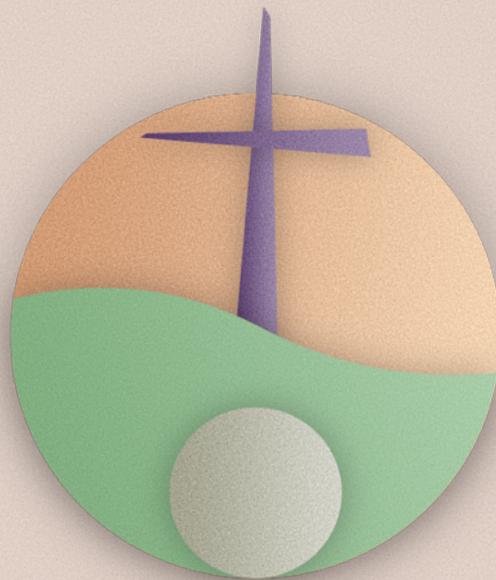


Church Together

Easter – Words Of Anguish And Betrayal

14th April 2022



Welcome

Welcome to **Church Together**.

No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together.

This service is best shared at an Evening Service. It is a reflection on some of the words that were said during the events of the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples, just before his death; and those words spoken and shared during the time in Gethsemane.

The service will include Communion and the lighting of a Candle.

On this special Maundy Thursday Communion Service we will be looking at: **Mark 14 v. 12 – 45**

The theme for tonight's service is: **Easter – Words Of Anguish And Betrayal**





We begin our time together on this Maundy Thursday by lighting a Solitary Candle.

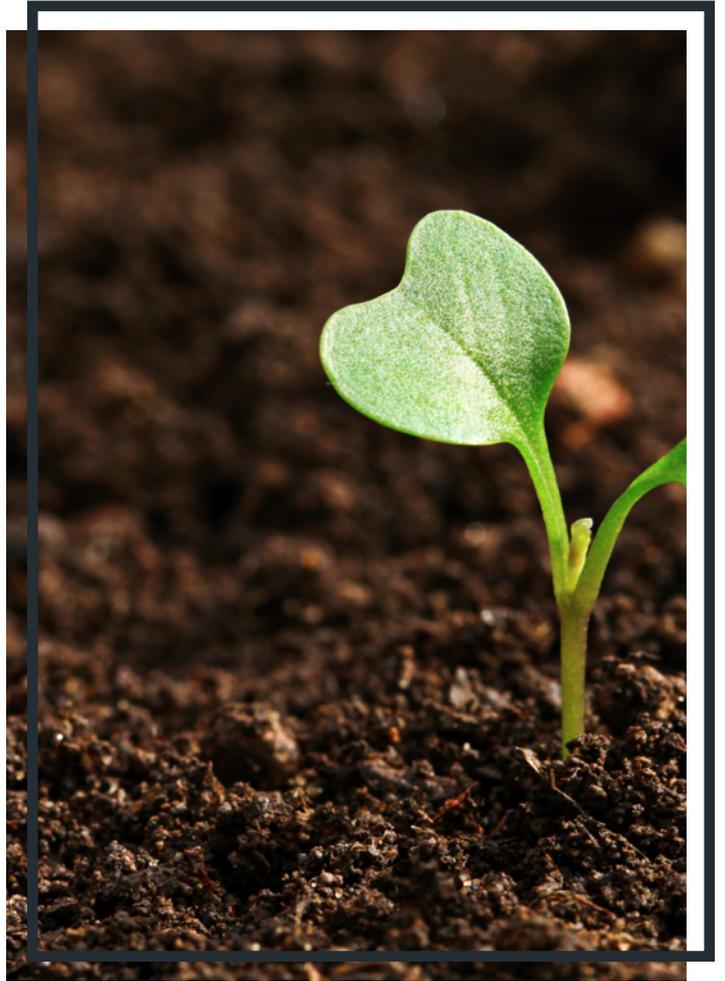
Take time to reflect on its glow and presence.

Thank Jesus that in the business of the day, you are able to take 'time out' of your normal routine in order to spend this hour in reflective thought about the words that were spoken around the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his Disciples.



Song Suggestion

We Have Come Into His House



A Prayer For Maundy Thursday

Lord Jesus, you told your disciples that the greatest expression of love is that a man will give up his life for his friends. You have called us your friends, and you have given your life for each of us; thank you.

When we really stop to think about this we are filled with wonder and amazement that you would do this for us! In return, we can only offer our own lives to you and ask that this time of worship that we will now spend together will express what we feel in our hearts, and that it will be accepted as our gift to you, we pray.

Help us Lord Jesus, to see the forgiving spirit as a sign of strength and not of weakness. Let your example be our inspiration, and your Holy Spirit our constant companion.

Loving Lord Jesus, the disciples ran away from you when you needed them most; Peter denied you when challenged that he was one of your friends; Pilate washed his hands of you; the soldiers mocked you; the crowds rejected you; and you were crucified. These are the events that we remember this Easter time. In many different ways we too have run away from you, denied you, washed our hands of you, mocked and rejected you, and we are sorry Lord. We pray this night that you will

forgive us.

Come to us now we pray, as you came to your first friends, to Peter and the other disciples, and give us the chance to begin afresh with you we pray. Let your Spirit be with us, so that when we are tempted to fail you again we shall be strong enough to stand firm and be counted as your friend.

We ask these our prayers in your eternal and precious name, Lord Jesus.

Amen

Communion

As we gather together we are one church in faith & love, and so we pray and celebrate Communion as one body.

If you are sharing this at home then have ready bread & wine (or juice) and spend a few minutes concentrating on the image to the left or listen to a quiet worship song to prepare yourself.

Take time to just be still.

Let us begin by saying:

Help us Lord, to calm our hearts, to slow our thoughts, to pause, to breathe in and out. In the stillness to come once again to hear the familiar stories of what you have done and in them to find you.

Let us now meditate on these words:

Surely not I?

Surely I would never betray you, never deny you. Surely? Beloved, give me the faith to doubt my righteousness. Give me the assurance to question, to examine myself honestly, to ask.

Give me the confidence to wonder how I might betray your perfect love, to see.

Give me grace to confess how my promises are broken, my heart broken.

Give me the peace to be troubled by my smugness, and repent.

Open my eyes to see that you see, you know, and knowing, you keep right on eating with me.

written by Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light*.

Take time to pause for a moment

Let us now come to the point of sharing Communion together:

(based on 1 Corinthians 11) (Read the words slowly)

This is for you, but it may change you
from one who is anxiously concerned about their own
redemption
into one who knows that Christ's body is the earth and all
who walk upon it, are one in Him
into knowing that we are not redeemed
by our being good but by our being connected
into knowing that daring to eat
at the table of Jesus Christ has unimaginable
consequences.

So come, come to be made whole,
and to participate in the work of making us one with Him
and each other.

written by Ann Siddall, *Stillpoint Spirituality Centre*.

Take time to pause a moment

Take and eat the bread

Pause a moment

Take and drink the wine

Pause a moment

Give thanks to Jesus in your own words

Let us now pray together these words:

Lord, in these sombre days

We recall the dark days before your trial

We pause to remember your suffering,

Your anguished prayers

As you faced death

And once again we are so thankful

That even though we did not deserve it

You drank the cup of suffering

Mocked and beaten

Crucified for us

In our place

Because you love us

We are so eternally thankful

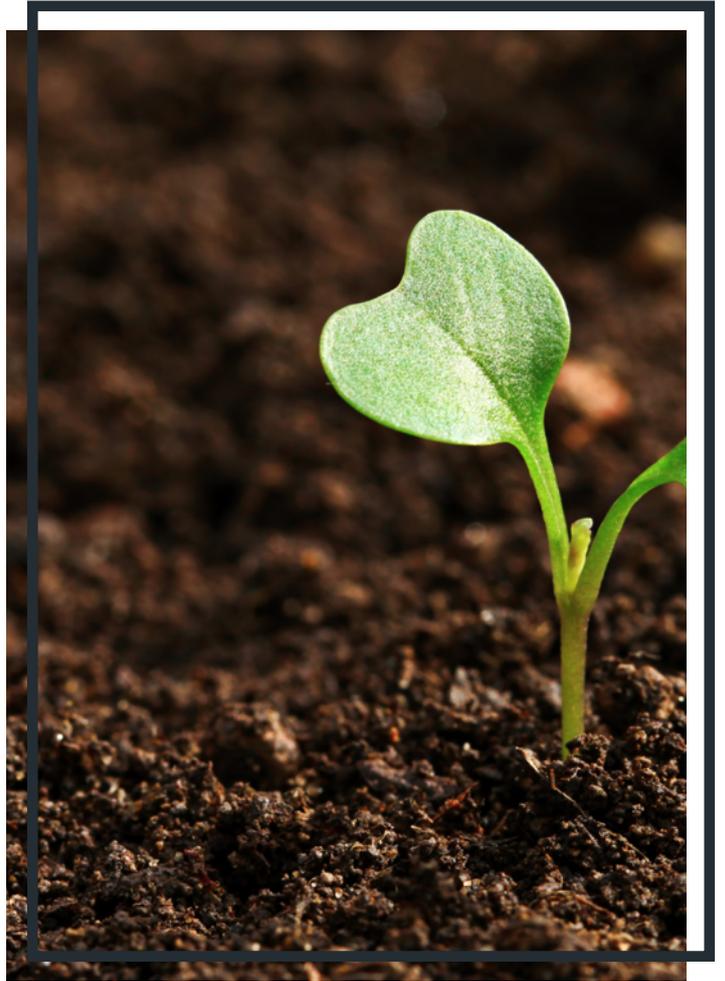
Saviour, Lord Jesus we give you all our praise Now and forever.

Amen



Song Suggestion

As We Are Gathered, Jesus Is
Here



Bible Reading

Mark 14 v. 12 – 45 NIV

The Last Supper

12 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.

Follow him. 14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large room up- stairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"

20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he

had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'

28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into

Galilee." 29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."

30 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."

31 But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.

Gethsemane

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba,

Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.

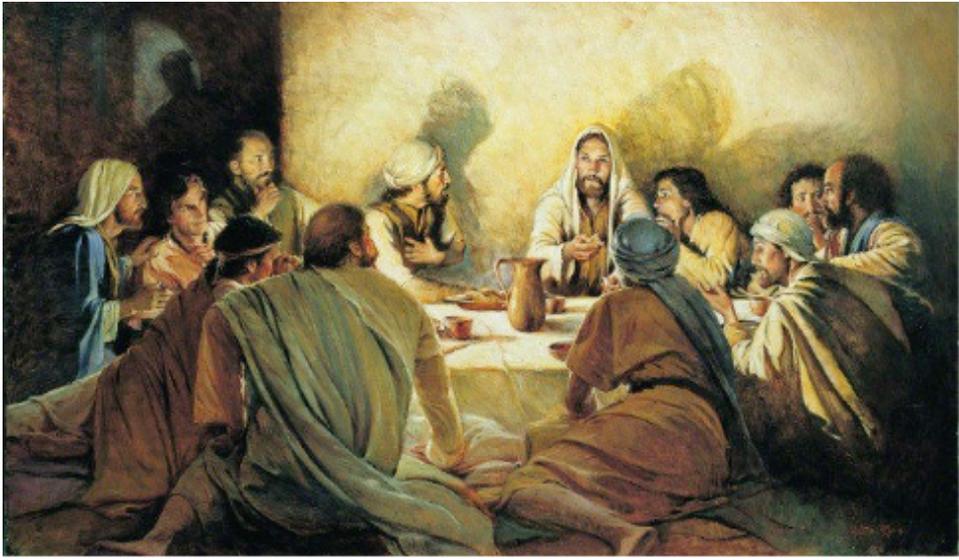
40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Jesus Arrested

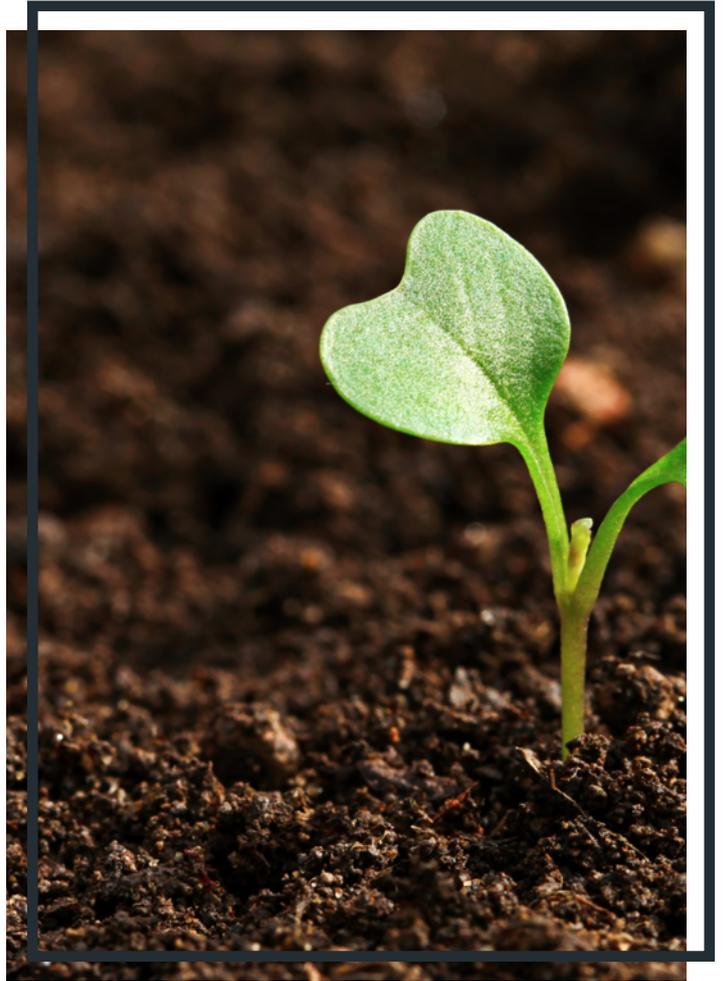
43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him.



Song Suggestion

My Song Is Love Unkown





Gethsemane

It is a cool evening,
refreshing after the intense heat of the day.
We have left the city with its noises and smells
of feasting and food.
The path to Gethsemane seems so peaceful.
The sky is a great velvet curtain
dotted with gleaming silver stars,
some alone, some in huge clusters.
They seem so close, as if they were almost within reach.
The meal we just had together was different from others.
Jesus seemed reflective, almost sad.
Now we have come to this special place among the
olives, these huge trees, twisted by time.
Only eleven of us are with Jesus.
Judas has gone off by himself,
leaving before the meal was over.
Jesus is telling us to rest here,
but he wants James, Peter and John to go with him.
The four of them climb to a place where the ground is
steeper, the rocks larger and the trees more sparsely
spread. Jesus tells the three to stop and keep watch.
They don't know what he means,
but he seems so intense that none of them can ask.
Like the time they went with him to another high place.
Then he shone with light. But this is different.
He seems so sad,
so preoccupied and weighed down.
Jesus has moved on, but the three can still see him. He
lies down, with his face to the ground.

They can hear his voice, but not all the words. He's agonising about a cup and doing his Father's will, They have seen him pray before, but not like this.

It's warmer than they thought, and they all wonder if ... wonder if...

Suddenly they wake up. Jesus stands before them.

He asks why they could not pray with him for just one hour. They want to with all their hearts, but they are just so tired. They promise to try again, and Jesus goes back to his place. They see him praying so intensely that the sweat gleams on his face in the moonlight.

All three begin praying hard ... praying hard ... praying...

Suddenly there's a lot of noise and lights.

A huge procession is entering the garden. Jesus is telling us, shouting almost, to get up. He says the hour has come.

There's Judas.

What on earth is going on?

Church Together Thought

We are often shocked by the story of Judas's betrayal of Jesus. Since Judas had spent about 3 years in close friendship with Jesus, we can wonder what could have prompted him to act as he did. Yet if we are honest as we should be, we can see the same potential in our own hearts. Whenever we refuse to give Jesus authority over a certain area of our own lives, we act like Judas. Whenever we promise to do one thing and then do another, we act like Judas.

Matthew, Mark and Luke in their Gospels have all conferred infamy on Judas and his traitor's kiss. Such a terrible, wicked act by the most trusted of disciples, the treasurer, the one who only hours earlier had received bread from Jesus' hand. We might say 'Whatever possessed him?' John, in his gospel tells us — 'Satan entered into him'.

Before the meal ended, Judas, the only non-Galilean disciple, slipped out into the night — he knew where he would find them later. He

knew that Jesus was heading for a favourite place among the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane as we are told in **Mark 14 v. 26**.

This was an easy place where the soldiers could arrest Jesus well away from the city crowds.

Also, in **Mark 14 v. 27 – 31**, we see that Peter, one of the Disciples, wasn't honest with himself when he promised that he would stay with Jesus no matter what the cost. He still didn't realise that following Jesus would lead him to the foot of the cross. So, when things got tough, Peter backed out of his commitment.

It makes me think, that we too often do the same thing. We would be wise to consider the difficulties that we may face along the journey that we are travelling with Jesus, for Jesus never promised us an easy journey when we decided to follow Him.

After the Passover meal, the little group would have wound their way down from the hustle and noise of Jerusalem, over the Kidron Valley and up onto the slopes of Gethsemane. It is here, in the olive grove of Gethsemane, that Jesus opened His heart to Peter, James and John. In **Mark 14 v. 34**, we hear Jesus say: **'My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death'**. It is here that we see Jesus demonstrating qualities that we need to cultivate in our own lives as well: honesty, transparency, and trust. It seems

obvious that Jesus needed others for support in this greatest hour of need shortly before His death.

If Jesus needed human support in order to face His trials, then surely, we need it even more. It is important that we develop a strong network of relationships, such as family and friends, in which we are held accountable to our promises and commitments. When we develop and maintain these strong meaningful relationships, we are creating a network of support that will help us sustain and grow our spiritual walk with God.

When Jesus asked them to **'keep watch'** with Him, they were too drowsy and fell fast asleep. The verses preceding the betrayal hold great pathos as we read how Jesus was so overwhelmed with anguish that His sweat was like drops of blood as He prayed, as we read in **Luke 22 v. 44**.

In this passage from **Mark 14 v. 35 – 36**, Jesus expressed his true feelings as He prayed for His Father to remove the impending suffering that He was about to face. However, Jesus never rebelled against God's will. He was willing to suffer and die so that we could experience the total forgiveness from sin that God offers us through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Even though we might want to escape from certain occasions of suffering, or the

situations that we might find ourselves in, we must surrender and submit all such desires to God's will. God may lead us into some tough experiences, but as painful as these may be, we can be totally assured that He has our best interests in mind.

We can also be sure that He will stand with us throughout the whole process. The following poem called '**Footprints in the Sand**' helps to make the point more poignant.

One night I dreamed a dream.

As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.

Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,

I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it. "Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,

You'd walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there was

only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you Never, ever, during your trials and testings.

When you saw only one set of footprints, It was then that I carried you."

Three times Jesus found the men sleeping — they really had no idea of the danger closing around them. This was the first betrayal. Have you ever thought that Jesus was betrayed twice?

First by Judas's kiss, then secondly by the fickle crowd shouting 'Crucify him!' And, although not a betrayal, He was also failed in His hour of greatest need by His disciples. Matthew and Mark in their gospels both recorded that all the disciples ran away. If only they had understood Jesus' warnings, they might have been better prepared, but, faced with an angry mob brandishing 'swords and clubs', no wonder they fled!

With cruel irony, the name of Judas and his kiss of betrayal, has passed into the language. Judas is famous for this one action and although Jesus had told them one of the group would betray Him, nevertheless, right up until Judas found Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, the disciples obviously had no idea it would be Judas. The danger didn't register — with the

celebration of Passover, wine and a good meal, their eyes were heavy with sleep.

We shall never know whether Judas expected Jesus to suddenly turn on the soldiers and give orders to fight them or raise an army to send the Roman forces of occupation packing. What we do know is that he approached Jesus with despicable hypocrisy and gave Jesus the customary kiss of greeting.

Matthew, Mark, and John all allude to Jesus taking this situation as a fulfilment of Scripture. We glimpse the single - minded commitment of God's only Son, gaining strength from the prophets even in His hour of betrayal.

Now let's look at the betrayal by the crowd.

In a matter of a few short days, the jubilant crowds who had shouted '**Hosanna!**' were to cry out with menace '**Crucify Him!**' Where were those who had been healed? Those who had listened spellbound to the parables and the visionary teaching. Where was Lazarus?

Jesus must have been turning over in His mind **Isaiah 53 v. 8: 'By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people he was stricken.'**

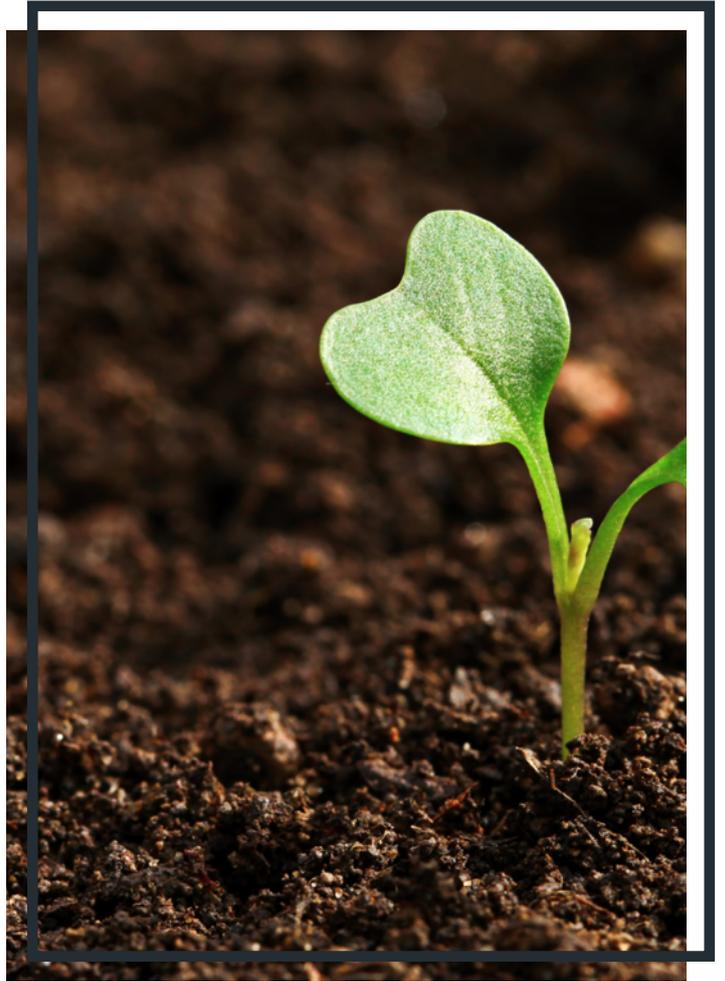
As we have already said, He meekly

accepted the role of God's suffering servant, offering no resistance, totally obedient to what He saw as His Father's will. But we need to ask, what about the other 11 Disciples. We are so familiar with Judas that we rather gloss over the disappearance of the Eleven. Mark in his gospel put it coldly: **'Then everyone deserted him and fled.'** Everyone. (**Mark 14 v. 50**). There was no one left to speak up for Jesus, to be His witness. Jesus had sadly predicted that they would all scatter (**Mark 14 v. 27**).

We all have betrayed God in one way or another. Maybe it's at times like this that we should use Judas's failure as an opportunity to take a hard look at our own lives; and then ask the question: **'In what ways have we betrayed God?' Have the words we have spoken betrayed Jesus in our lives and caused him anguish?**

Song Suggestion

Here Is Love, Vast As The Ocean



Closing Prayers For Maundy Thursday

Gracious God, we gather in this evening hour as friends gathered with Jesus in an Upper Room long ago. We come bearing the marks and burdens of a bitter and broken world. We come from anonymous places, with dry and thirsty spirits. Remind us, in the breaking of the bread, of our need and of your great sufficiency. Refresh us and make us whole with the cup of forgiveness. Draw us nearer to each other in mutual service and closer to you in the covenant of faithfulness and thanksgiving. As the night advances, deepen in us a sense of your steadfast love for us in Jesus Christ, our friend and Redeemer.

Tonight Loving Lord, we have been reminded of the night you washed the disciples' feet and shared with them the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup at the Passover meal. You served out of your great love for us, not for show but because you love us.

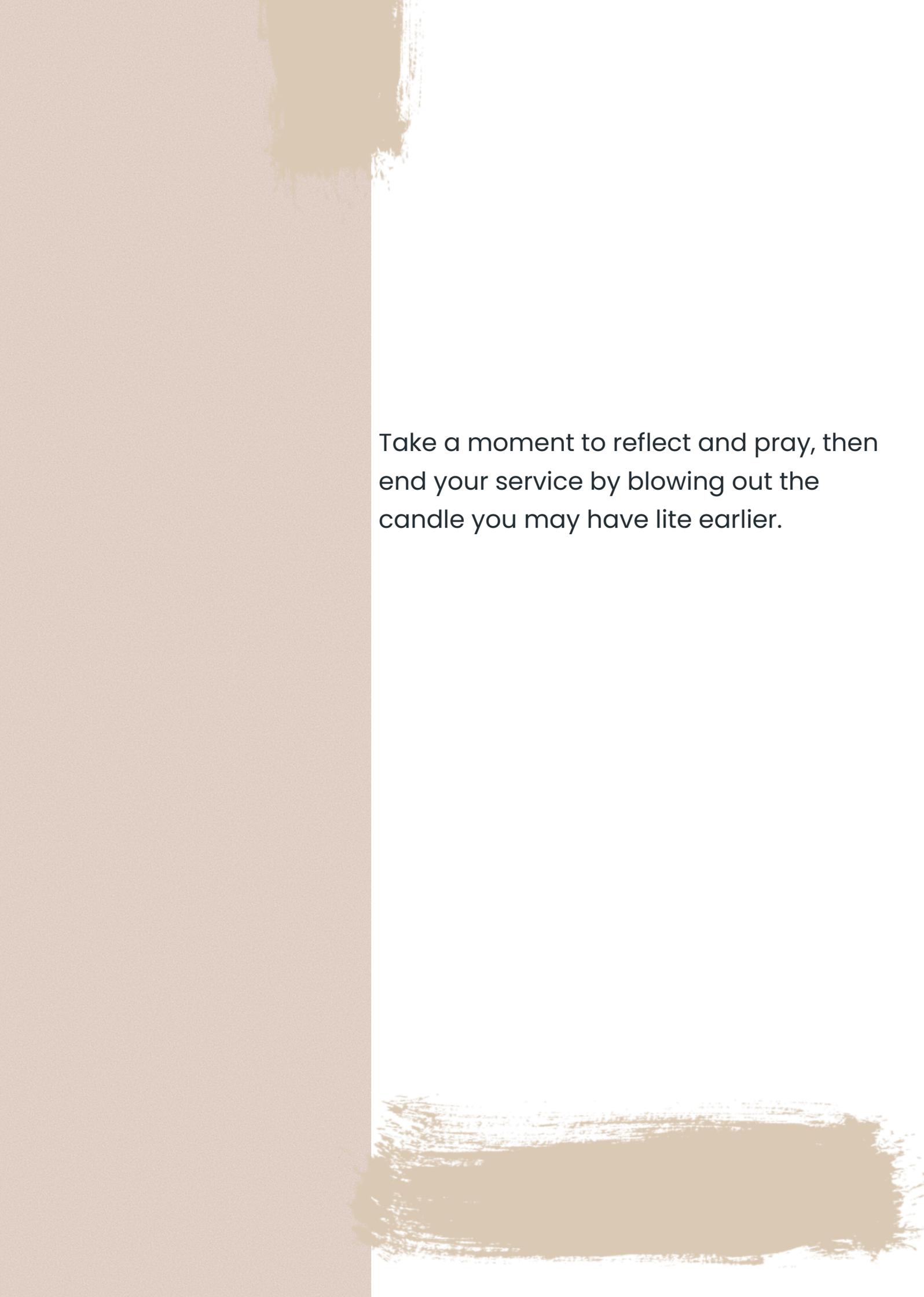
Loving Lord, we are told by the writers of Scripture that you poured out your whole life. The bread was broken and the cup was shared. You wrapped your clothes, got on your knees, and washed the feet of the disciples. An act of grace that lives as a picture of your call to us to serve each other.

Heavenly Father, Maundy Thursday brings us to the reality of the blessing of giving. Loving our neighbours costs us something. But every time we serve motivated by your great love, we live out your teaching. Our hearts are changed by serving to shine a light on our pride, greed, insecurity, bitterness, and resentment. You replace those attitudes with love, grace, mercy, and gratitude. Serving transforms the way we see others.

Finally, Lord Jesus, we discover in you someone who walked this walk, not just talked the talk. In this very night, we pray for our hearts to change to love each other as you did. That we would pour our lives out for each other. That we, too, would wash the feet of our neighbours in small and significant ways. A life in response to the good news of the gospel gives generously. Teach us to have faith to live this out. For we ask all these things in the powerful name of Jesus.

Amen





Take a moment to reflect and pray, then end your service by blowing out the candle you may have lite earlier.