

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF NOBLESVILLE
April 2, 2026**

After the Maundy Thursday Communion, we observe “the stripping of the church”: working in complete silence, the servers remove one by one each and every item of decoration—vessels, paraments, candles, candlesticks, vases, flags, banners—and everything used in worship other than furniture. Originally a purely utilitarian act necessary for cleaning the church prior to Easter, the stripping of the church has come to symbolize the stripping of Jesus before the Crucifixion. By the time of its conclusion the church’s chancel is transformed from being a place of holy worship in the midst of beauty, to what now appears quite like a tomb—with the communion table itself now appearing to be a burial sarcophagus. In that transformation a great truth is made visible: that the joy we typically experience in our worship came at the cost of the death of the One we worship.



**“This is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”**

MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 2, 2026, 7:00 PM

HAND WASHING

(Parlor area, before service)

PRELUDE

Cheryl Mayhew, organ

† **CALL TO WORSHIP** (responsive)

L: On this day,
Christ the Lamb of God gave himself into the hands of those who would try to
destroy him.

**P: On this day,
Christ gathered with his disciples in an upper room.**

L: On this day,
Christ took a towel and washed his disciples' feet.

**P: On this day,
Christ gave us a new commandment that we should love one another.**

L: Let us Pray:
Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal Jesus gave his disciples
a new commandment,
to love one another as he loved them.

**P: Write this commandment on our hearts; give us the will to serve others as
he was the servant of all, who gave his life and died for us, yet is alive and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

† **HYMN** "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" #98

SCRIPTURE LESSON John 13:1-17, 31b-35

GROUP REFLECTION

Hand Washing - Do you have a favorite memory of handwashing? How did it
feel to have your hands washed, to wash someone else's? When was the last
time you had your hands washed, or washed someone else's? How do you
think the disciples felt when they saw Jesus take off his robe and put on a tow-
el; when he washed their feet? How do you think Jesus felt? Have you ever
felt this way while engaging in a ministry? Are there ways we serve now that
evoke similar emotions? Do we seek those opportunities? Do we avoid them?
Do you think Jesus can relate to the emotions we feel with this kind of minis-
try?

MEDITATION

"He Gets Us!"

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

L: On this night, we gather as the Hebrew people gathered in exile to share the
Lamb and celebrate the Lord's passing over them in mercy. On this night, we
gather amazed and humbled to have the dust of our souls washed by the serv-
ant Messiah. We pause in our hurried lives to ask:

**P: What wondrous love is this, O my soul, that caused Christ to lay aside
his life for my soul?**

L: We pass on tonight to children and strangers what we have received
from you, Lord Jesus: Who on that night you left us took bread, blessed it,
broke it and gave it to the disciples, saying, "*Do this in remembrance of me,*"
Who took the cup and said, "*This is my life for you, share in its newness and
remember me.*"

**P: And so we remember how you came to us, poor and vulnerable, how
you taught us by story and example, how you fed us on hillside and sea-
shore.**

L: As we remember you, pour out yourself again to us and by your Holy
Spirit make us living remembrances of your great love and life. Fill us with a
new understanding of love among all your children that others may see our
witness and draw close to you.

**P: Merciful Deliverer, Humble Servant, and Love Among Us, Holy Trinity, we
give you praise and thanks. Amen.**

*(Please Come forward down the right center aisle
to receive the Lord's Supper)*

† **HYMN** "Were You There?" #102

STRIPPING OF THE CHURCH *(In Silence)*

(please leave the sanctuary quietly.)

† Please stand if you are able