Maundy Thursday

Concerning the Service

This Maundy Thursday service was designed for use in the home, around the dinner table (whatever shape that takes). If possible the table should be set with the best the house has to offer. A fine tablecloth perhaps, flowers, and the best place settings. We sit down to feast with God and for that we bring our best. If your best is a folding table and takeout containers God will be as honored by that as fine silver and crystal.

This service draws from the Eucharistic tradition, but it is not a sacramental meal. We call it Eukharistía: Ancient ***Greek*** *(εὐχαριστία), meaning "gratitude, giving of thanks". And this we can and should do whenever we share the bounty of the earth!*

All Christians are called to bless and so while this meal is not sacramental it includes blessings of the food and drink shared, and the people gathered. A recipe for bread has been included if you wish to make it at home, but you can use any bread you have available.

Similarly, while the service mentions wine you should use whatever beverage makes sense for you and those gathered. In the ancient world wine was safe (when the water was not) and was a staple. Using a beverage that is a staple of your dinner table is always acceptable.

The service has been written so that various parts can be shared out among those present, don't be afraid to let children read and lead! Each part is either meant to be read by a single person, or by all. And this is indicated with "One" or "All." The "One" parts may be shared and a single leader is not required. While this service assumes a small gathering it can, when necessary, be done by an individual who while physically alone is nevertheless gathered in spirit with the rest of the church this night.

One candle (called the Christ candle) should be placed on the table and lit before the service begins, it will remain lighted throughout. If possible a candle should be given to each person present.

Throughout some sections will be marked [In times of pandemic/epidemic], these portions of the service are meant specifically for times when physical gathering has been banned due to disease. They may be omitted at other times.

Preparation [In times of pandemic/epidemic]

All **We begin by washing, as we were washed in our baptism. We cleanse our hands as we were cleansed in the waters of new birth. We do this not because we are afraid, but because we were commanded to love: and to cleanse our hands, and gather in spirit, is how we love the vulnerable, whom Jesus loved. May we be instruments of love. May the sacrifices we make be for the good of our human family near and far.**

Each person present then washes their hands thoroughly with soap and water. Once washed each should help with setting the table as they are able. The food should be set out in the middle with bread and wine and other good things. When all is ready those present take their places at the table and the one designated begins.

If a candle is available for each person they may now take their candle, light it, and place it at their place at the table. They may say the following:

One As Jesus traveled he spread light wherever he went, light that could not be extinguished. Tonight I light my candle in honor of [the women who attended him/his mother Mary/the disciples/the crowds who followed him/the lepers he healed/the possessed he freed/the poor/the sick/the woman who anointed him with oil/etc].

When all have taken their places at the table.

Opening

One [Beloveds/Dear ones/Friends] tonight is a holy night. Tonight we join with Christians around the world as we remember the last night our Lord spent with his friends. We gather around a table, and with all those who remember tonight. Though we are dispersed, we are together, in spirit and in truth.

> Tonight is about friendship, and love. But not all the stories tonight are happy, because suffering and evil are real. So tonight we will eat a meal, we will share stories, and we will pray together.

Blessing of the Meal

This portion of the service may be used at any time a meal is shared among Christians. It follows the shape of the last supper, and therefore will sound familiar and much like the Eucharist. However a priest is not required because the elements are not consecrated. They are however blessed, something all Christians are called to do.

The one who blesses the bread takes the bread and holds it where all may see it.

One On the night that Jesus gathered with his friends he took bread and he blessed it and shared it with his friends, for God who loves us, feeds us. As God's people ate manna in the wilderness and were satisfied, so we share this bread with Christ, and with one another. May it be for us bread from heaven, strength for our bodies, balm for our souls, and may it empower us to be Christ's body in this world.

The bread is passed around the table for all to take their fill.

The one who blesses the wine [or other beverage] then takes the wine (in a bottle or carafe) and holds it where all may see it.

One One the night that Jesus gathered with his friends he took wine and he blessed it and shared it with them. For the God who made us delights in us, and gives us good gifts to delight our tongues, and give joy to our souls. As Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that will not fail, so Jesus offers us the same. May this [wine] be for us the holy drink of heaven, and may it wash us of sin and quench the thirst of our souls.

The wine [or other beverage] is then poured out into each person's cup, a generous amount!

The whole company together then blesses the rest of the meal, saying together.

All **Holy and lifegiving God, we thank you for the bounty of your Creation laid before us. We ask you to bless it, that it may be to us a holy meal. We give thanks for all those who labored so that it might sustain us, and we ask that through it you would give us the strength to be your good stewards; to care, and tend your creation, and to care especially for our siblings, all the people of this world. Tonight, be with all the members of our community who we love and miss, those who cannot be here with us to share this meal. We ask these things by the grace of Jesus Christ our Brother and the Holy Spirit our friend and guide. Amen.**

The meal should be enjoyed by all. As feels appropriate the following stories should be read by members of the gathered group while the rest continue their meal. These stories can be scattered throughout the meal as seems appropriate. Conversation and questions are encouraged, for this is a gathering of friends.

The First Story

John 2.1-12

The Wedding at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there for a few days. *(Reading taken from the NRSV)*

The Second Story

Matthew 14.13-21

Feeding the Five Thousand

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. *(Reading taken from the NRSV)*

The Third Story

John 13.1-17, 31b-35

The Last Supper

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." *(Reading taken from the NRSV)*

As the meal is concluded and the dishes are still on the table the following is read

John 18.1-11
The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus
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. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "For whom are you looking?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he", they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "For whom are you looking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" *(Reading taken from the NRSV)*

One Our dinner is over, the waiting begins. Tonight Jesus was alone, under arrest, and awaiting his death. Tonight his friends were alone with their guilt, shame, and fear.

[In the time of pandemic/epidemic]
One Tonight we are missing our normal routines, our communities, and friends. Many are alone, isolated and afraid, Jesus waits with us all tonight, even as we wait with him. Jesus knows what loneliness feels like, what fear tastes like. Jesus knows the heartbreak of being alone when you want most to be with people you love. Tonight we hold vigil with the sick, the fearful, the lonely, and with all who risk their own lives to protect and care for ours.

One We are invited to clear away the dishes, and clean up the remains of our meal in silence, and with prayer. Tonight this table was our altar, and this home[place] our sanctuary. Let us cleanse it of all that has come before this moment: of our anxiety, our worry, our sorrow, and our shame.

The table may then be cleared by all present, as each is able. Each person extinguishes their candle. The Christ candle may be left lighted. One person may be designated to read Psalm 51 while the table is cleared, and table cloth or decoration removed. The table is then wiped down with the clean damp cloth, and dried.

Psalm 51
1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your
loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.

5 And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.

6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.

7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly

8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.

10 Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.

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

12 Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.

13 Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.

15 Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.

16 Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.

18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

19 Be favorable and gracious to Zion, *
and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

20 Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices,
with burnt-offerings and oblations; *
then shall they offer young bullocks upon your altar. (*Psalm 51 from the Book of Common Prayer, 1979.*)

When the table is cleared all gather together for a final prayer and invitation to keep vigil.

One Holy One, draw near to your people this night, wait and watch with us; for our hearts are heavy. Send your holy angels to watch over the sick, and to guide the hands of those who tend to them. And we beseech you, comfort us as a Mother soothes her beloved children. May we watch, and wait, strengthened by your presence. **Amen.**

If desired those gathered in that place should bring flowers, potted plants, beloved objects, the Christ candle or other lights. A place to watch with Jesus (and a reminder of the Garden of Gethsemane) can be made with these things and those who feel so called spend an hour there at some point in the night reading scripture, praying, or simply keeping silent vigil.

Service by The Rev. Josephine Robertson, All Saints Episcopal Church, Bellevue, WA.