

## **Maundy Thursday 2024**

All material © Heather Whyte unless stated otherwise.

God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

Luke 22:7-13

Prayer (Adapted from Psalm 118 (PQW))

God of eternity your love is endless throughout creation.

In you we find our strength.

You are the source of life and in you all are born united.

When we realise this our hearts sing out,  
rejoicing in our oneness, rejoicing in love.

In you is eternity,

and though we die, in you we live and so we need not fear.

In this reality there will be trials,

we will mourn and grieve over friends and family loved and lost,  
but we are one and can never be separated.

So, through our tears, we remember  
and in our remembering, we find hope.

Eternal God in you we find our strength,

For you are the source of life and in you all are born united.

Reflection (you might like to have 6 nightlights or candles lit)

During Lent two groups have met to consider the need for time to contemplate and reflect, the need for space and the recognition of special places, and to find ways to practice this.

There are some who see contemplation as a waste of time, questioning what difference it makes. Some think the purpose is enlightenment whilst others recognise it is about being ready, being awake for the moment when the sun rises, when enlightenment dawns, when we understand.

In a way Holy Week is all about those who do not understand, or choose not to understand. For each person who fails to understand the light dims, and the dawn of the kingdom recedes.

The disciples often did not understand. Most of them had no background knowledge of Judaism and did not understand about prophets. Jesus knew this and tried to explain but as the path moved towards the events of Easter all the talk of what must happen was a complete mystery to them. Maybe it is still a mystery to us. (extinguish Candle 1)

The wealthy young ruler did not understand. He had followed all the commandments, he lived a good life but when Jesus suggested he should give away all he had it was inconceivable. He wants salvation but craved his independence, Jesus says let go of independence and understand salvation. (extinguish candle 2)

The religious authorities refuse to understand. Jesus challenges their authority but also offers an opening to a new way of understanding but they choose to ignore his words often deliberately misunderstanding. (extinguish candle 3)

Temple traders did not understand. They were only making a living and chose to deny the injustice in what they did. (extinguish candle 4)

Jerusalem did not understand. Crowds welcome Jesus, caught up in the moment, following the lead of others but they do not understand and so they call for Barrabus to be released instead of Jesus. (extinguish Candle 5)

Judas. Did Judas understand? Judas is often accused and judged by readers of scripture who would say he did not understand. I often wonder if in fact Judas, of all the disciples understood most. If we buy into the prophecy of Easter then someone had to be the catalyst, someone had to play the part of betrayer. The gospels all tell a slightly different story but only Matthew tells of the weight of Judas' guilt bringing him to suicide, the others simply say he was the one who brought the soldiers to arrest Jesus, and we are left to imagine how it must have felt to understand what was required and choose to do it out of love.

Judas – a symbol of failure and worldliness, or a symbol of faith and love. (candle stays lit)

The Last Supper could be seen as getting bogged down in the reality of this world or it can be a reminder to lift our eyes and our hearts to what lies beyond. A moment of contemplation and wakefulness, an opportunity to remember and be aware.

We have forgotten to see

In the quiet of the storm of life there is a peace. It is a peace that comes from knowing the nearness, the strength and the love that breathes within creation. We see it in the bird soaring on the thermal wave; we see it in the child enchanted by a butterfly as it flutters between flowers; we see it in the reflections in a still lake, and we feel it as we sit and wait for the breath of God to ripple around us and fill us with courage for the future.

Except, often we don't sit and wait, too busy with everything we think is important, everything that keeps our familiar life going. We think we are travelling forward but really we are hovering, maintaining something that in our hearts we know is no longer where we should be. We walk past signs and turnings believing we are following the way and ignoring the niggling reality that we missed the way.

We long to be amazed, to be stunned into silence and yet the invitations are all around, but we have become immune to revelation as we hurry through familiar territory, feeling safe and secure. We have furled our wings and forgotten our freedom and the joy of flying, the excitement of exploring and discovering something new.

So, let us lift our eyes to the sky, let us rest secure in love and let us breathe in the inspiration and invitation to journey, allowing ourselves the freedom to explore the path unknown which beckons us onward into the life that is God. (© Heather Whyte 2022)

Prayer Based on Psalm 116 (PQW)

Eternal God, we offer you our praise, in you we are one with all creation and in oneness our voices are heard, our fears are listened to and in love they are borne away, our concerns are shared and in love solutions are found. In you we are free, sorrows are of this time, but joy is eternal, and following the way of love we are following the path of life in all its fullness.

In response we offer all that we are:

In love we will bear others gently.

In love we will share our stories as an offering to you.

In love we will speak of you, even though it may be hard.

In love we will fulfil our promise as followers of Jesus.

In love we will honour all creation.

In love we will offer you our days and my nights, and in all that we do we will seek to honour you.

[John 17:20 – 18:11](#)

[Music – Eric Clapton](#)

We reconvene on Sunday morning....