

## What?! Moving the soup lunch from Good Friday to dinner on Maundy Thursday?

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Why? It's just fine the way it is. Sound familiar? Perhaps it is the sound of "we've always done it this way" or "don't mess with tradition." Well, maybe it is fine the way it is...and maybe it can be different and yet still fine. It depends on who you talk to, doesn't it?



The Three Days of Holy Week have traditionally run from the evening of Maundy Thursday through Evening Prayer on Easter Day. It is a specific window of time that invites the faith community to an intentional spiritual practice in preparation for the celebration of Easter Resurrection. The journey begins with readings about Jesus sharing a last meal with his disciples, the washing of feet as a sign of

humility and love, and the sharing of Eucharist. By the end of the service, the sanctuary is quiet and ready for the solemnity of Good Friday.

On Good Friday, we arrive in silence and enter a time of reflection on the Crucifixion, praying the Solemn Collects, venerating the Cross, and sharing communion from the Reserve Sacrament consecrated the evening before. Traditionally, the service has ended in silence, preparing the way for a reflective Holy Saturday before the Great Vigil of Easter held on Saturday night.



Years ago, this parish wanted to encourage participation in the Good Friday liturgy, and it was decided that offering a soup lunch afterward would help people give it a try. Doing so did increase participation, but in the process, the opportunity for ending in silence was diminished. I have wondered for years if we could connect the soup meal with Maundy Thursday where the table fellowship would lead directly into the liturgy which follows: Jesus at table with his disciples. I decided to give it a try this year. In making this shift, we will also offer a second hour of readings and quiet reflection for those who wish to remain after

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the first hour on Good Friday. I realize it will be different for many. That is not necessarily bad, just noticeably different. Some will welcome the opportunity to more fully enter the silence of the day. It also gives those who would normally provide setup and preparation for soup on Good Friday that opportunity for silence, something several have expressly desired.

I invite everyone to give it a try: soup dinner at 6 pm Maundy Thursday followed by worship at 7 pm; Good Friday service at 12 noon followed by another separate hour at 1 pm for readings and silent reflection.

**Please note:** Such things as the washing of feet or the veneration of the Cross are offered as a spiritual practice of embodying humility and sharing **love** with one another. You may participate in all or portions of each liturgy as is true with all our services.

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