NARRATOR: And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture),

JESUS: "I am thirsty."

NARRATOR: A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said,

JESUS: "It is finished."

NARRATOR: Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

You are encouraged to come forward and pray at the cross.

SONG DURING PRAYER TIME: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, United Methodist Hymnal #298

*When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died;
my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God;
all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.*

*See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.*

BURIAL OF JESUS

NARRATOR

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

If possible, have someone play a military snare drum as the cross is covered.

THE CROSS IS COVERED

SIGN OF THE CROSS

Smell the anointing oil and use it to make the sign of the cross on a neighbor's forehead

Please leave in silence when you are ready to exit

Service conceived and compiled by Lisa Ann Moss Degrenia © 2015 www.revlisad.com

You are welcome to use this service with proper attribution. Please contact Lisa directly for publishing and posting consideration.

