

A Love or Agape Feast

A Prayer and Worship Service

Participants: Two people to lead (two or more leaders—a person to read scripture reading or lead songs)

Directions: Any group or individual invited to participate in this service. Doing so will help to continue a spirit of cooperation with other groups than our own small group.

This service if prepared can add appreciably to the spiritual life of the participant. A meaningful worship area should be used and the room should be prepared before the those participating enter the room.

Altar arrangements: The standard altar arrangement as well as a plate of bread and a cup of water shall be set on the altar. (Cross and candles and any other community symbol.)

The Community Gathers: During this time greetings and salutations are extended. The participants shall then take their seats. (Informal)

Main Leader

The early Christians of times past had a common meal, which expressed the self-giving love seen ultimately in God's love for the world. Since that early time many Christians have desired to celebrate Holy Communion. Due to the lack of an ordained minister, they could not. Thus, a service with the similar significance was established that did not require an ordained minister. This meal was called: the Agape feast. Agape being the Greek word for the self-giving love of God seen in God's love for the world. Today, we call it the Love feast. The Love Feast acknowledges our *koinonia*...our community, sharing, fellowship, and unity through symbols of bread and water. The Kiss of Peace is the way those first followers acknowledged God's presence in their community.

Opening Prayer and a Chance for Corporate Adoration

- **The Confession and Pardon: Main Leader**

The first followers of Jesus were known as the followers of the master's way. The greatest decision we can make today is to decide to follow Christ's way rather than our own. In order to see the beauty in life, we chose to live in the way Jesus Christ. Living our lives in obedience to his powerful teachings of love and justice. Friends, there are within all of us sins that prevent us from being apart of the true body of Christ. Let us put into confession our sins and pray for God's forgiveness, which was restored by the sacrifice Jesus Christ made. Join me in a moment of silent prayer. Lord in your mercy... **hear our prayers.**

(After a few moments... A chance for corporate confession the chaplain Main Leader may ask: Have there been time this week that you have had a chance to share Christ's love and did not? Starting with a personal example. This can be done rhetorically or you can ask them to offer their thought up for the community)

Song/Music

Prayer: Assisting Leader

(May use this prayer or their own).

Forgive us our sins O, God. In the past, we have sinned in attitude and action, commission and omission, individually and communally. We have not shared love where love was needed and we have been impatient with others. We have been numb to the sufferings of the community around us, which has prevented us from living in your way. Our business and school work is not always carried out in the manner that it should. We have failed to love one another in critical times and we have failed to know what it truly means to love as you love us. Forgive us we pray.

Scripture reading: Main Leader

(Suggestion: 1 John 1.9 "If we confess our sins, the one who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (NRSV 1 John 1:9).)

Main Leader: Hear these words and respond: We are forgiven!

The People of God Respond: We are forgiven!

A Corporate Time of Thanksgiving**Readings from the Bible**

Main Leader reads Matthew 25.31-40 ("least of these")

Assisting Leader reads I Corinthians 13.1-13. (Love Chapter)

A Corporate Time of Supplication**A Time of sharing how God has Worked Among Us: Main Leader**

Open Question: How have you seen God working in your life these the few weeks.

Song/Music**Call to Dedication: Main Leader**

You who are determined to hold fast this tie of Christian Community and friendship, surround now this altar where we shall pledge anew that love, repentance, and fellowship, which binds us to one another and to God who is the source of our love *(The community will leave their seats and form a circle around the altar area.)*

Prayer for the People of God: Assisting Leader

Almighty God, help us realize that we are individuals that are apart of the one whole, and we dedicate our lives to each other in loving service for all humanity. May our ties of Christian community and mutual helpfulness bind us as we work toward the fulfillment of your divine purpose in the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. Amen.

Celebration of the Bread and Water: Main Leader

(For the celebration, we use the method of intinction, that is, the bread shall first be passed around and each person shall dip the bread into the cup and serve it to one of the persons to the side of them.)

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (*John 6.32-33*). We take this bread as a symbol of the strength that comes from God, and remembering that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. **Pass the bread.**

Main Leader:

Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." (*John 4.13-14*). We take this water as a symbol of the abundant life, love, and friendship shown to us through the example Jesus who is the Christ.

(Pass the water and pour into a cup of water and give it to the person on your side. Then eat bread and drink water)

Assisting Leader:

Through faith, may God dwell in our hearts in love. And "I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you be filled with all the fullness of God" (*Ephesians 3.18-19*). Which is far more than we could ever understand. Glory you, oh God, the Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. And the people said... **Amen.**

One of the of the officiates, determines beforehand, shall place their hands around the hands of the other and say (Suggested) "Peace be with you" and the other responds "and also with you" or you can say (Alternate) "the Lord be with you brother" The other will respond by saying, "and with thy spirit". Passing the kiss of peace to the person, who will do likewise until it has extended to all that are encircled. After going around the circle the floor can be opened up for the sharing of joys and concerns.

(Suggestion) *The people shall remain in a circle. After the sharing of joys and concerns, the Main Leader can close joys and concerns by saying "Thank you God, for being with us during our joys and during our concerns, Amen".*