

# St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Richmond, Virginia

On Maundy Thursday in Holy Week, we remember the night that Jesus shared the meal with his friends that became the Holy Eucharist. After the meal, he washed their feet in the role of a servant, and gave his final teaching (*maundy* comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, which means *commandment, instruction*) that they follow his example to love and serve others as he had.

The Agape Meal is one way of experiencing and connecting with this foundational moment in the Christian story through a shared meal, prayers, and foot washing. It is an accessible event, especially for families with children, and requires the support of a substantial number of servant helpers. Agape (ah-GAHP-ay) is the Greek word that expresses the highest form of love, God's love; this kind of meal-service is sometimes known as a "love-feast."

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Maundy Thursday

April 6, 2023

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## Agape Meal & Footwashing

*The community gathers around the dinner tables in the Fellowship Hall.*

**The Gathering**                      *All stand. A period of silence is kept.*

**Officiant**        The Lord be with you.

**People**            **And also with you.**

**Officiant**        Let us pray.

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that that we may remember these great gifts of love by Jesus Christ our Lord, and follow his great command to love one another as he eternally loves us all; who has given himself for the whole world; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**A Reading**     Luke 22:7-16

The Day of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John with this task: "Go and prepare for us to eat the Passover meal."

They said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare it?"

Jesus replied, "When you go into the city, a man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters. Say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher says to you, "Where is the guestroom where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"' He will show you a large upstairs room, already furnished. Make preparations there." They went and found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When the time came, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles joined him. He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. I tell you, I won't eat it until it is fulfilled in God's kingdom." After taking a cup and giving thanks, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. I tell you that from now on I won't drink from the fruit of the vine until God's kingdom has come." After taking the bread and giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup after the meal and said, "This cup is the new covenant by my blood, which is poured out for you.

"But look! My betrayer is with me; his hand is on this table. The Son of Man goes just as it has been determined. But how terrible it is for that person who betrays him." They began to argue among themselves about which of them it could possibly be who would do this.

An argument broke out among the disciples over which one of them should be regarded as the greatest.

But Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles rule over their subjects, and those in authority over them are called ‘friends of the people.’ But that’s not the way it will be with you. Instead, the greatest among you must become like a person of lower status and the leader like a servant. So which one is greater, the one who is seated at the table or the one who serves at the table? Isn’t it the one who is seated at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

“You are the ones who have continued with me in my trials. And I confer royal power on you just as my Father granted royal power to me. Thus you will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones overseeing the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Reader**            The Word of the Lord.  
**People**            **Thanks be to God.**

### **A Blessing over the Food**

**Officiant**        Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler 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. **Amen.**

### **The Meal**

*The People now sit. At each table, people may serve themselves and begin to eat.  
Once all have been served, the following blessings are said together.*

**A Blessing over the Bread**                      *At each table, a person holds the bread for all to see.*

**People**            **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You bring forth bread from the earth; and on this night you feed us with 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. Amen.**

**A Blessing over the Wine**                      *At each table, a person holds the wine for all to see.*

**People**            **Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe. You create the fruit of the vine; and on this night you refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.**

*The people eat.*

### **The Footwashing**

*After the meal is eaten, but before the table is cleared,  
all are invited to serve one another in footwashing.*

**A Reading**     John 13:1-15

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.

Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal. The devil had already provoked Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his

waist. Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

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

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

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

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

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." He knew who would betray him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you is clean."

*The reading pauses.*

*One at a time, approach a chair barefoot and allow another to wash your feet in silence.*

*Clergy are present at each station to wash those who approach. If you would prefer to have a friend or family member wash your feet, or if you would like to wash someone's feet, simply let the clergy know.*

*When all who desire have had their feet washed, the reading continues.*

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? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly, because I am. If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do.

"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 the Son of Man in himself and will glorify him immediately. Little children, I'm with you for a little while longer. You will look for me—but, just as I told the Jewish leaders, I also tell you now—"Where I'm going, you can't come."

"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other."

**Reader**            The Word of the Lord.

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

### **The Prayers**

*Please stand.*

**Officiant**        The Lord be with you.

**People**            **And also with you.**

**Officiant**        Let us pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Officiant** O God of the crucified and risen One, from whom no trial or trouble can separate us: you feed us with your Word and soothe us with your Spirit, closer to us than breath itself. Make us glad this night for the life of your servant Jesus; make us servants of all for the sake of Jesus; who for our sake gave his life for the salvation of all. In the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

### **The Stripping of the Table**

*The Maundy Thursday liturgy traditionally ends with a ritual stripping of the altar which is left empty until the Easter Vigil on Saturday. Tonight, we clear the tables together while meditative music plays. Once each table is clear, you may gather your belongings and depart in silence.*

#### **Participants**

**Officiant:** The Rev. Abby Kocher

**Assisting clergy:** The Rev. Cate Anthony, the Rev. John Jenkins

**Musicians:** Will Rohrs, *viola*; Diana Chou, *piano*

**Chef:** Claire Hackley

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