"Love One Another"
Reflection by Tricia Guerrero

1 Corinthians 11:23-26
For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

John 13:3-20; 31-35
Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’ Jesus answered, ‘You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’ Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.’ Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’ Jesus said to him, ‘One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.’ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, “The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.” I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.’

When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

The events we remember tonight are events that for Jesus, took place during Passover, which is part of an eight-day Jewish festival that happens in the spring and were celebrated to remember the Israelites’ deliverance from Egyptian slavery to freedom.

So, set within this context, our Bible story begins. Jesus knows he will not be with the disciples much longer, and so he performs an act of service for them to his show love. He washes their feet, something servants usually did at that time when a person came in from walking in sandals or bare feet on dusty roads. Jesus says it is an example of how they should love others when he is gone.

When it is Simon Peter’s turn to have his feet washed, Peter resists, saying that Jesus will never wash his feet. Jesus explains that refusing the washing will prove that Peter is not one of Jesus’ own. Peter responds by enthusiastically agreeing to the washing.

Like with Peter, the foot washing and the command to “love one another” both call us into spaces of discomfort and we tend to resist just like Peter. In a normal foot washing, we have many excuses not to participate: it’s embarrassing, it’s too intimate, your socks have holes, you don’t like the person doing it, your toes are weird, you don’t want someone touching you, you don’t have time, it’s just for super religious people.

The reasons it is so hard to love one another without condition are much the same: it’s embarrassing, it’s too intimate, you’re imperfect, you don’t even like one another, someone is weird or disagrees with you, you don’t have time.
The washing of our feet or hands is a symbolic sharing in Christ’s servanthood and the command to love one another. Living into this commandment is a lifelong challenge and practice. Tonight we are invited to renew our commitment to living out Jesus’ call for us to love and serve. Over the past year, the very act of hand-washing has become a tangible and important way to love our neighbors and do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

When we remember Jesus and his teachings through this ritual, we are showing our love and devotion to Jesus and to one another. And even though it’s different this year, we can observe this at home by washing a loved one’s feet and allowing them to wash your feet. Or soak your own hands or feet in a bowl of warm water. Imagine what it would feel like to have Jesus wash your feet.

Imagine what it would be like to truly love one another in our communities and world, loving beyond just when it feels good but with our actions, with our hands and feet because we follow Jesus, who calls us to love one another even when it’s not easy.

Let us be in prayer:

Almighty and merciful God, through Jesus Christ you taught us to wash one another’s feet and to live his love for us with one another. Strengthen and expand our bonds of love and fellowship, that together we may walk the way of the cross that brings eternal life. Amen.

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From John 13: So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.


The disciples prepared a place for Jesus to eat the Passover meal. Jesus is well aware of the course his life will take and says so to the disciples. During this meal, Jesus gives thanks for the bread and breaks it and then takes a cup and blesses it. He shares this meal with his disciples, declaring the bread is his body and the cup is his blood—beginning the ritual we know as Communion and giving the disciples and all of us a way of remembering him.