

St. Matthew Trinity, Hoboken, NJ - Maundy Thursday 2020

Our congregation will gather online at 6:00 pm for prayer to mark the occasion of our Lord's Passover with his disciples before the crucifixion. Since we cannot be together in person, let's celebrate this night in our homes.

People like to eat together! Realizing that many of the poor were excluded from their communion fellowship, the Moravians instituted an **Agape** or **Love Feast** to include all who were hungry. (Moravians are forerunners to Lutherans and an important part of our history.) In the absence of clergy or other reasons that there could be no communion (pandemics, weather) the Moravians held **Agape** or **Love Feast**. They did not serve wine or bread at the meal in order not to confuse it with communion. You can serve what is best for your family. The pattern for the meal is found in stories throughout scripture.

Take the time to join us for corporate prayer and scripture before your family dinner.

Suggestions for your Meal

Wash your hands together and remember your baptism. Light a candle in the bathroom (Scented candles may work best in bathrooms). As we wash away the dirt and germs that make us sick remember that God cares enough for us to wash us in baptism.

If you are sheltering alone, call a friend, the pastor or a family member and tell them that you love them.

Place a cross, candle or flower at the center of the table and remember that Jesus is a guest at the meal

Share family stories of meals together. What is your favorite meal? What meals do you remember as a child? Why is it important to eat together? What were meals like for Jesus and his friends? (Did the disciples eat all their vegetables?)

Prayer is vital to a **Love Feast**. A fixed form of prayer may be used, especially something like the Lord's Prayer or Be present at our table, Lord. Don't forget to pray for our first responders, medical personnel, our leaders and all who are afraid, suffering or in grief at this time. Scripture is also important. There may be scripture readings, or persons may quote Scripture spontaneously as the Spirit moves.

Prayers before the meal:

Be present at our table, Lord;

Be here and everywhere adored;
Thy creatures bless, and grant that we
May feast in paradise with Thee (*John Cenick*)

OR

The eyes of all look to You, O LORD, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. (*Psalm 145: 15–16*)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (*Martin Luther*)

Suggested Scripture Lessons:

Psalm 145:8-21: God's abounding Love

1 Corinthians 13: The gift of Love

2 Corinthians 9:6-15: Our generous sharing glorifies God.

Luke 9: 12-17: The feeding of the 5,000.

Luke 14:16-24: The parable of the Great feast

Luther's "Thanks After the Meal" from the Small Catechism

Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently and with folded hands say:

Give thanks to the LORD, for God is good and divine love endures forever. God gives food to every creature. God provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. God's pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor the Lord's delight in the legs of a human; the LORD delights in those who love, who put their hope in this unfailing love. (*Psalm 136:1, 25; 147:9–11*)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

May your Maundy Thursday be filled with Love, Hope and Joy in these troubling times. This will be a Holy Week that we will always remember.

- *Pastor Gary*