

A Maundy Thursday Agape Meal



Welcome

Celebrant: Friends, tonight is a holy night. Tonight we join with Christians around the world as we remember the last night our Lord spent with his friends. We gather around a table, and with all those who remember tonight. Though we are dispersed, we are together, in spirit and in truth.

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.

Worship leader: As Jesus traveled he spread light wherever he went, light that could not be extinguished.

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 blessing over the bread is recited, all join in the blessing by holding up their own bread.

Reader 1): On the night that Jesus gathered 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.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. May this be for us bread from heaven, strength for our bodies, and balm for our souls; and may it empower us to be Christ’s body in this world.

As the blessing over the wine (or other beverage) is recited, all join in the blessing by holding up their own cups.

Reader 2: 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:

All led by worship leader): 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, our brother, and the Holy Spirit, our friend and guide. Amen.

Each household enjoys their meal while the stories are read.

Storytelling and Response

The First Story

John 2:1-12: The Wedding at Cana

² On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and ² Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. ³ When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They don't have any wine."

⁴ Jesus replied, "Woman, what does that have to do with me? My time hasn't come yet."

⁵ His mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Nearby were six stone water jars used for the Jewish cleansing ritual, each able to hold about twenty or thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water," and they filled them to the brim. ⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some from them and take it to the headwaiter," and they did. ⁹ The headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine. He didn't know where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

The headwaiter called the groom ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone serves the good wine first. They bring out the second-rate wine only when the guests are drinking freely. You kept the good wine until now." ¹¹ This was the first miraculous sign that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

¹² After this, Jesus and his mother, his brothers, and his disciples went down to Capernaum and stayed there for a few days. (*From the Common English Bible.*)

Mary is instrumental in Jesus' mission. She points and leads us to Jesus through her word and example.

This week who has pointed to Jesus for you? For whom have you been the one to point to Jesus?

The Second Story

Matthew 14:13-21: Feeding the Five Thousand

¹³ When Jesus heard about John, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. When the crowds learned this, they followed him on foot from the cities. ¹⁴ When Jesus arrived and saw a large crowd, he had compassion for them and healed those who were sick. ¹⁵ That evening his disciples came and said to him, “This is an isolated place and it’s getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”

¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, “There’s no need to send them away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷ They replied, “We have nothing here except five loaves of bread and two fish.”

¹⁸ He said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹ He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish, looked up to heaven, blessed them and broke the loaves apart and gave them to his disciples. Then the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ Everyone ate until they were full, and they filled twelve baskets with the leftovers. ²¹ About five thousand men plus women and children had eaten.

This great miracle took place at the most unlikely moment: at the end of the day, when it was time to return home, when the disciples realized they had only five loaves and two fishes. Yet Jesus asked his disciples and his hearers to trust him, to “sit down” on the grass as if they were not in any hurry. Those who trusted got more than they needed.

I look back on some moments when I too experienced God’s generosity in my life, and I ask to know how to “sit down” in trust in the moment of crisis.

The Third Story

John 13:1-17, 31b-35: The Last Supper

13 Before the Festival of Passover, Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them fully.

² Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal. The devil had already provoked Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. ⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later."

⁸ "No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me."

⁹ Simon Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

¹⁰ Jesus responded, "Those who have bathed need only to have their feet washed, because they are completely clean. You disciples are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ He knew who would betray him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you is clean."

¹² After he washed the disciples' feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table. He said to them, "Do you know what I've done for you? ¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly, because I am. ¹⁴ If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do. ¹⁶ I assure you, servants aren't greater than their master, nor are those who are sent greater than the one who

sent them. ¹⁷ Since you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

Celebrant: 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.”

All: 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.

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

All: 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.

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

Hymn 606

ubi carit

Leah Milton will sing the Verses and the congregation will sing the Antiphon.

Antiphon

Where true char - i - ty and love dwell, God him-self is there.

Since the love of Christ has joined us in one body,
let us all rejoice and be glad now and always.
And as we hear and love our Lord, the living God,
so let us in sincerity love all people.

Antiphon

As we are all of one body, when we gather
let no discord or enmity break our oneness.
May all our petty jealousies and hatred cease
that Christ the Lord may be with us through all our days.

Antiphon

Now we pray that with the blessed you grant us grace
to see your exalted glory O Christ our God,
our boundless source of joy and truth, of peace and love,
for ever and for evermore, world without end.

Antiphon

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Turning

Celebrant: 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.

Worship Leader: 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.

Your mercy is great

Worship leader: 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.

Your mercy is great

Worship leader: 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. Lead our elected officials to champion the cause of the needy. Hear us, sovereign God.

Your mercy is great

Worship leader: Blessed are you, faithful God, for you accompany suffering humanity with love. Abide wherever illness or suffering has struck. Be with those who have lost their employment; those who fear the present and the future. Visit all who mourn their dead. Support physicians, nurses, and home health aides. Hear us, faithful God.

Your mercy is great

Worship leader: 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.

Your mercy is great

Worship leader: 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.

Your mercy is great

Worship leader: 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.

Amen.

Celebrant: 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.

Instrumental reflection: *Longing*

Mark Hayes

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

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.

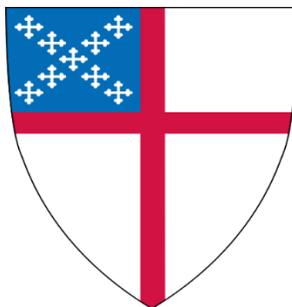
Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders who had come to get him, “Have you come with swords and clubs to arrest me, as though I were a thief? Day after day I was with you in the temple, but you didn’t arrest me. But this is your time, when darkness rules.”

Silence

On this night, there is no blessing or dismissal. Please leave the call in silence.

Our Holy Week worship will continue on Friday at 7 pm with prayers for Good Friday

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Participants:

Celebrant: Rev. Mary Haggerty

Worship Leader: Holly Garrett

Reader 1: Susan Oris

Reader 2: Mary Dobbs

