

BEFORE WE START

An Agape Meal is a time of Christian fellowship recalling the meals Jesus shared with his disciples.

It is held on occasions when the church cannot gather fully, when there is a need for something more informal and spontaneous.

Another advantage of the Agape Meal is that any Christian can lead it. It encourages widespread participation and can often involve children/the whole family.

Gather together the following, if you can:

- A candle (with a safe place to put it) and matches
- Some bread – a slice, a roll, a rice cake, or whatever you have
- A drink – water or juice, wine or tea!
- A bible (the readings will also be printed in the service book)
- A cross (if you have one at home)

Take time to arrange these near you, and then when you're ready, open the zoom link.

When you arrive onto zoom please stay muted unless you're invited to unmute yourself.

AGAPE MEAL LITURGY

(As we gather for worship, please start by lighting your candle)

Either you or someone with you should pray:

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray, and drive far from it the snares of the enemy. May your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace, and may your blessing be always upon us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Leader: Take a moment in quiet & stillness to wait on God.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

Leader: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All : AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Please 'mute' yourself on zoom now

OPENING RESPONSES

Leader: Out of darkness came light,

All : **And the power of God was revealed,**

Leader: In the running wave and the flowing air,

All : **In the quiet earth and the shining stars.**

Leader: Out of the dust came life,

All : **And the image of God was revealed,**

Leader: In the human face and the gentle heart,

All : **In the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul.**

Leader: Out of justice came freedom,

All : **And the wisdom of God was revealed,**

Leader: In the need to grow and the will to love,

All : **In the chance to know and the power to choose.**

Leader: And God looked at the creation,

All : **And behold, it was very good.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Salt is good, but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it?
Giving God, you blessed us with saltiness,

All : **But we become bland.**

Leader: You gave us your living Word,

All : **But we did not keep it.**

Leader: You gave us a world to live in and others to love,

All : **But we neglect them.**

Leader: You give us all that we need,

All : **But we forget to thank you.**

Leader: God, in your mercy:

All : **Forgive us.**

(Silence)

Leader: Forgiving God, we believe that you have called us,

All : **To be salt and light.**

Leader: That you offer us time and space and strength,

All : **To begin again.**

(Silence)

Leader: Giving and forgiving God,

All : We thank you.

Leader: May we be salt and light again and be at peace with one another.

All : Amen.

READING (1) / Isaiah 43

Yahweh is the one who makes a way in the sea, a pathway in the mighty waters.

¹⁷ He destroyed chariots and horses and all their mighty warriors.

They fell, never to rise again— gone forever, snuffed out like a wick. This is what he says. ¹⁸ “Stop dwelling on the past. Don’t even remember these former things.

¹⁹ I am doing something brand new, *something unheard of*.

Even now it sprouts and grows and matures. Don’t you perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and open up flowing streams in the desert.

²⁰ Wild beasts, jackals, and owls will glorify me. For I supply streams of water in the desert and rivers in the wilderness to satisfy the thirst of my people, my chosen ones, ²¹ so that you, whom I have shaped and formed for myself, will proclaim my praise.

READING (2) / 2 Corinthians 4: 7-18

⁷We are like common clay jars that carry this glorious treasure within, so that the extraordinary overflow of power will be seen as God's, not ours.^[h] ⁸Though we experience every kind of pressure, we're not crushed. At times we don't know what to do, but quitting is not an option. ⁹We are persecuted by others, but God has not forsaken us. We may be knocked down, but not out. ¹⁰We continually share in the death of Jesus in our own bodies so that the resurrection life of Jesus will be revealed through our humanity. ¹¹We consider living to mean that we are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus will be revealed through our humanity. ¹²So, then, death is at work in us but it releases life in you. ¹³We have the same Spirit of faith that is described in the Scriptures when it says, "First I believed, then I spoke in faith." So we also first believe then speak in faith. ¹⁴We do this because we are convinced that he who raised Jesus will raise us up with him, and together we will all be brought into his presence. ¹⁵Yes, all things work for your enrichment so that more of God's marvellous grace will spread to more and more people, resulting in an even greater increase of praise to God, bringing him even more glory! ¹⁶So no wonder we don't give up. For even though our outer person gradually wears out, our inner being is renewed every single day. ¹⁷We view our slight, short-lived troubles in the light of eternity. We see our difficulties as the substance that produces for us an eternal, weighty glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸because we don't focus our attention on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but the unseen realm is eternal.

SHORT REFLECTION

THANKSGIVING & PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGAPE

Leader: Taste and see that God is gracious,
All : Blessed is the one who trusts in Him.

Leader: As we tear and share this bread and this drink,
All : We thank you, God, for our daily bread.

Leader: For the food which delights and nourishes us,
All : For companionship, in all forms, that sustains us.

Leader: And for your living water which transforms our lives.
All : Amen.

READING (3) 1 Corinthians 11: 23-25

The same night in which he was handed over, he took bread ²⁴ and gave thanks. Then he distributed it to the disciples and said, “Take it and eat your fill.^[1] It is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.” ²⁵ He did the same with the cup *of wine* after supper and said, “This cup seals the new covenant with my blood. Drink it—and whenever you drink this, do it to remember me.”

(Enjoy your bread and drink. Take time to really taste and enjoy it. If you're with someone else, offer it to each other saying, “this is to remind you that Jesus loves you.”)

PRAYER AFTER AGAPE

Leader: With gratefulness to each other for all that we have shared,

All : **And thankfulness to God and all the people who have brought this good food to us, we begin to look outwards and ahead to our lives beyond this week and this place.**

Leader: So let us pray as Jesus taught us:

All : **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

CLOSING RESPONSES

Leader: O God of life, of all life and of each life,

All : **We lay our lives before you.**

Leader: We give our lives to you,

All : **From whom nothing in us is hidden.**

Leader: You are before us, God, you are behind.

All : **You are around us, God, you are within.**

Leader: O God of life, O generous Spirit,

All : **Renew us with your life today, tomorrow and always. Amen**

THE BLESSING

Leader: Giving God, bless all who have gathered to share in this food today, and all who feel alone. May we know the fullness of your presence at every meal and in all our sharing, and may we be welcomed with all your saints to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom.

Leader: God to enfold us,
All : **God to surround us;**
Leader: God in our speaking,
All : **God in our thinking;**
Leader: God in our life,
All : **God on our lips;**
Leader: God in our souls,
All : **God in our hearts.**

Leader: And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
All : **Amen.**

Please 'un-mute' your zoom again now

THE DISMISSAL

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All : **IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. AMEN.**