



**First Church of Christ in Mansfield
(Congregational) United Church of Christ**

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church
The Rev. Charles Ericson, Intentional Interim Minister
Erik Haeger, Organist
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**April 17, 2025 — Maundy Thursday
Service of the Last Supper and Tenebrae**

Welcome to Our Guests!

*We're delighted you have joined us for worship; the members are the ministers of this church...
if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us!*

Chimes

Prelude

Greeting and Introduction

Centering in the Spirit

Leader: We have come to worship the Trinity,

**All: One God, three persons, beyond our understanding,
yet constantly revealing themselves to us.**

Leader: We have come to worship an infinite being

All: who took on finite flesh: fully human and fully divine—

Leader: a being who is love itself,

All: yet loathes injustice;

Leader: who is almighty,

All: yet let go of power to be in solidarity with outcasts and criminals.

Leader: We gather to worship the living God

All: who died.

Opening Hymn

An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare

CH 385

Prayer of Invocation

Gracious God, you give us the sun to illumine the day, and the moon and stars to shine by night. As we gather this evening to remember the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his closest and dearest disciples, please kindle in us the flame of your love that our lives may shed abroad the radiance of your light and the world may be full of your splendor of your glory, through Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. Amen.

Gospel Reading:

“The Last Supper”

Luke 22:7-20

⁷Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.” ⁹They asked him, “Where do you want us to make preparations for it?” ¹⁰“Listen,” he said to them, “when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters ¹¹and say to the owner of the house, ‘The teacher asks you, “Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’” ¹²He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.” ¹³So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. ¹⁴When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

~ Service of the Last Supper ~

Prayer for Transformation

Leader: When we follow in the steps of Jesus, we say yes to bearing his cross — not because there is any kind of value in suffering, not to prove our selflessness, nor because God wills it, but because living as Jesus lived makes the cross inevitable. So together, let us pray:

All: Jesus, when we side with you, we side with all who threaten the status quo. When we refuse the call to see others' struggles as our own, we abandon our kin to shoulder their crosses alone. So we pray, O God, embolden us to accept the risks that come with following you — even as we resist the powers and systems that set crosses on our shoulders. Amen.

Words of Grace

The Last Supper shows us who is welcome at Christ's table:

People who sometimes trust, and sometimes question, who are sometimes fearful, sometimes bold. Liars and backsliders, doubters and deniers, and those who still struggle to get free of what the world calls power, but commit to revolution anyway.

Impulsive people. Imperfect people. People who mess up over and over—but try again, and again, and again. In short: each and every one of us. And when we act these ways, God does not respond with anger and condemnation; but with empathy, understanding, overwhelming grace and unconditional, redeeming love — all being poured out upon each and every one of us this very moment. So let no one ever tell you that you are not welcome here: Jesus wants you at his table, exactly as you are.

Invitation

This table is open to all who...seek to follow Christ's way.

Come to this sacred table not because you must, but because you may.

Let us come not because we are fulfilled, but because in our emptiness
We stand in need of God's mercy and assurance.
Let us come not to express an opinion,
But to seek a presence, and to pray for a spirit.
Let us come to this table, then, kindred, as we are; partake and share.
It is spread for all of us so that we might again know
That God has come to us, shared our common lot,
And invited us to join the people of God's new age.

Communion Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Sharing the Elements

Anthem

The Upper Room

Don Besig & Nancy Price

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, by coming to this table, we receive gifts beyond measure. We give thanks for Jesus Christ, through whom we receive life, and in whom we are bound in covenant. Renew us, so that we may willingly serve as Christ served. Amen.

Hymn

Go To Dark Gethsemane

CH 196

~ Service of Tenebrae ~

Matthew 26:20-25	The Shadow of Betrayal
Matthew 26:31-35	The Shadow of Desertion
Luke 22:39-44	The Agony of the Soul
Mark 14:32-41	The Unshared Vigil
John 17:1-6	"Father, the Hour Has Come"
John 17:15-22	"That They May All Be One"
John 18:1-5	The Arrest in the Garden
Mark 15:16-20	The Shadow of the Cross
John 1:1-4, 14, 10, 12	The Word Was God

Benediction

And as we leave communal worship
to enter deeper into this liminal space between life, death, and life again,
go with the knowledge that the Triune God—
who fashioned you with love,
whose Spirit breathes in and through you,
and who shares in our every sorrow and every joy—
goes with you, even in doubt, even in death,
even to the end of the age.
Go in peace, and in silence,
to wait with those who wait, and mourn with those who mourn. Amen.

Source: *Traditional Maundy Thursday Readings, Holy Week Liturgy from Sanctified Art, and Communion Liturgy, found in the United Church of Christ Book of Worship.*

Join us for:

Good Friday Vigil

The sanctuary will be open from noon to 3 p.m. Resources on “The Seven Last Words of Christ” will be available for your individual reflection and prayer while contemplative music plays in the background. Take as little or as much time as you wish.

Easter Morning

Start the day with the Sunrise Service and breakfast at Spring Hill Baptist Church.

Then, at 10:15 a.m. at First Church, we will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus through scripture, prayers, and music centered on the hope and joy of Christ's victory over death. The children will process with the new Paschal Candle and will “unearth” the Alleluia banner.