

Saint John's Episcopal Church, Concord

576 Concord Road
Glen Mills, PA 19342
www.saintjohnsconcord.com
610-459-2994

Maundy Thursday: Agape Meal & Hand Washing April 1, 2021



Photo Credit: Austin Kehmeier (Unsplash.com)

The Rev. Jill LaRoche Wikel – Rector

2021 Mission of Saint John's
To be a welcoming community committed to
seeking, serving, and growing in Christ.

Many Christian communities have the custom of sharing a simple meal before or after the Maundy Thursday Eucharist, as part of the commemoration of the two maundys (maundy = commandment) of the Lord, to “love one another” and to break bread “in remembrance of me.”

We know that our Lord shared a last meal with his disciples. In the Gospel of John (chapter 13), at this meal Jesus washed the feet of his twelve disciples saying, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another” (John 13:34). At this supper, our Lord instituted – created the new tradition of – what St. Paul called “the Lord’s Supper” in which Jesus gives new meaning to bread and wine shared at this meal (see Luke 22:14-20).

Since we are unable to gather together and celebrate the Last Supper (Eucharist), our Maundy Thursday practice will be to focus on the first maundy “love one another” given during a simple meal, a meal of love – or in Greek, agape.

To prepare for this worship service, please gather simple foods: bread, olives, cheese, wine/juice, fruits. Place these on your table, along with candles and any other sacred symbols you choose.

Also, please have ready a bowl of warm water; soft clean towels; and a fragrant oil or lotion. These items will be used in our ritual hand washing (done in place of the usual foot washing on Maundy Thursday).

This service is designed to be prayed by you with family/friends in your “bubble;” or you may join Rev. Jill for our Zoom service on Thursday, April 1st. Meeting ID 955 049 2211 Passcode 1702.

Agapé Meal with Ritual Handwashing

OPENING ACCLIMATION

Leader: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

People: ***Hosanna in the highest!***

THE BLESSINGS

Lift up the item you are offering to God as you say these blessings.

Over Wine

Leader: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You create the fruit of the vine; and on this night you have refreshed us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May the time come quickly when we can share that cup again, even as you are with us now in our very thirst for you. Glory to you for ever and ever.

People: ***Amen.***

Over Bread

Leader: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You bring forth bread from the earth; and on this night you have given us the bread of life in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. As grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power for ever and ever.

People: Amen.

Over the Other Foods

Leader: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever.

People: Amen.

SACRED SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrew Scriptures

Exodus 12:1-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

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.

"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."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON/REFLECTION ON THE FIRST MAUNDY:

How can we practice this commandment to love one another? What acts of service are we doing for others?

RITUAL HAND WASHING

Have a bowl of warm water, clean, soft towels, and fragrant lotion/oil ready for this portion of the service.

Wash my Hands

by Lucy Nanson, New Zealand:

Wash my hands on Maundy Thursday
not my feet

My hands peel potatoes, wipe messes from the floor
change dirty nappies, clean the grease from pots and pans
have pointed in anger and pushed away in tears
in years past they've smacked a child and raised a fist
fumbled with nervousness, shaken with fear
I've wrung them when waiting for news to come
crushed a letter I'd rather forget
covered my mouth when I've been caught out
touched forbidden things, childhood memories do not grow dim
These hands have dug gardens, planted seeds
picked fruit and berries, weeded out and pruned trees
found bleeding from the rose's thorns
dirt and blood mix together
when washed before a cup of tea
Love expressed by them
asks for your respect
in the hand-shake of warm greeting,
the gentle rubbing of a child's bump
the caressing of a lover, the softness of a baby's cheek
sounds of music played by them in tunes upon a flute
they've held a frightened teenager,
touched a father in his death
where cold skin tells the end of life has come
but not the end of love,
comforted a mother losing agility and health.
With my hands outstretched before you
I stand humbled and in awe
your gentle washing in water, the softness of the towel
symbolizing a cleansing

the servant-hood of Christ.
Wash my hands on Maundy Thursday
and not my feet.

The Washing

Leader. Brothers and sisters in Christ: On the night before his death, Jesus set an example for his disciples by washing their feet, an act of humble service. He taught that strength and growth in the life of the Kingdom of God come not by power, authority, or miracle, but by such simple service.

If able, the gathered people should wash and anoint each other's hands. If one person is praying this service in solitude, then it is appropriate to wash one's own hands.

Taking another person's hands into theirs, wash the hands saying,

 Create in me a clean heart, O God;
 and renew a right spirit within me.

Then, gently dry the wet hands and anoint them with the lotion/oil, praying:

 I bless these hands,
 and the work that they do,
 and the people that they touch,
 and the love that they give.

When everyone's hands have been washed and blessed, pray together the following psalm.

Psalm 116:1, 10-17

¹ I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

¹⁰ How shall I repay the Lord *
for all the good things he has done for me?

¹¹ I will lift up the cup of salvation *
and call upon the Name of the Lord.

¹² I will fulfill my vows to the Lord *
in the presence of all his people.

¹³ Precious in the sight of the Lord *
is the death of his servants.

¹⁴ O Lord, I am your servant; *
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.

¹⁵ I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and call upon the Name of the Lord.

¹⁶ I will fulfill my vows to the Lord *
in the presence of all his people,
¹⁷ In the courts of the Lord's house, *
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!

The service concludes with the following:

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

*People: **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.***

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

*People: **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.***

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

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

*People: **Thanks be to God.***