

Maundy Thursday Worship

April 2, 2026

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
“Center Church”

United Church of Christ - ONA
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Maundy Thursday

Marking the conclusion of Lent, Maundy Thursday is named from the Latin “mandatum” (commandment), signifying the new commandment given by Jesus to his disciples at the Last Supper. The feeling of this service is rich and ambiguous. It is a commemoration of the loving and giving Jesus showed his disciples to the very end. It is also a celebration of Jesus’ gift of the Lord’s Supper, by which the church continues its communion with him, and through him, with God and with each other. But the celebration is bound up with the impending suffering and loss of Jesus, the weakness and failures of the disciples, and the betrayal of Jesus by one of his own. The somber aspects of this evening are heightened by the traditional use of tenebrae (“darkness”) as we dim the lights.

PRELUDE

Two settings of *Passion Chorale*

J.G. Rheinberger, D. Buxtehude

WELCOME

PRAYER

*HYMN

It Was a Sad and Solemn Night

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PREPARING OUR TABLES

First Reading (Institution of Passover)

Exodus 13:3-10

Second Reading (Jesus prepares for Passover)

Matthew 26:17-19

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Rev. Souder

We have betrayed you and deserted you, God. As we pause before our descent with you into the trauma and tribulation of the cross, draw our attention ever closer to your presence in our lives. Refresh our hearts, that we recognize the sufferings in the world, in our neighbor, and in ourselves. Amen

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Rev. Walker

Tender One, set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus, the light of the world. Amen.

Third Reading (Shadow or Betrayal)

Matthew 26:20-25

Fourth Reading (Shadow of Denial)

Matthew 26:31-35

SERVICE OF COMMUNION

ALL ARE WELCOME TO THE TABLE

INVITATION

Fifth Reading (The Supper)

Matthew 26:26-29

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Sixth Reading (That They May Be One)

John 16:31-17:11

Seventh Reading (Agony of the Soul)

Matthew 26:36-46

INVITATION TO OFFERTORY

Offertory Anthem

Holy Jesus

Johann Crüger, arr. Gary Matheny

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low,
Praise Holy Spirit evermore,
One God triune whom we adore. Amen*

Dedication

Eighth Reading (Arrest and Flight)

Matthew 26:47-56

Ninth Reading (Before Pilate)

Matthew 27 selected verses

HYMN

Won't You Let me Be Your Servant?

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Tenth Reading (The Death of Jesus)

Mark 15:33-39

*We dwell for a moment in the silence and dark.
When ready, you may exit*

*All are welcome to come to the sanctuary from Noon – 1pm tomorrow,
Good Friday, for silent prayer and reflection.*



***Easter Service at Center Church Sunday 10am
At the Church of Christ Granby, 10:30am
Rev. Audrey will also conduct a sunrise service at
6:40am in the parking lot of the Church.***

In our Service Tonight

Ministers:	Rev. Lori J. Souder Rev. Audrey Walker
Organist:	Larry Schipull
Choir Director:	Ben Coakley
Readers:	Ginette Desrosiers Bill Giles Diane Percy Vicki Scherer Nora Schumacher
Deacons:	Karen Anderson Martha Guild



*Tonight's Offering will be directed to
Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry, Inc.,
Serving South Hadley and Granby*



It Was a Sad and Solemn Night

Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:23-26

Isaac Watts, 1709; alt.

1 It was a sad and sol - emn night, when powers of earth
 2 Be - fore the mourn - ful scene be - gan, our Je - sus blessed
 3 "This is my bod - y, broke for sin, re - ceive and eat
 4 "Share this, my feast, till time shall end, in mem - ory of
 5 O Christ your feast we cel - e - brate; we show your death,

and hell a - rose A - gainst the Child of
 and broke the bread; What love through all these
 the liv - ing food"; Then took the cup and
 your dy - ing friend: Meet at my ta - ble
 we sing your name, Till you re - turn, and

God's de - light, whom friends be - trayed to wick - ed foes.
 ac - tions ran, what won - drous words of love were said!
 blessed the wine, "This the new cov - enant in my blood."
 and re - call the love which God has shown to all."
 we shall eat the mar - riage sup - per of the Lamb.

Isaac Watts, often considered the founder of English hymnody, recalls very powerfully in this hymn the Maundy Thursday events. The meal in the upper room is recounted, and the great marriage feast of the Lamb is anticipated.

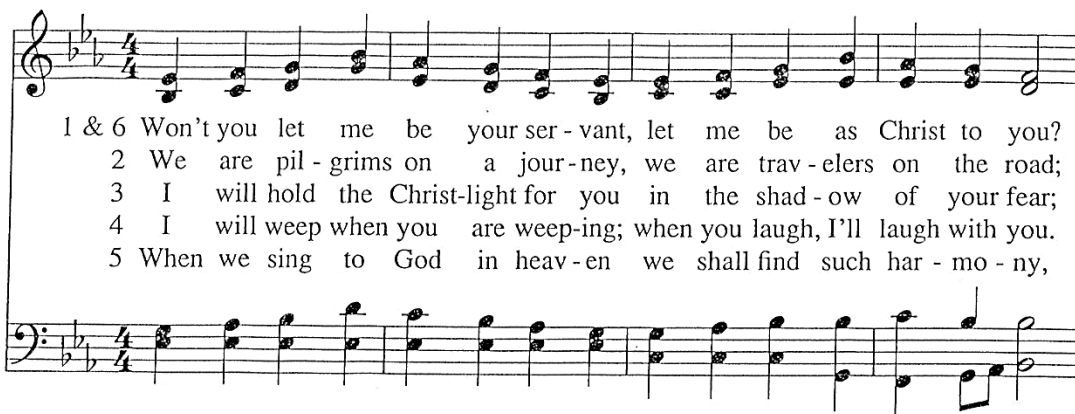
Tune: BOURBON L.M.
 Melody attrib. to Freeman Lewis, 1825
 Harm. Louise McAllister (1913-1960)
 Alternate tune: ERHALT UNS, HERR

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

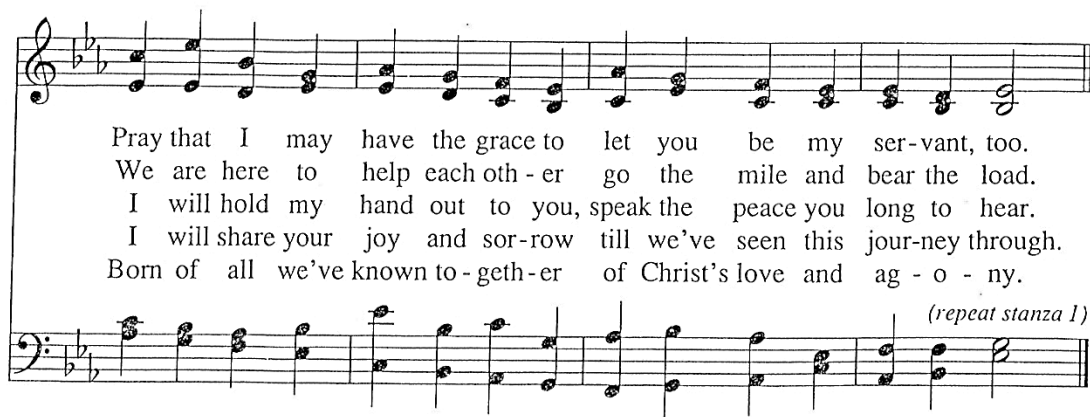
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Richard Gillard, 1977; alt.

Rom. 12:9-18; Col. 1:24-29



1 & 6 Won't you let me be your ser- vant, let me be as Christ to you?
2 We are pil- grims on a jour-ney, we are trav- elers on the road;
3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shad- ow of your fear;
4 I will weep when you are weep- ing; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
5 When we sing to God in heav- en we shall find such har- mo- ny,



Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my ser- vant, too.
We are here to help each oth- er go the mile and bear the load.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
I will share your joy and sor- row till we've seen this jour-ney through.
Born of all we've known to- geth- er of Christ's love and ag- o - ny.

(repeat stanza 1)

Richard Gillard was born in England and later made his home in New Zealand. Largely self-taught, Gillard has described his musical style as "folk." This is the best known of his many songs in the United States.

Tune: SERVANT SONG 8.7.8.7.
Richard Gillard, 1977
Arr. Betty Carr Pulkingham, 1977; adapt.