

Easter Week Prayer Vigil Preparation

A Time To Draw Closer To Christ



2019

The Cross For Us... The Cross In Us... In Holy Communion
Maundy Thursday (after Service) Thru Good Friday 3pm

CHRIST THE SHEPHERD

OVERVIEW

This document is designed to help prepare you for the upcoming Vigil from Maundy Thursday at 8pm through until Good Friday at 3pm. It contains the purpose as to why you are participating in the Vigil, a perspective of the emotions you may go thru, prayers & scripture readings for the week of the Vigil and the logistics of the Vigil. By reading this before the Vigil, you will be better prepared for the Vigil.

HOW DO I PRAY AT THE VIGIL

First, be you. Pray from the heart with the help of the Holy Spirit. You are talking with God and He just wants to know what is on your mind. There are all types and styles of prayers and I do not believe the Lord fancies any one particular kind. All prayers are good. If you are wondering, "can I even pray for a half hour or more?" Sure you can! (Just in case, there will be a Vigil Prayer Guide available to help you with a variety of spiritual items to assist you). Don't feel limited by this book (or the time frame) either. If you have your own method, then use that. This year, in weekly messages, we learned about Gospel Prayer, in which prayer is based upon the new life with God that Christ's work for us provides, consisting of generous stretches of praise and adoration and our main purpose is fellowship with God... Try it out! If you want to pray longer than half an hour or add in additional time through the weekend, please do. If half an hour of prayer is a stretch for you, good for you for taking the step to grow into that. Don't be afraid! Think of it as hanging out with God for half an hour. You don't have to come up with words for that whole time, or even any of that time. Listen. Breathe. Take time just to be in God's presence. At the end of this guide is additional information on ideas and styles of prayer.

PURPOSE

The **GOAL** of this Lenten Prayer Vigil time is to collectively enter into prayer during this holiest time of year. As a church family we are joining together for 19 continuous hours at Christ the Shepherd, handing off the vigil from one group of Christians to another. It's a way of joining together as one body, unified in the name of Christ. It's a way of trusting that we are partnering together, taking turns to cover our church, our community, our world with prayer as we dwell in the darkness of Maundy Thursday & Good Friday. It's an opportunity to be **FUELED** by a closeness to God and create a culture in which prayer is woven into the fabric of our daily live and our relationships with each other.

God Bless you as you

Walk with Him

and your brothers

and sisters in dedicated prayer!

A Personal Perspective.....FROM AN CTS ELDER

All of us in our lifetime have received gifts from various individuals. It is even more special when it comes from someone who loves us. It may have been your 1st Barbie on your 6th birthday, or that pellet gun that Dad got you as a young teen and mom is still stewing about, or that nice dinner your husband cooked for your 20th anniversary, or maybe it's your 1st grandchild. For certain, the gifts that you really enjoyed and treasured the most were most likely from the people who loved you. Relationship is so important.

John 3:16 says the God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. Christ went to the cross for us, washing away our sins with His precious blood so that we may be seen as righteous in God's eyes and have eternal life in His kingdom. This gift from the Father (He gave His begotten son because He so loved the world) and the gift from Christ (shedding His blood so that we could have eternal life) are gifts so precious, unimaginable, with no expiration and beyond human comprehension that must be cherished. We know both were given out of pure love for us, to reap the reward of eternal life. More mind boggling is that these gifts are like no other we have ever received, free of charge with no strings attached, because we believe. Believe it or not it gets even better. Everyone is eligible for these awesome gifts by simply believing in Christ and living our lives, in a Christ-like manner, as the Gospels have laid out to us in scripture. And for those who do not believe, it is up to us to spread the Good News of the Gospel, and engage them, so that they also believe in the promise of eternal life.

Use this Lenten Prayer Vigil as a vehicle to become closer to Him, showing your true heart and emotions and praying with all you have to express that you indeed know the agony, pain and suffering He went through for you prior to His death. Praise Him also for the gift of eternal life and the love and grace He extended to us.

Each of us has their own way of processing this amazing gift of grace and love so let us collectively pray with Him these 19 hours. We need this more than you think.

PRAYERS AND SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sunday of the Passion in Holy Week: Palm Sunday

Loving God, I am just beginning to realize how much you love me. Your son, Jesus was humble and obedient. He fulfilled your will for him by becoming human and suffering with us. I ask you for the desire to become more humble so that my own life might also bear witness to you. I want to use the small sufferings I have in this world to give you glory. Please, Lord, guide my mind with your truth. Strengthen my life by the example of Jesus. Help me to be with Jesus in this week as he demonstrates again his total love for me. He died so that I would no longer be separated from you. Help me to feel how close you are and to live in union with you. *Amen.*

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16 Philippians 2:5-11 Luke 22:14-23:56

Monday of Holy Week:

God of love, my prayer is simple: Your son, Jesus, suffered and died for me. I know only that I cannot have real strength unless I rely on you. I cannot feel protected from my many weaknesses until I turn to you for forgiveness and your unalterable love. Help me to share this strength, protection and love with others. *Amen*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 36:5-11 Hebrews 9:11-15 John 12:1-11

Tuesday of Holy Week:

God of such unwavering love, how do I "celebrate" the passion and death of Jesus? I often want to look the other way and not watch, not stay with Jesus in his suffering. Give me the strength to see his love with honesty and compassion and to feel deeply your own forgiveness and mercy for me. Help me to understand how to "celebrate" this week. I want to be able to bring my weaknesses and imperfections with me as I journey with Jesus this week, so aware of his love. *Amen.*

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 71:1-14 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 John 12:20-36

Wednesday of Holy Week:

My Savior, do you invite me to share in the glory of the resurrection? Please stay with me as I struggle to see how accepting the crosses of my life will free me from the power of the one who wants only to destroy my love and trust in you. Help me to be humble and accepting like your son, Jesus. I want to turn to you with the same trust he had in your love. Save me, Lord. Only you can save me. *Amen.*

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 70 Hebrews 12:1-3 John 13:21-32

Maundy Thursday:

This is the day before Good Friday and is a time for remembering the Last Supper that Jesus and His closest friends and followers spent together. The word "Maundy" is an English adulteration of the Latin word Maun datum, which means "commandment". At the Last Supper Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment; that you love one another." Maundy Thursday is the day that we also focus on servanthood, which is symbolized by Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. In some churches this is re-enacted by washing another's feet during a worship service.

Loving Provider, you gather me in this upper room with your son, to be fed by your love. At that supper, Jesus told us to "love one another" and I know that is the heart of his gift, his sacrifice for me. I ask that I might find the source of my own heart, the meaning for my own life, in that Eucharist. Guide me to the fullness of your love and life. *Amen.*

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14 Psalm 116:1, 10-17

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday:

This day commemorates the day upon which Jesus was crucified and died. It is a day for remembering Jesus' death and all the implications that death has for us. Special services are held throughout this day to help us remember through readings, prayer and vigil.

My Lord, your son has suffered so much, shed so much blood. I was born with so many faults and my nature is so full of weakness, and yet your son Jesus has died on the cross. For me. I know your grace has the power to cleanse me of my many sins and to make me more like your Son. Thank you for your goodness and love for me. I ask you, Father, to watch over me - always. *Amen.*

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 Psalm 22 Hebrews 10:16-25 John 18:1-19:42

Holy Saturday:

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Job 14:1-14 Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16 1 Peter 4:1-8 Matthew 27:57-66

PRAYER VIGIL LOGISTICS

Thank you for participating in our 19-hour Maundy Thursday through Good Friday Lenten Prayer Vigil. You've signed up and pledged to pray for half an hour (or more), and this Vigil Preparation document is meant to help you prepare for the Vigil as well as know where and when to go. This year's Lenten Prayer Vigil was designed so that members could pray together at CTS with other members. The goal is to have every hour of the Vigil attended by many CTS members at our church. If coming to CTS holds you back from participating in the Vigil, we can discuss options so you may part of our community of Lenten prayer. You should have already pledged via the Connection Card by entering your family name, how many are pledging to pray, select the day (Maundy Thursday/Good Friday) and the location (@CTS Preferred/Home). A separate Lenten Prayer Vigil Guide will be made available upon entry to the church if you desire, to assist you in prayer at the Vigil. (It will also be available from the CTS website before Maundy Thursday). This guide contains Worship & Praise, Contemplation, Jesus at Gethsemane, God's in Our Mission, Our Beloved Church, The Persecuted Church, Healing, Family, Nation, and World, Prayers of Praise & Adoration, The Great Litany, and ending with Scripture readings upon dismissal.

For those attending the Vigil at CTS, please arrive quietly and through the side door (the far right door) across from the Post Office. For your safety all other doors of the church will be locked. Elders will be available throughout the Vigil. Elders are there to assist you and pray with you, if requested.

First, you may wonder **WHERE** to pray. We have the entire sanctuary and prayer room dedicated for our Vigil. You can pray anywhere! But you might give some forethought to this question so you can help yourself be in a place where there are few distractions during your prayer time. The Gethsemane Prayer Room will have soft lighting, two kneelers, bibles, candles and a cross. This area is secluded and provides the most privacy. The other location is the Sanctuary. Here there will be one kneeler, bibles, candles, appropriate spiritual music, lighting and a large Cross centered on the platform. You can sit anywhere you feel most comfortable. You might also think of which place you feel most connected to God.

We ask that you are respectful and shutoff all electronics and refrain from all conversations in the prayer areas. This is a time for prayer!

Feel free to contact Tom Hoynowski @hoynowtc@comcast.net or 404 388 5271 for any questions comments or suggestions regarding the Vigil.