

GROW. PRAY. STUDY.
First United Methodist Church - Weekly Study Guide
“Equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”

The Final Week
“Maundy Thursday: A Supper, A Garden and Religion Gone Bad”
March 22-27

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” **Matthew 26:26-28**

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane...he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” **Matthew 26:36-39**

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled... All of them condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him. **Mark 14:53, 65**

This week we come to Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday. This is the day Christians remember Jesus joining his disciples in the Upper Room for that final meal.....what we now know as the Lord’s Supper. On Holy Thursday things began to pick up speed for Jesus. He made preparations for this final meal with his disciples, broke bread and drank the wine with them.....even with the one who would betray him.....and then he went to the Garden and he cried out to God for strength to face the cross.

This week we are going to spend our time thinking about both what happened in the Upper Room and in the Garden. In both instances we see Jesus calling us to be people who will follow him to the cross. In both the Upper Room and the Garden we see a picture of grace and strength. As we go through these readings I invite you to spend some time thinking about your own life. Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for life in and with Christ? When you are overcome by your struggles, where do you turn?

MONDAY Read Luke 22:7-34

As with his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus arranged in advance for the Passover meal. With hope-filled words, he changed the annual Passover Supper into a Last Supper. He asked us to do this to recall his sacrifice (verses 14-20). Jesus said he eagerly desired to eat this special meal with his disciples. With how much eagerness, or lack of it, do you take part in the Lord’s Supper? What experiences or beliefs lead you to feel the way you do? How can you take in Jesus’ love and restoring power more fully and receive him through this meal?

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

TUESDAY Read John 14:1 – 15:17

Only John's gospel records what Jesus said after the Last Supper ended. In this first section, Jesus declared that he is the central revelation of God. His earthly time was nearly over—but that did not mean he was abandoning the disciples. The presence of the "Advocate" (or "Comforter") would bring Jesus' peace to their hearts. How does John 14:16-18 show that the Holy Spirit does not replace Jesus, but rather, in a way beyond our full understanding, is Jesus' presence with us?

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

WEDNESDAY Read John 15:18 – 16:33

Though Jesus is sure God's Kingdom will win out at last, he offers no empty promises of an easy life. In fact, he ends the passage by promising troubles in the world! That's one reason the Holy Spirit's presence is so important. Then Jesus adds, "Take heart." Why? Because, he says, "I've already overcome the world." This passage, like 1 Corinthians 13:9 ("we know in part"), reminds us that our vision of God is limited. How have you seen God's power work in ways beyond human strength and wisdom at times of grief or loss? How can God's presence help you to trust even at the times when you don't "get it"?

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

THURSDAY Read John 17:1-26

This great passage reaches its peak as John shows Jesus at prayer. Even at this time of crisis, Jesus focuses most of his prayer on the spiritual well-being and safety of his followers. Be sure to note that he was not just praying for the group around him on that evening. Jesus prayed for you that night, too (verse 20). Twice (verse 11, verses 20-23) Jesus prays that his followers may be one. He asks God to unite us with each other as he and the Father are united. What issues or practices create the most division in your heart between you and other believers? How can God help you to live more fully into the unity Jesus prayed for?

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

FRIDAY Read Luke 22:39-54

The Final Week nears its climax. Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives. He had resolutely come to this moment—but still, he agonizes over the awful suffering just ahead. Crucially, he tells God, "Not my will but yours be done." The pace quickens as the rulers and Judas set their dark plot in motion. Sooner or later, we all face a situation in life that seems unbearable. What does Jesus' time in the Garden teach us about the value of honestly facing and expressing our feelings in those times of anguish? To what extent have you learned to say, "Not my will but yours be done"?

Pray the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

Saturday Read Mark 15:6-7, 11-15, 22-25

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

I invite you to pray the following prayer:

Dear God,

As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN