

Maundy Thursday

Brougham Place Uniting Church

6th April 2023



We share in a light meal together.

Opening Prayer

We meet gathered around the table together as Jesus so often did with his friends and followers.

It was the time of the Passover – a time for the Jewish people to gather to share symbolic food, remembering their past liberation from Egypt and God’s providential care during the Exodus and establishing a new nation.

The food that may have been present at the Last Supper celebrated by Jesus and his disciples, is symbolically represented here on the table before us.

The **unleavened bread** reminds us that there was no time to bake leavened bread as the captive people had to flee with all haste.

Parsley and celery represent the hyssop that was used to smear lamb’s blood on the Hebrew’s door posts, that God might distinguish their household when passing over the land.

Bitter herbs symbolise the people’s suffering.

Salt water is a symbol of the crossing of the Red Sea and the Egyptians’ tears.

Charoses (a mixture of shredded apple, nuts and cinnamon) is a symbol of the bricks and mortar the people were forced to make.

Roast lamb was eaten in preparation for the Exodus.

Wine reminds us of God’s goodness and the bounty of the Promised Land. At the conclusion of the meal, the doors of

the house were opened so that the Elijah's Spirit would enter the celebration. The final cup of wine to be taken during the seder meal was called the **Cup of Elijah**.

When Jesus was at supper, gathered with his disciples in the Upper Room, there came a special and sacred moment that has been handed down through countless generations, the act of Holy Communion, often called the Lord's Supper when Jesus made this act and symbols his own.

He took the bread and said the prayer of thanksgiving, and shared it saying, "This is my body... given for you." The bread he took was the bread of liberation.

This act was tantamount to declaring that he is the prophet promised long ago who would liberate all people, that he is the embodiment of the law of Moses.

And he took up the cup, saying, "This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins". This was most likely the Cup of Elijah.

In these acts Jesus was declaring that he embodied all of the Law and the Prophets, that God was doing a new thing that would encompass *all* people in a covenant of eternal love.

So tonight, we recall this heritage of saving grace, remembering that this last supper was celebrated just before Christ's arrest, trial and crucifixion. We remember who we are and whose we are. We enter into the mystery of what it means to be God's people and the Body of Christ.

We Sing: An Upper Room did our Lord prepare (TiS 536)

1. An upper room did our Lord prepare
for those he loved until the end:
and his disciples still gather there
to celebrate their risen friend.
2. A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:
to share his bread, his loving cup.
Whatever burdens may bow us down,
he by his cross shall lift us up.
3. And after supper he washed their feet,
for service, too, is sacrament.
In him our joy shall be made complete -
sent out to serve, as he was sent.
4. No end there is! We depart in peace.
He loves beyond the uttermost:
in every room in our Father's house
he will be there, as Lord and host.

Frederick Pratt Green
1903-2000

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Communion

Call to Worship

The darkness deepens, and the Lord grows troubled.

Can we watch with Him?

Can we be the friends at His table who share His bread and wine?

Can we be the companions who journey with Him to the end?

**Come, let us worship, let us watch,
and let us give thanks for such great love.**

Amen.

Praise & Confession

Lord Jesus,

we are stunned at Your passion and Your commitment toward us.

You did not run from the darkness,

You did not hide from Your accusers,

You did not fade into safe obscurity.

You stepped with determination into the darkness,
willingly giving Yourself to whip and fist, to wood and nails.

We praise You, Gracious Lord,

**for what You were prepared to endure to reconcile us with
God.**

We praise You, Gracious Lord,

**for Your words of forgiveness, and the invitation to
paradise.**

Forgive us that we allow ourselves to become too familiar
with this story,
that we take Your suffering too lightly, and receive Your grace
too cheaply.

**As we watch with You, while the darkness encroaches,
let us remember what this journey means,
and count again the cost of love.**

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in Heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

When the time arrived for Jesus to be lifted up;
when all had been prepared,
and He shared His last meal with His friends,
the Lord, took the loaf, blessed it, broke it,
and gave it to the disciples.

**When you eat the bread, remember me.
This is my body broken for you.**

When the meal was finished,
the Lord took the cup, blessed it,
and gave it to the disciples.

**When you drink the wine, remember me.
This is my blood shed for you.**

Now, as we gather at this table,
we eat bread;
we drink wine;
and we remember the One who died to bring us life.
And we will keep sharing this meal until He returns. Amen.

Communion is shared.

Thanksgiving

**We thank You, Lord,
for giving us this sacred meal,
for giving us Your presence and Your life,
and for reminding us of Your everlasting grace,
which will be celebrated for all eternity.
Amen.**

We Sing Now let us from this table rise (TiS 530)

1. Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind and soul;
with Christ we die and live again,
his selfless love has made us whole.
2. With minds alert, upheld by grace,
to spread the Word in speech and deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.
3. To fill each human house with love,
it is the sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humbly pledge ourselves to share.
4. Then give us grace, Companion God,
to choose again the pilgrim way,
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

Fredrik Herman Kaan 1922 –

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Blessing

Our service is now complete.

We invite you to leave this space and return at 9am
tomorrow morning, to continue our journey of worship.