

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Agape Meal



St. Francis' Episcopal Church

CONCERNING THE SERVICE

This Maundy Thursday service was designed for use in the home, around a virtual dinner table, while we are physically separated during this time. The service draws from the Eucharistic tradition, but it is not a sacramental meal. In New Testament Greek it is called Euckharista, meaning “gratitude, giving or thanks”—and this we can and should do whenever we share the bounty of the earth!

All Christians are called to bless and so while this meal is not sacramental it includes blessings of the food and drink shared, and the people gathered.

While the service mentions wine, you should use whatever beverage makes sense for you. In the ancient world, wine was safe (when the water was often not) and was a staple. Using a beverage that is a staple of your dinner table is always welcomed.

This service has been written so that various parts can be shared out among those present. Each part is either meant to be read by a single person, or by all.

One candle (called the Christ candle) will be lit before the service begins, and will remain lit throughout. If you have a candle to light in your own space, you may wish to light yours at that same time.

OPENING

Gathering Hymn

One Bread, One Body

LEVAS 151

Hymn Leader, Tracey Oswald

One bread, one bod-y, one Lord of all, one cup of
bless - ing which we bless. And we, though
man - y, through-out the earth, We are one
bod - y in this one Lord.

Last time ⊕

1. Gen - tile or Jew, ser - vant or
 2. Man - y the gifts, man - y the
 3. Grain for the fields, scat - tered and

1. free, wom - an or man,
 2. works, one in the Lord
 3. grown, gath - ered to one

1. no more, One
 2. of all, One
 3. for all, One

⊕ CODA
 Lord.

Officiant: Tonight is about friendship and love. But not all the stories tonight are happy, because suffering and evil are real. So tonight we will eat a meal, we will share stories, and we will pray together.

The Christ candle is now lit, as well as any other candles present for this meal.

Deacon: As Jesus traveled he spread light wherever he went, light that could not be extinguished. In whose honor do we light this candle tonight?

The Many may offer their own answers, which may involve any or all of the following, or any other answers those gathered wish to add:

<i>the women who attended him</i>	<i>his mother Mary</i>	<i>the disciples</i>
<i>the crowds who followed him</i>	<i>the lepers he healed</i>	<i>the possessed he freed</i>
<i>the woman who anointed him</i>	<i>the poor</i>	<i>the sick etc.</i>

BLESSING OF THE MEAL

This portion of the service follows the shape of the last supper, and therefore will sound familiar and much like the Eucharist. However, the elements are not consecrated as they are in the Eucharist. Rather, we bless God for these gifts and ask God to bless them for our use, as all Christians are called to do throughout our lives.

As the Officiant prays the blessing over the bread, all join in the blessing by holding up their own bread.

Officiant: On the night that Jesus fathered with his friends, he took bread and he blessed it and shared it with his friends—for God who loves us, feeds us. As God's people ate manna in the wilderness and were satisfied, so we share this bread with Christ and with one another.

As the Deacon prays the blessing over the drink, all join in the blessing by holding up their own drink.

Deacon: On the night that Jesus gathered with his friends, he took wine and he blessed it and shared it with them—for the God who made us delights in us, and gives us good gifts to delight our tongues and give joy to our souls. As Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that would not fail, so Jesus offers us the same.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.
May this be for us the holy drink of heaven, and may it wash us of sin and quench the thirst of our souls.

The whole company together then blesses the rest of the meal, saying together:

Many: **Holy and life-giving God: we thank you for the bounty of your creation laid before us. We ask you to bless it, that it may be to us a holy meal; we give thanks for all those who labored so that it might sustain us; and we ask that through it you would give us the strength to be your good stewards, to care for and tend your creation, and to care especially for our siblings, all the people of this world. Tonight, be with all the members of our community who we love and miss, those who cannot be here with us to share this meal. We ask these things by the grace of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, our friend and guide. Amen.**

The meal should be enjoyed by all.

STORYTELLING AND RESPONSE

The following stories should be read by members of the gathered group while the rest continue their meal. Conversation and questions are encouraged, for this is a gathering of friends.

THE FIRST STORY

John 2:1-12: The Wedding at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

(Reading taken from the NRSV)

THE SECOND STORY

Matthew 14:13-21: Feeding the Five Thousand

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(Reading taken from the NRSV)

THE THIRD STORY

John 13:1-17, 31b-35: Washing the Disciples' Feet

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 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.

(Reading taken from the NRSV)

Officiant: The Lord Jesus, after he had eaten with his disciples and had washed their feet, said to them, "Do you know what I, your Lord and teacher, have done to you? I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done."

Many: **Peace is my last gift to you, my own peace I now leave with you; peace which the world cannot give, I give to you.**

Officiant: I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.

Many: **Peace is my last gift to you, my own peace I now leave with you; peace which the world cannot give, I give to you.**

Officiant: By this shall the world know that you are my disciples: That you have love for one another.

U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - mor,
Live in char - i - ty and stead - fast love,

u - bi ca - ri - tas De - us i ³ - bi est.
live in char - i - ty; God will dwell with you.

Setting: Jacques Berthier, from *Songs and Prayers from Taizé* © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.
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TURNING

Deacon: Tonight with Christians around the globe, let us pray for the church, the earth, our troubled world, and all in need, responding to each petition with the words: Your mercy is great.

Intercessor: Blessed are you, holy God, for the church. Gather all the baptized around your presence in the Word. Strengthen the body of your people even when we cannot assemble for worship. Give our bishops and all our clergy faithfulness and creativity for their ministry in this time, and accompany those preparing for baptism. Hear us, holy God.

Many: **Your mercy is great.**

Intercessor: Blessed are you, bountiful God, for this good earth and for the flowering of springtime. Save dry lands from destructive droughts. Protect the waters from pollution. Allow in this time the planting of fields for food. Make us into care-givers of your plants and animals. Hear us, bountiful God.

Many: **Your mercy is great.**

Intercessor: Blessed are you, sovereign God, for our nation. Inspire all people to live in peace and concord. Grant wisdom and courage to heads of state and to legislators as they face the coronavirus. Lead our elected officials to champion the cause of the needy. Hear us, sovereign God.

Many: **Your mercy is great.**

Intercessor: Blessed are you, faithful God, for you accompany suffering humanity with love. Abide wherever the coronavirus has struck. Visit all who mourn their dead; all who have contracted the virus; those who are quarantined or stranded away from home; those who have lost their employment; those who fear the present and the future. Support physicians, nurses, and home health aides; medical researchers; and the World Health Organization. Hear us, faithful God.

Many: **Your mercy is great.**

Intercessor: Blessed are you, gracious God, for you care for the needy. We beg you to feed the hungry, protect the refugee, embrace the distressed, house the homeless, nurse the sick, and comfort the dying. Hear us, gracious God.

Many: **Your mercy is great.**

Intercessor: Blessed are you, eternal God, for all who have died in the faith, and those whom we name before you now... At the end, bring us with them into your everlasting glory. Hear us, gracious God.

Many: **Your mercy is great.**

Intercessor: Receive, merciful God, our prayers, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the host of our meal of life, who died and rose that we might live with you, now and forever.

Many: **Amen.**

Officiant: Our dinner is over; the waiting begins. Tonight Jesus was alone, under arrest, and awaiting his death. Tonight his friends were alone with their guilt, shame, and fear. Tonight we are missing our normal routines, our communities, and our friends. Many are alone, isolated, and afraid. Jesus waits with us all tonight, even as we wait with him. Jesus knows what loneliness feels like, what fear tastes like. Jesus knows the heartbreak of being alone when you want most to be with people you love. Tonight we hold vigil with the sick, the fearful, the lonely, and with all who risk their own lives to protect and care for ours.

Hymn Leader, Joe O'Reilly

1. They cru - ci - fied my Lord, and He nev - er said a mum - ba - lin'
 2. They nailed Him to a tree, and He nev - er said a mum - ba - lin'

1. word; They cru - ci - fied my Lord, and He nev - er said a mum - ba - lin'
 2. word; They nailed Him to a tree, and He nev - er said a mum - ba - lin'

1. word. Not a word, not a word, not a word.
 2. word; Not a word, not a word, not a word.

3. They pierced Him in the side.
 4. The blood came streamin' down.
 5. He hung His head and died.

THE FINAL STORY

Luke 22:39-53: The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Deacon: Jesus left and made his way to the Mount of Olives, as was his custom, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived, he said to them, "Pray that you won't give in to temptation." He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed. He said, "Father, if it's your will, take this cup of suffering away from me. However, not my will but your will must be done." Then a heavenly angel appeared to him and strengthened him. He was in anguish and prayed even more earnestly. His sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground. When he got up from praying, he went to the disciples. He found them asleep, overcome by grief. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray so that you won't give in to temptation."

While Jesus was still speaking, a crowd appeared, and the one called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Human One with a kiss?"

When those around him recognized what was about to happen, they said, "Lord, should we fight with our swords?" One of them struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. Jesus responded, "Stop! No more of this!" He touched the slave's ear and healed him.

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders who had come to get him, "Have you come with swords and clubs to arrest me, as though I were a thief? Day after day I was with you in the temple, but you didn't arrest me. But this is your time, when darkness rules."

(Reading taken from the CEB)

SILENCE

The service ends in silence. Silently clear your eating space and wash dishes. When the table is clear and all washed and away, extinguish the candle in silence. If possible, keep this space empty until Good Friday services tomorrow evening.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Officiant	The Rev. Laurie Anzilotti
Deacon	The Ven. Rebecca Barger
Lectors	Bob Smith
	Janet Houseman
	Katie Jones

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