

Thursday of Holy Week is remembered as the time Jesus ate a final meal together with the men who had followed him for so long. There are a variety of events that are clustered on this last day before Jesus was arrested that are commemorated in various ways in services of worship. These include the last meal together, which was probably a Passover meal, the institution of Eucharist or Communion, the betrayal by Judas (because of the exchange with Jesus at the meal), and Jesus praying in Gethsemane while the disciples fell asleep.

Traditionally in the Christian Church, this day is known as Maundy Thursday. The term **Maundy** comes from the Latin word *mandatum* (from which we get our English word *mandate*), from a verb that means "to give," "to entrust," or "to order." The term is usually translated "commandment," from John's account of this Thursday night. According to the Fourth Gospel, as Jesus and the Disciples were eating their final meal together before Jesus' arrest, he washed the disciples' feet to illustrate humility and the spirit of servanthood.

The sharing of the Eucharist, or sacrament of thanksgiving, on Maundy Thursday is the means by which most Christians observe this day. There is a great variety in exactly how the service is conducted, however. In some churches, it is traditional for the pastor or priest to wash the feet of members of the congregation as part of the service. In some church traditions all of the altar coverings and decorations are removed after the Eucharist is served on Maundy Thursday. Since the altar in these traditions symbolize the Christ, the "stripping of the altar" symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and the stripping of Jesus by the soldiers prior to his crucifixion. This, like the darkness often incorporated into a Good Friday service, represents the humiliation of Jesus and the consequences of sin as a preparation for the celebration of new life and hope that is to come on Resurrection Day. Some churches only leave the altar bare until the Good Friday Service, when the normal coverings are replaced with black.

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Bishop Monroe Saunders, Jr. is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. As the eldest son of one of the country's most prominent Apostolic ministers, his call to the ministry, at the age of 17, was neither unexpected nor unwelcome.

Bishop Saunders is the pastor of the Transformation Ministries of the United Church of Jesus Christ, Baltimore, Maryland, a ministry founded by his father Bishop Monroe Saunders, Sr. as the First United Church of Jesus Christ (Apostolic) in 1965. As Pastor, Bishop Saunders, Jr. strives to teach and preach the recovering of lost souls for the Kingdom of God and the equipping of saints for the work of the ministry. Bishop Saunders senses the urgency for unity in the Body of Christ and the need for transformative spiritual development. Bishop Saunders has held two prior pastorates; First United Church of Jesus Christ in Detroit, Michigan and the Capitol Hill United Church of Jesus Christ in Washington DC.

Bishop Saunders' formal education is rooted in the tradition of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and Social Welfare from Morgan State University. He later received a Masters Degree from Howard University in Religion & Education, followed by the Doctor of Ministry Degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. In July 2006, Bishop Saunders' published [Barren with a Promise](#), a book written to encourage those who are going through barren moments in their lives to build their faith – because out of barrenness, the seed of promise can break forth!

Bishop Saunders' wife, Lady Winsome R. Saunders, and his family make the love and joy of his life complete. The Transformation Church is blessed to have as Pastor, Bishop Monroe Saunders, Jr., a **visionary and leader of spiritual transformation during this critical time in our history.**