

**ST. JOHN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COMPASS, PA**

April 2, 2026 – MAUNDY THURSDAY, YR. A

The Rev. Dr. Nina George–Hacker

Homily: “*Jesus Gives. We Receive.*”*

Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14 (The Lord establishes the Passover)

Psalms 116:1, 10-17 (The Psalmist pledges to lift up the cup of salvation, and fulfill his vows to the Lord)

1 Corinthians 11:23-32 (St. Paul received from the Lord the words of institution at Communion)

St. Luke 22:14-30 (Jesus presides at the Last Supper)

Maundy Thursday draws us into the final evening Jesus spent with His disciples before going to the Cross. Everything that happens on this night takes place with Jesus’ full awareness. He knows the hour has come. He is aware that betrayal is already in motion. He understands suffering and death are near. And knowing all of this, He still chooses to gather His friends around a table for a fellowship meal.

In St. John’s account of the Last Supper, he tells us, “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” This love Jesus shows them—and us—is not reactive or sentimental. It is steady, deliberate, and costly. It is love that kneels. Love that serves. Love that gives itself before anyone understands what is happening or why.

A shared meal is meaningful on this night because it is the setting where Jesus shows us who God is. In the middle of an ordinary human practice—eating together—Jesus reveals extraordinary grace. He takes bread and wine. He takes a towel and a basin. He does not explain suffering or offer a strategy for dealing with the coming crisis. Instead, He offers *Himself*.

Maundy Thursday is rooted in the Passover story, a meal that recalled God’s deliverance and faithfulness. Jesus receives this tradition and fulfills it in Himself. He becomes the *true* Passover Lamb, not by asking His disciples to act, but by acting on their behalf. At the table, Jesus shows us that salvation is a gift we receive even before we respond to it. The meal also reveals how difficult receiving can be.

Peter resists having his feet washed; not because he doubts Jesus, but because being served exposes his vulnerability and need. Jesus does not argue Peter into agreement. He merely stays with him and insists on giving. This moment points forward to the Cross, where Jesus will wash humanity clean in a way we could never manage for ourselves.

Gathering around a table on Maundy Thursday allows the Church to slow down and enter this story with our whole bodies. The table reminds us that faith is not only spoken but also shared. Bread is taken. Cups are lifted. Hands are opened. We are reminded that Jesus has already done for us what we could not do for ourselves; Christ has done this in us, and on our behalf.

This night is not meant to rush toward Easter. It invites us to remain with Jesus in the tension of love given freely in the shadow of the Cross. A shared meal allows space for that lingering. It creates room for silence, for gratitude, and for the quiet work of the Holy Spirit, who forms us through our receiving Him and His gifts before He sends us out to love others as God has loved us in Jesus Christ.

Tonight, we set the table. Jesus does the serving, and we will receive. Lord, open each of us to receive You fully, on this holy night and in the days to come. *Amen.*

* Adapt. “Why We Gather at the Table,” 3 March 2026, [GCI Equipper](https://equipper.gci.org/2026/03/liturgy-for-april-2-2026-maundy-thursday/) <https://equipper.gci.org/2026/03/liturgy-for-april-2-2026-maundy-thursday> 17 March 2026.