

April 5, 2017

In the Interim...

If you were invited to a good friend's house for supper, would you refuse to go? Or if a good friend died, would you refuse to go to the funeral? Have you thought that when we fail to attend a Maundy Thursday service, we are declining our Lord's invitation to his table and when we fail to attend a Good Friday Service, we are declining to attend our Lord's funeral?

The Maundy Thursday Service on April 13, 7:00 PM, will commemorate the Last Supper, which Jesus observed as a Passover meal with his disciples on the last day of his earthly life. The word "Maundy" comes from the Latin word for commandment ("mandatum"), which Jesus talked about when he told his disciples that he was leaving them "a new commandment," that they "love one another."

The Good Friday Service on April 14, 12:00 noon, will offer a version of a tenebrae service. The word "tenebrae" is Latin for darkness or shadows. The service will focus on the last words of Christ spoken from the cross. After each set of words, we will extinguish a candle, pray a response, and sing a song. Following the extinguishing of the seventh candle, the pulpit Bible will be closed, symbolizing the sealing of the tomb. We will sit in moments of silence, followed with prayerful singing. Then we will stand and very softly whisper the Lord's Prayer. At this point, the service ends. There will be no benediction as we leave in silence.

The story is left unfinished because the story is not over until Easter Day. Attending Easter Sunday services without attending Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services is like watching only the happy ending of a movie without seeing the struggles that had to be overcome to arrive at a victorious resolution.

On Easter morning, the candles will be lit again and we will celebrate that Christ is risen and sin and death are defeated. The important services of Holy Week are a vital part of preparation for this grand celebration.

Wanda Neely