



Mennonite
Church
Canada

Resource Centre

From our Churches

Church: Ridgeview Mennonite Church
Gordonville, PA

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Silent Evening Meal and Footwashing Service for Maundy Thursday

Notes for Leaders

This service includes a simple meal of breads, cheeses and fruits that is eaten in silence. Music and scripture readings from Matthew, Luke and John tell the story of the anointing of Jesus' feet, Judas' decision to betray Jesus, the Last Supper, Jesus washing the disciples' feet, and the scenes in the Garden of Gethsemane. Candles are extinguished throughout the readings, and the service ends in silence and darkness.

Several weeks before the service, announcements are made in Sunday morning worship which let people know the expectations regarding silence during the meal. On Maundy Thursday evening, signs are posted just outside the fellowship hall to remind people to enter in silence and find a place at one of the tables within.

The fellowship hall is dimly lit. Eight candles (of various types and sizes) are lit and burning on a central table. Bread, cheese and fruit are set out on each table. At each place setting is a bulletin listing the scriptures and songs for the worship service that follows the meal.

A small group of singers can sit together at one table in order to lead and accompany the singing. They may choose to sing some of the songs and invite the whole group to sing others. Scripture readers (be sure to choose people of various ages) can be seated throughout the room and simply read from their table (or if the group is large, they can come to a microphone to read). At the appropriate time, a designated group brings in basins and towels for the footwashing ritual. Persons will need to be assigned to extinguish the candles.

Order of Service:

All are seated in silence.

A sung grace, such as “Great God, the giver of all good” (HWB 458) is offered.

The meal is eaten in silence.

Scripture readings and songs:

Mary anoints Jesus – John 12:1-3

Song: My Jesus, I love thee (HWB 522, vv.1, 2)

Candle is extinguished.

Judas objects, Jesus respond – John 12:4-8

Silence

Candle is extinguished.

Judas agrees to betray Jesus – Matthew 26:14-16

Song: What wondrous love is this? (HWB 530, vv.1, 2)

Candle is extinguished.

The Passover meal is eaten – Matthew 26:17-29

Song: I am the Bread of Life (HWB 472, vv.1-3)

Candle is extinguished.

The dispute about greatness and Jesus warns Peter – Luke 22:24-34

Song: Will you let me be your servant (HWB 307)

Candle is extinguished.

Jesus washes the disciples' feet – John 13:1-17

Song: Jesus took a towel (HWB 449)

Candle is extinguished.

Footwashing (basins and towels are placed around the room; during the ritual, anyone may lead out in a song; after completing the ritual, participants re-gather at tables in silence)

Jesus prays in the garden and is arrested – Matthew 26:36-46

Song: 'Tis midnight, and on Olive's brow (HWB 241)

Candle is extinguished.

Song: Stay with me (HWB 242)

Last candle is extinguished.

Instrumental ensemble plays the haunting melody, “Ebenezer” (HWB 410).

Worshippers depart in silence whenever they are ready to go.