**Call to Dinner  - divide up as desired**

We are Jesus’ disciples, following him even as he moves toward the cross.

**Even as he wraps a towel around his waist and kneels to wash the filth from the feet of his friends.**

We are Jesus’ disciples, longing to be faithful even as the way gets hard.

**Even as the powers that oppose the way of Christ press in around us.**

We are Jesus’ disciples, struggling to love others even as Jesus loved us.

**We are Jesus’ disciples, gathered here to worship God and to share Christ’s love with one another.**

May we draw strength from this gathered community.

**Surely God is present with us!  Amen.**

**Joys and Concerns & Prayer**

Give everyone a chance to say something they are worried about and something they are grateful for. Have one person round out the time with a prayer.

**Gospel Lesson: Read out loud John 13:1-15**

13 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4 got up from the table,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+13%3A1-17&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26624a)] took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

5 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. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” 7 Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” 8

Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” 9 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 10 Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+13%3A1-17&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26630b)] but is entirely clean. And you[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+13%3A1-17&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26630c)] are clean, though not all of you.” 11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

12 After he 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? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. 14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

Reader: The Word of God for the people of God

All: **Thanks be to God!**

**Questions for discussion:**

* What do you know about this passage already?
* What questions does this bring up?
* What do you know about the old practice of foot washing?

**Info for consideration:**

* In biblical Palestine, it was customary hospitality practice for a host to provide their guests with water upon arrival so that guests could wash their own feet from their dusty travels.  It was a practical need for cleanliness, but I also imagine that it was a comfort, a relief for the guest to be able to clean off the dust of the journey.
* Footwashing itself was a normal practice, but what Jesus did was not normal. Jesus didn’t just provide the water and towel, Jesus knelt down to wash the disciples’ feet himself!
* To wash someone else’s feet was an act considered so lowly that even a Hebrew servant wouldn’t have been asked to do so.  So when Jesus washed the disciples feet, they were rightly caught off guard, embarrassed even!
* It was an act of service, yes, but beyond that—it was an act of radical and extravagant love.  That’s how the passage starts after all.  John introduces the scene writing, “Having loved his own who were in the world, [Jesus] loved them to the end.”
* And after he is done, Jesus explains to the disciples—in case they missed the point—that he did this for an example of how they should treat one another.

  We are called to wash one another’s feet.

We are called to serve one another.

We are called to love one another extravagantly.

One another.

That’s a tricky phrase.  It’s an act of radical mutuality.

* So often when we read this passage or think about Jesus’ example of footwashing, we only remember that we are supposed to serve others.  We are quick to forget that mutuality part. We forget that we are also called to receive footwashing, service, and extravagant love.

**Read together:**  
Like Peter, we get rather squirmy when it comes to receiving other people’s acts of service.  We’d much rather be the one to give, to serve, to wash. We want to be the one who has to give. We want to be the one in control of the situation.

There is something fundamentally uneasy, vulnerable, intimate about being the one to receive.  But Jesus, and later Paul, are persistent in this “one-another” business.

Wash one another’s feet.

Love one another.

Welcome one another.

Bear with one another.

Encourage one another.

Serve one another.

And Jesus’ extravagant love is offered to each and every one of us.  We only have to say yes.

**Questions for discussion**

* How much time have you spent thinking about hand-washing in the last few weeks? More than usual? Have you washed your hands more than usual, too?
* Is hand-washing an act of service? Why or why not?
* What are the good things about washing hands? What is the toll that hand-washing takes?
  + Consider: our hands are raw, and so might our hearts be. How is Jesus showing up in the cracks and raw spots?

**If you have hand lotion, go ahead and grab it. Either, rub lotion on your hands, slowly massaging them as you pray, or let someone else rub lotion on your hands for you as an act of giving and receiving the love of Christ—who meets us in our pain and weakness.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Soothing God, even as we come seeking your balm this day, we offer our time, our energy, and our hearts to you so that we can find your strength in our weakness, your hope in our disappointment, and your peace in our chaos. Thank you for meeting us where we are!**