

Maundy Thursday Agape Meal

Preparation

We are keeping Holy Week apart again for the second year – and hopefully the last. We are unable to meet together in church but invite you instead to join in with a meal, together but in our separate places, before we live-stream a service of Holy Communion from the church at 8.30pm. We hope you will be able to join in with that as well. If you are able to access YouTube, then there is an audio-visual version of this service there for you to play as you have your own meal at home if you would like to or you can read all the parts yourself.

You are welcome to have whatever meal you have to hand but there are a few things you might like to be aware of before we begin. This meal is based on three courses, with readings and prayers between each. They need not be at all complicated – perhaps a soup and a ‘main’ course (however that looks for you), followed by fruit – but feel free to adapt the positions of the readings around the meal you have.

Part of the service includes ‘setting the table’, so you might like to start with an empty table and then add the things as we say the words. You might like to have ready a candle, bread, wine and a cross.

Take your time over your meal. Pause between courses. Read the readings and sing the songs. If you aren’t familiar with the songs included here – they are available on YouTube - the link is included or you can just search for them by title. If you can’t access YouTube then feel free to replace them with something that you do know. If you prefer you can of course keep a time of silence.

Wherever and however and with whoever you keep this meal tonight, know that we are thinking of and praying for you tonight and every night.

Ruth and Heather

Gathering

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who on this night shared a final meal with his friends - I bid you welcome. Let this be a time of sharing; of sharing food and of sharing in the love we have for each other and for our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord give us a happy time together.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.'

In that love, we are the body of Christ.

His Spirit is with us.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

And also with you.

Let us pray.

This is the place and this is the time

Here and now, God waits to break into our experience.

To change our minds.

To change our hearts.

To change our ways.

To make us see the world and the whole of life in a new light.

To fill us with hope, joy and certainty for the future.

Here and now – let us praise God.

Song: Be Still for the Presence of the Lord

(Available online at [Be still for the presence of the Lord - YouTube](#))

1. Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here;
come bow before Him now with reverence and fear:
in Him no sin is found - we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.

2. Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour He is crowned:
how awesome is the sight - our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

3. Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place:
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace -
no work too hard for Him. In faith receive from Him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

David J. Evans

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A reading: John 15.4-5, 8-9

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.

Setting the Table

On the table in the midst of this scattered community with whom Christ is present we set symbols to remind us of His promises to us:

A **candle**, to remind us of Jesus who said, "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life".

Bread, symbol of Jesus who said, "I am the bread of life. The bread that I shall give is myself for the life of the world".

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, you bring forth bread from the earth to sustain us. Blessed is your name for all the life and food we share this night, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Wine, symbol of Jesus who said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, you create the fruit of the vine. Blessed is your name for refreshing our lives from the cup of life and salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A **cross**, to remind us that Jesus said, “A new commandment I give you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another”.

**Lord, we welcome your presence with us.
May the food and companionship we share
Nourish our bodies, hearts and minds.
And may our spirits be refreshed
As we live in the light of your presence
With us now, and at all times and places.
Amen.**

The Meal

I now invite you to sit and enjoy your meal. Let it be for us a reminder of the community and love that we share in the name of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

First Course

After the first course:

A Reading: John 13.1-17

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.

Song: All the Room was Hushed and Still

(Available online at [Love Each Other - Graham Kendrick - Lyric Video - YouTube](#))

All the room was hushed and still
And when the bowl was filled
He stooped to wash their feet
And when it was complete, he said

“This is what I'm asking you to do
This is why I'm kneeling here beside you
This is what I want my church to be
This is what I want the world to see
Who it is you follow
Love each other
One another
Love each other
In the way that I have loved you
Walk together
And whatever comes
Love each other
In the way that I have loved you”

Let the room be hushed and still
Let us go to where he kneels
And join him as he serves
And learn his ways of love, he said

“This is what I'm asking you to do
This is why I'm kneeling here beside you
This is what I want my church to be
This is what I want the world to see
Who it is you follow

Love each other
One another
Love each other
In the way that I have loved you
Walk together
And whatever comes
Love each other
In the way that I have loved you.”

Graham Kendrick
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Second Course

After the second course:

A Reading: 1 Corinthians 11.23-26

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Song: Bread of Life (Available online at [Bread Of Life - YouTube](#))

*Bread of life, truth eternal,
Broken now to set us free.
The risen Christ, his saving power,
Is here in Bread and Wine for me.*

Lord, I know I am not worthy to receive you.
You speak the words and I am healed.
Here at your table, Love's mystery:
One bread, one cup, one family.

Lord by your cross, you reconciled us to the Father.
We have only to believe.
Your sacrifice, our victory,
Now by your blood we are redeemed.

Lord, you gave your people manna in the desert,
Still you fulfil our every need.
Lord when we hunger, Lord, when we thirst,
We come to you and we receive

Words & Music by Joanne Boyce & Mike Stanley
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Third Course

After the third course:

A Reading: John 13.31-35

Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Song: A New Commandment

(Available online at [A New Commandment I give unto You Song Lyrics. - YouTube](#))

A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.
By this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.

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A Reading: 17.1-8, 17.20-18.1

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you,

Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

Closing Prayer:

God our Father,
Your son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end
and drank the cup prepared for him:
may we who share his table
watch with him through the night of suffering
and be faithful.

Amen

Please join us on YouTube for Holy Communion at 8.30pm or keep some time of quiet prayer in ‘the garden’ if you prefer.