



Called to More Holy Thursday Virtual Traditional Service

The Love Feast is a rite practiced by United Methodists that has its roots way back. Wesley bumped into it through his contact with the Moravians. Love Feasts were often celebrated in class meetings. It was a way of helping build community. The Love Feast is relational. It is me sharing with others, with you, how God's grace has been working in my life today. The United Methodist Book of Worship says, "The Love Feast, or Agape Meal, is a Christian fellowship meal recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry and expressing the koinonia (community, sharing, fellowship) enjoyed by the family of Christ. Although its origins in the early church are closely interconnected with the origins of the Lord's Supper, the two services became quite distinct and should not be confused with each other."-- umc.org

Gathering

On this night we come together to remember that last night before Jesus gave up himself for us. As we read scriptures, pray and gather at the table, we are reminded that like that night so long-ago Jesus longs to be here with us. The table is set, the feast will begin soon, welcome to our Holy Thursday celebration.

Greeting

We come tonight to hear the stories of Passover and the Last Supper.

We recall the stories of God's loving care.

We come tonight to remember.

We remember the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup.

We come tonight to be reminded.

We are reminded of Jesus' sacrificial love.

Confession

Holy and merciful God, we come tonight to repent for the times that we have failed to show love. For the missed opportunities as well as the times we have done harm. We confess to you and to one another that we have sinned and fallen short. Accept our repentance and forgive us we pray. Amen.

Scripture

OT: Exodus 12:1-13

Gospel: Luke 22:7-23

(At this time, offer a short story on communion. You can invite the congregation to consider a few questions or have a short time of prayer. Questions for thought: Imagine that scene with Jesus' disciples as he changes the meaning of the Passover meal. Put yourself in the shoes of a disciple at the table. What would you be thinking and feeling as Jesus infuses new meaning to a treasured tradition? Explain the differences and similarities between the Love Feast and Communion.)

Love Feast

Use a Love Feast liturgy of your choice. Three options are included below.





Sending

Tonight, you have been fed, you have been offered the gifts of love and grace. Now share as you have received, so that the world may know the love of God. Amen.

Hymn Suggestions

Let us Break Bread Together UMH #617

What Wondrous Love is This UMH #292

Piano accompaniments can be found and downloaded here: www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/piano-accompaniment-recordings

Love Feast Liturgies

Abbreviated version:

Leader: As we join together as a community of faith with whom Christ is present, we set symbols on our table to remind us of his promises to us:

A candle (or light), to remind us of the way, "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life".

Bread, symbol to remind us of God's love, "I am the bread of life. The bread that I shall give is myself for the life of the world".
A cup, representing the cup of salvation. Through this, we remember Jesus' love that is poured out for all of us.

All: God, we welcome your presence with us. May the food and companionship we share nourish our bodies, hearts and minds. And may our spirits be refreshed. As we live in the light of your presence. With us now, and at all times and places. Amen.

As you break bread and drink of these cups, and let us be reminded that
God loves you...God loves all of us.

Alternative version:

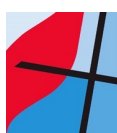
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Welcome to this feast of love.

Throughout his ministry Jesus ate meals in the homes of many, some family and friends, other times strangers. These meals were an opportunity for Jesus to share love. Today you have invited Jesus to come to the table at our homes to share in this meal with you. If you are a table for one or a table of many Jesus has joined you for this special meal.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



CALLED TO MORE
A Lenten Series on Wrestling with Sin

Table Grace

Be present at our table, Lord;
Be here and everywhere adored;
Thy creatures bless and grant that we
May feast in paradise with Thee.

Love Feasts include the sharing of cake, crackers or bread and a beverage, traditionally water. As we share this bread, as we drink this water, we thank you, God, for our daily bread. Sustain us God. We thank you also for this water that quenches our thirst, and for you the living water that transforms us. Fill our hunger and thirst for you. Amen.

Extended alternative:

A Love Feast for Sheltering in Place

(Before the Love Feast begins participants are invited to prepare ahead of time by having glasses of water or juice and sweet bread to share; and light a candle as you host it)

One: We have been asked to shelter in place to keep one another safe.

All: For us this is as act of communal grace.

One: The Lord has not left us, nor forsaken us.

All: In Divine Love we are held securely.

One: We are not alone.

All: We are still together united by our prayers and our witness of hope before the world.

One: You are the one who has loved each of us from before the world began. Even now we are all being held in the security of loving arms. You are attentive to our every prayer and through these prayers you have knitted us together. You are aware of our needs before they revealed at our horizon and have begun to act before we know to cry out. Keep us attentive to the needs around us, so you might illuminate your gracious presence through our acts of kindness. Amen.

Hymn: And Are We Yet Alive UMH 553 vs.1&2

**And are we yet alive,
to wish each other grace?
Glory and thanks to Jesus give
for his Almighty grace!**

**Preserved by power divine
to full salvation here,
again in Jesus' praise we join,
and in his sight appear.**

Scripture: Psalm 46 (in Haiku)

God is our refuge;
Our help in time of trouble.
So we shall not fear.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



CALLED TO MORE

A Lenten Series on Wrestling with Sin

Not when our world shakes,
Nor when the mountains tumble
Down into the sea,

Waves crash and they foam,
The surging sea continue
To shake the mountains.

The river's channels
will bring joy to God's city,
A holy dwelling.

Our God lives in it,
A city that can't be moved
God has rescued it.

Our nations still roar,
As they seem to come and go.
When God gives a shout,

The earth is dissolved.
Know the Lord is on our side.
God is our stronghold.

So come bear witness
Our God devastates the earth.
Brings end to our wars.

Shattering the bow
And breaking all of our spears;
Our shields in ashes.

"Stop all your striving,
Recognize that I am God."
God commands us all.

"I will be placed first.
I am to be exalted,
over everything!"

The Lord's on our side.
God is our only stronghold,
The God of Jacob.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



CALLED TO MORE

A Lenten Series on Wrestling with Sin

Hymn: And Are We Yet Alive vs. 3&4

What troubles have we seen,
what mighty conflicts past,
fighting without and fears within,
Since we assembled last!

Yet out of all the Lord
Hath brought us by his love;
and still he doth his help afford,
and hides our life above.

The passing of the Bread:
One: The Lord be with you.
All: And also with you.

Sing or say grace: (tune: Old One Hundred)

Be present at our table Lord. Be here and everywhere adored;
thy creatures bless and grant that we may feast in paradise with Thee. Amen.

Sharing the cups of water/juice

Then let us make our boast
of his redeeming power,
which saves us to the utter most,
till we can sin no more.

Let us take up the cross
till we the crown obtain,
and gladly reckon all things loss
so we may Jesus gain.

Blessing:

May the Lord bless you wherever you are.
May you find comfort in the eternal love of God
who was and is and is to come.
May the hope you embrace be the hope you share,
until we see each other's face.
Amen.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY