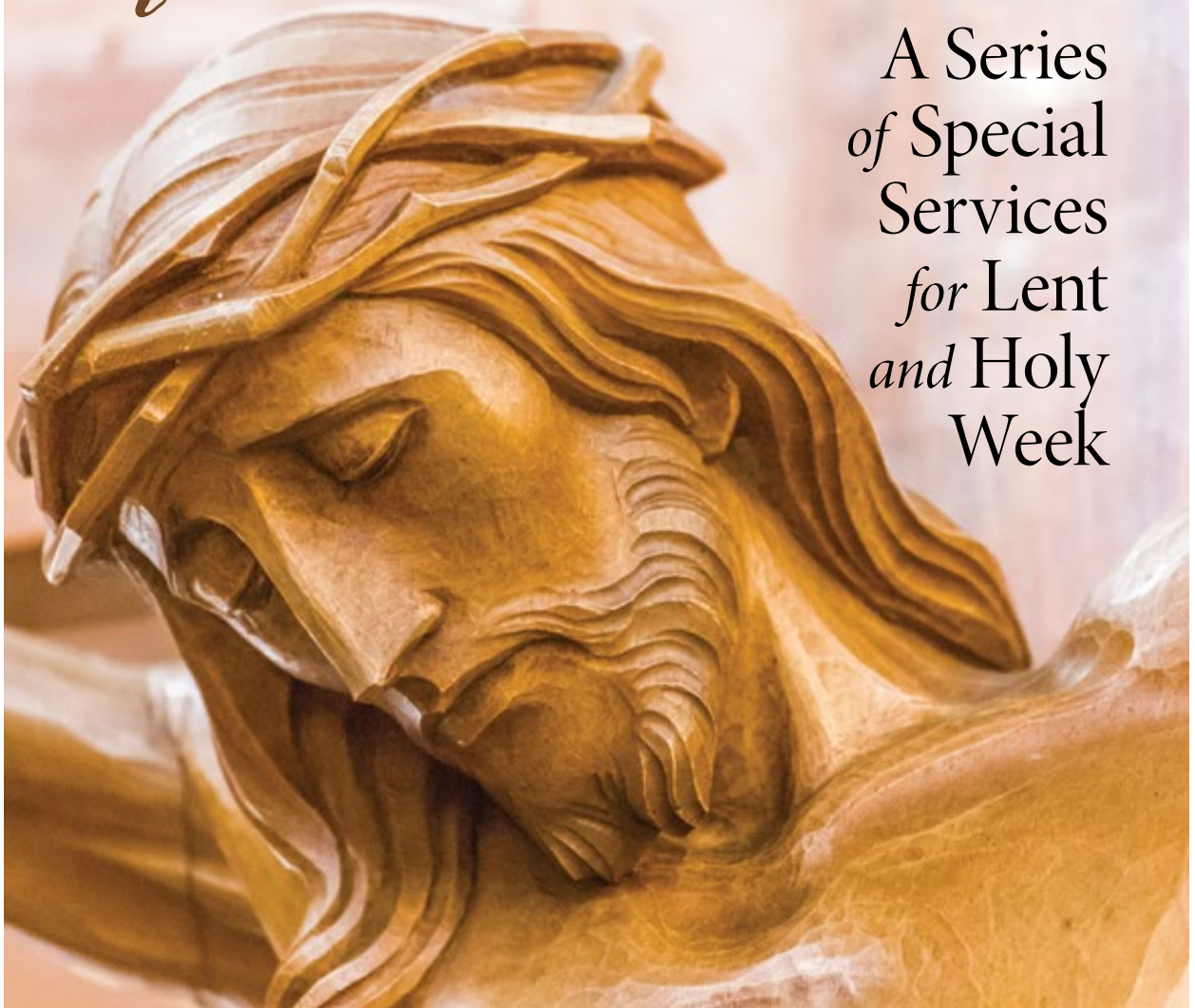


WORSHIP KIT

The Body of Christ

A Series
of Special
Services
*for Lent
and Holy
Week*



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About “The Body of Christ”

Here is a series of services that takes the time to consider seriously our Lord’s humanity, the human body in which he wrought our salvation. Week by week, responsive calls to worship, Scripture readings, hymn stanzas, and prayers invite congregation members to focus their attention on: • the feet of Christ • the eyes of Christ • the hands of Christ • the mouth of Christ • the ears of Christ • the heart of Christ. Homilies on these topics, rich in biblical references, are scripted in such a way that they may be offered by two persons as dialog sermons—or by a single preacher.

Pastors and parishes participating in Lenten pulpit exchanges will notice that the six services may be offered in virtually any order.

The Sermons are written in such a way that they may be offered in dialog form by two speakers—or as monologs, with a single preacher speaking both parts.

Two Hymns are required for each service, one at the beginning and the other before the sermon. These are to be of your own choosing. Besides Lenten “standards,” you might search out hymns with “anatomical references,” like:

“O Master, Let Me Walk with You”

“Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”

“Wide Open Are Your Hands”

“Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me”
“Lord, Speak to Us that We May Speak”
“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”
“Your Heart, O God, Is Grieved”

A third congregation hymn may be sung during the Offering ... or a choir anthem or other special music may be offered there.

The Psalmody for each week is cast in a responsive form in which the congregation sings lines of a hymn stanza (to the Lenten melody Martyrdom, “Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed”) while the verses of the psalm are spoken. For greatest effect, the organist may introduce the melody before the first spoken line, then softly hold the last chord while the spoken line is read, preferably by someone at a microphone.

Certain services may be enhanced:

Ash Wednesday — The imposition of ashes may take place after the Opening Hymn, before the First Lesson, or after the Lord’s Prayer.

Maundy Thursday — The rite of washing the feet may take place after the reading of the Gospel. Stripping of the altar may take place before the final hymn stanza ... or the chancel may be stripped during the Good Friday service, right before the Christ Candle is removed.

Good Friday — This service may be offered in a Tennebrae form by designating places at which candles will be extinguished.

Easter — Following the opening greeting/response, during an organ prelude before the first hymn, a “Procession of New Life” may take place, in which the Altar Guild assigns congregation members (including children) various sanctuary furnishings to carry in and place, such as processional cross, paschal candle, paraments, books and vessels, flowers and banners.

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Week 1: The Feet of Christ

Order of Service

Opening Hymn (*needs to be chosen*)

Call to Worship

- P** Lord God, ruler of the universe, heaven is your throne and the earth is your footstool.
- C** We fall at your feet and worship you.
- P** Lord Jesus, savior of the world, sin and death are in subjection under your feet.
- C** We fall at your feet and worship you.
- P** Lord Spirit, guide of our lives, you lead our feet in the way of salvation.
- C** We fall at your feet and worship you.
- P** Lord Jesus, you have forgiven us much because you have loved us much.
- C** Teach us also to love and forgive ourselves as well as others. Amen.

Hymn Herzlich Tut Mich Verlangen (Rhythmic) 76 76 D

Lord Jesus, you draw near us
In garb of human flesh,
An earthly form, to cheer us,
To kindle faith afresh.
Your body for us broken
On the accursed tree
Becomes a sacred token
Of glory yet to be.

Prayer of the Day (*needs to be written*)

Hymn Herzlich Tut Mich Verlangen (Rhythmic) 76 76 D

Draw near us, precious Savior,
With footsteps sure and true.
Assure us of your favor;
Let us draw near to you.
O Word-made-flesh, forever
Your name shall be adored.
Oh, let us cherish ever
The feet of Christ, our Lord.

First Lesson Isaiah 65:17—66:2

P “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring

of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the Lord. Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

Psalmody from Psalm 119 (with verses sung to the tune Martyrdom CM)

Ⓟ Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!

The feet of those who trust the Lord
Pursue God's righteous ways.

Ⓟ Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who do no wrong but walk in his ways.

The paths of those who love God's Word
Lead to their Maker's praise.

Ⓟ Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

The feet of those who trust the Lord
Pursue God's righteous ways.

Ⓟ When I learn your righteous ordinances, I will praise you with an upright heart. Do not let me stray from your commandments.

The paths of those who love God's Word
Lead to their Maker's praise.

Second Lesson..... 1 Corinthians 15:19-28

¶ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Psalmody from Psalm 119 (with verses sung to the tune Martyrdom CM)

The feet of those who trust the Lord
Pursue God's righteous ways.

¶ Bring our hearts into subjection under your holy will, O Lord, to share your joy of obedience to the Father.

The paths of those who love God's Word
Lead to their Maker's praise.

Holy Gospel Luke 7:36-50

¶ One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what

sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher." A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Hymn (*needs to be chosen*)

Sermon: The Feet of Christ

Do you find it hard to focus on his feet?

Feet are so ... basic, so human ... and Jesus is the Son of God. I guess sometimes I find myself so concentrating on our Lord's holiness that it is hard to focus on his human attributes. The feet of someone like Moses would be easier to contemplate—when God told him at the burning bush to take off his sandals and he stood there barefoot before the Lord. The feet of the Israelites then, as they walked dryshod through the Red Sea. The Bible talks about those feet—

—as a sign of humanity. Maybe we can begin by picturing Mary, the loving mother of Jesus, seated with her baby upon her lap, playing with the toes of the infant Jesus. Can you picture her tickling his feet or playing some little "count your toesies" game?

O.K., in my imagination I can see and hear the baby Jesus laughing and cooing.

But since Jesus was truly human, those feet and toes grew.

I can now see the feet of Christ running and playing children's games with other little friends. I can visualize those feet walking on dusty roads to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple.

Picture them, if you will, standing before the teachers in the Temple discussing the laws of the Torah.

And then walking home again, submissive to his parents. There is Nazareth—I can picture the feet of the young Jesus standing in the sawdust and shavings of the carpenter's shop.

Finally, as those feet have grown once again, try to see the feet of Christ now as the feet of a man.

A strong sure-footed man.

See in your mind those feet stepping into the river Jordan to be baptized.

Like the Israelites, again—crossing into the promised land.

When our Lord's feet came up out of the water, they walked all around Galilee—from village to village, from mountain to seashore—as Jesus began teaching the people. Those feet were now most likely calloused from the many miles they had walked.

Our feet are more familiar with riding in cars and airplanes than they are with walking.

But the feet of Christ walked everywhere Jesus wanted to go. On one occasion they even walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee.

I wonder, did his feet get wet? I know it doesn't matter, but I can't help wondering.

They were feet that wore sandals and were probably often dusty and tired from their many travels.

On the occasion described in our Gospel reading, the feet of Christ were under the roof of a Pharisee. Jesus had been invited to his house to eat a meal. In that time, people normally ate reclining on pillows on the floor. If the feet of the guests were dirty or smelly from being unwashed it could detract from the enjoyment of the meal. Usually there were servants who washed the feet of the guests, or at the very least a basin was provided so that the guests could wash their own feet. On the night of his betrayal, it was Christ himself who girded a towel and washed the feet of the disciples, assuming the role of a servant. But in this house on this evening, that courtesy was for some reason neglected or ignored and omitted.

It is at this point that a woman of the city enters.

The text says she was a sinner and implies that she might have been a prostitute.

She brought ointment and began crying when she saw him.

Did she plan to do this?

How can one plan to wash someone's feet with tears?

Perhaps they were tears of repentance and shame. Maybe when she saw Jesus she was overcome with remorse for her life. And when she approached him to anoint his feet, she might even have been ashamed and embarrassed that her tears inadvertently fell on his feet, so she began to wipe them off with her hair. As she washed his feet she began to kiss the feet of Christ and to anoint them with the ointment she had brought.

This is one of the most beautiful acts of devotion in the Bible. To fall at one's feet is a sign of submission; to embrace one's feet is a display of honor and worship; to kiss one's feet is a gripping and compelling act of adoration and love. This woman's deed is a lovely and inspiring exhibition of the desire of every Christian to be with Jesus.

Haven't you felt that keen desire to be near Jesus?

When you are ashamed of your sins, or when you feel isolation and loneliness; when you feel angry at someone, or you feel hurt or betrayed—

Then you just want to be near Jesus, your truest friend,

to see him, to hold him, to fall at his feet and cry out your pain upon the sinless feet of Christ!

Wouldn't we be overcome by the same emotions as the beautiful spirit in this woman? When we would finally be near the sinless Son of God, we would fall at his feet in love and devotion. For the glory would be too sweet, too overpowering to gaze up into his face. In the presence of Jesus we would be content to stare at the feet of Christ only we would notice one difference that this woman did not yet see.

We would see wounds upon those feet. We would see where nails had pierced the feet of Christ to fasten them to a cross that would guarantee the forgiveness which he gives to this woman and to us.

But seeing those wounds would only redouble our joy and our wonder. For we would also remember that there were other women who fell at his feet and worshiped him. Their feet had taken them to a tomb—a tomb which they found to be empty, a tomb from which the soldiers had rushed away with hurried feet. There they embraced the undying feet of Christ! Because of what they saw, and what it means for us, we now can hear the Savior's words unafraid and rush with willing feet to believe them:

YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU, GO IN PEACE!

Offering

Prayers for the Body of Christ

P Let us pray for the whole body of Christ and for all people according to their needs. For all nations and their leaders, that they may follow your footsteps in the paths of peace, let us pray:

C Draw near, O Lord, in mercy.

P For your body, the church, that we may find ways to wash and anoint your feet by serving those whom you love, let us pray:

C Draw near, O Lord, in mercy.

P For our congregation, because the faith you have given us has saved us, that we may joyfully love and forgive others so that they may share our faith, let us pray:

C Draw near, O Lord, in mercy.

P For all who have much to be forgiven, that by your Spirit they may be brought to repentance and receive forgiveness at your feet, let us pray:

C Draw near, O Lord, in mercy.

P For all who love little, that all pride and arrogance would be recognized as sin also, that they too may be brought to repentance and receive forgiveness at your feet, let us pray:

C Draw near, O Lord, in mercy.

P For the sick (especially ...), remembering that as you walked in a crowd a woman who believed and touched the fringe of your garment was healed; that for these also your healing power may flow out of you, let us pray:

C Draw near, O Lord, in mercy.

P For all who grieve, remembering that the women at the tomb also fell at your feet and worshiped you, for you have walked from life to death to eternal life, let us pray:

C Draw near, O Lord, in mercy.

P Into your care, O Lord, we entrust all for whom we pray, believing in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn..... Herzlich Tut Mich Verlangen (Rhythmic) 76 76 D

The feet of Christ, our brother,
Approach us from above,
As we draw near each other
With Spirit-given love.
May we, such grace receiving,
Become, with one accord,
In all our daily living
The Body of the Lord.

Lord's Prayer