

Good Shepherd Community Church 6:30 p.m.

Agape-Communion Service Order

The purpose of our service this evening is to celebrate the Lord's Supper *somewhat* in the manner of the early church – in the setting of the *agape*, or love feast. In this service a very simple shared meal and the communion service will be held together so that they constitute a whole experience. In addition a foot washing will occur in imitation of our Lord's example. This type of *agape*-communion service will enable us to experience a heightened sense of fellowship among ourselves and with God. It is a believer's service. The service structure will move from preparation to communion in the bread and cup but the "brethren" can contribute as the Spirit leads with appropriate song, prayer, scripture and brief teaching. The focus should at all times remain on the Lord Jesus and his atoning sacrifice on the cross for us sinners.

Opening Scripture Sentences

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Luke 22:14f

Table Gathering and Sanctification Prayer

The LORD Jesus is our unseen Host

All gather around the table and stand quietly. The chosen Host (Pastor Jeff), lights a candle.

Host:

Blessed are you, O Lord God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by your commandments and has commanded us to kindle the festival lights. Blessed are you, O Lord God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season. May our gathering be consecrated O God, by the light of your countenance shining upon us in the blessing and bringing us peace.

Luke 24:30-31,35-36

On the evening of the first day of the week when the disciples were together . . . Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, Peace be with you. . . .

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Opening Song of Affirmation- The Lord is Here!

1. The Lord is here! His promised word is evermore the same, Himself to be where two or three are gathered in His name.
2. The Lord is here! Where Christ comes his Spirit too is there, with all who raise the song of praise or breathe the voice of prayer.
3. The Lord is here! He comes in peace with blessings from above, by pledge and sign of bread and wine to fold us in His love.
4. The Lord is here! To every soul this gift of grace be given,

to walk the way of Christ today, and share the life of heaven.

(C.M.) Timothy Dudley Smith, 1985 Tune: Crimond

Scripture- Luke 22:7-16

Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." And they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare it?"

And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters." And you shall say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" "And he will show you a large, furnished, upper room; prepare it there."

And they departed and found everything just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover. And when the hour had come He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Mark 14: 18-20

And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me."

Begin to eat

Interruption- The Footwashing Service

Adapted from The Complete Library of Christian Worship , 6.344-346.

We Read the Scripture: Luke 22:24-27, John 13:1-17

Jesus in Selfless Care

No servant rose, but Jesus saw the need, to wash their feet;
So he went, Lord of heav'n and all the earth, about to greet
The fear of the cross, yet he always kept,
In mind the ones for whom God's wrath he met.

In a basin water he did carry, to wash each man,
King though he was, yet failed he not to serve, to lift his hand,
To help the men, for whom he came to die,
Showing us how in service to abide.

Well did he know from glory he had come, to save his own,
From endless loss, from darkness and from sin, to carry home
To his land of light and life without end
Those whom he served as Master to his friends.

Tune: Sandon (#44) in Hymns for the Living Church Text: Jeff Gregory 2011

Scripture Text: 1 John 3:16-18

Meditation: "Laying our Lives down for Each Other" By Mark Bahr

Hymns-

As in That Upper Room You Left Your Seat

As in that upper room you left your seat
and took a towel and chose a servant's part,
so for today, Lord, wash again my feet,
who in your mercy died to cleanse my heart.

I bow before you, all my sin confessed,
to hear again the words of love you said;
and at your table, as your honored guest,
I take and eat the true and living bread.

So in remembrance of your life laid down
I come to praise you for your grace divine;
Saved by your cross, and subject to your crown,
strengthened for service by this bread and wine.

Meter: 10.10.10.10

“Jesus Took a Towel and He Washed My Feet”

The Order for this Rite

Leader:

The washing of one another's feet follows the example of Jesus when he washed the feet of his disciples. This reminds us that our Lord calls us, not to lives of prominence, but to lives of service.

In Jesus' act, we see the majesty of God, who always stoops to lift our burdens and cleanse our sins, empowering and calling us to live free from the chains of pride and the bitterness of competition.

By washing another's feet, we also commit ourselves to lives of service, in the spirit of Christ, who took on human form, humbling himself in service to others.

By allowing our feet to be washed, we acknowledge our need to be served by one another.

Prayer (Leader):

O Prince of Peace, O Friend of Sinners,
we praise you and give you thanks,
because you laid aside your power as a garment
and took upon yourself the form of a slave.

People:

*You became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.
You allowed yourself to be born to die in our place,
You allowed a sinner to wash your feet with her tears.
For God chose what is low and despised in the world
to bring to nothing things that are.*

*Therefore, with the woman who worshiped you with her tears,
and with the disciples whose feet you washed,
and with all who have followed you from that time till now,
we praise you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader:

O Eternal Father, blessed is our Lord Jesus,
who on that night before Passover,
rose from the Supper, laid aside his garments
took a towel and poured water,
and washed his disciples' feet, saying to them:
"If I, your Lord and Teacher,
have washed your feet,
you also ought to wash one another's feet.
If you know these things,
blessed are you if you do them."

People:

*Come now, mighty Spirit of God,
wash us and make us one body in Christ.
Unite us to one another in this act of love,
we may no longer be in bondage to the pride that enslaves the world.
but may know your liberating peace
such as the world cannot give. Amen.*

The Footwashing

As we wash each other's feet, let us pray for one another.
Song- "Brother Let Me Be Your Servant"

Unison Closing Prayer

*Blessed are you, Lord God.
You have made us partakers of Christ and of one another.
Send the Spirit of truth to keep alive in us what Jesus taught and did,
that our lips may carry his good news, and that our lives may live out the humility
of the One who lives and reigns with You and with the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and
ever. Amen.*

Response Songs – on Jesus love for his own
229 HLC "O the deep, deep love of Jesus"

Continue with the Meal

The Blessing of the Food -

*Blessed be God who brings forth bread and wine from the earth to satisfy the need of man
and to make glad his heart.*

Eating (Sharing of bread, cheese, soup, fruits and drink)

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

(The congregation may then exchange the Peace using the same greeting and response or through other ways.)

Chorus- # 102 "He is Our Peace" by Kandela Groves

He is our peace

Who has broken down every wall;
He is our peace, He is our peace.
He is our peace
Who has broken down every wall;
He is our peace, He is our peace.

The Lord's Supper Led by Jonathan Jay

Scripture Readings and Meditation: "The True Bread"

Deuteronomy 8:1-3
Matthew 4:1-4
John 6:26-51

Pausing for Preparation: Examination, Confession and Cleansing

Paul writes: (1 Cor. 11:33, 27-29)

So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.
Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup.
For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.

Time of Confession

Let us confess our sins and ask God to cleanse our hearts and hands

Prayer Hymn 74- Create in Me a Clean Heart

Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right within me. Cast me not away from your presence, O Lord, and take not your holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation and renew a right spirit within me.

Prayer Response (Psalm 139:23-24)

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Assurances of Pardon

Declaration: To each who confesses himself or herself a sinner, humbling himself before God and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation I declare this sure promise of God- *If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* 1 John 1:9

Hymn HLC# 287 My Faith Has Found a Resting Place

Institution of the Lord's Supper

1 Cor. 11:23-24 *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us!

Therefore, let us keep the feast!

Thanksgiving Prayer- Jonathan Byler

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

*God of power and might
Heaven and earth are filled with glory.
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
God of power and might
Heaven and earth are filled with glory.
Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.*

Breaking of Bread- Jonathan Byler

Communion Hymn- "Twas on That Night (Rockingham Old)

1 Cor. 11:25-26 *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.*

Sharing of Cup – Jeff Gregory

Doxology

Departure Hymns- Now Let Us from This Table Rise

Blessed be the Tie That Binds - 207

Benediction- Numbers 6:22-27

*"The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."*