

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

(Normally people will be seated throughout the service)

Steps during the service

EXPLANATION – OUT OF EGYPT

Let me remind us of the history of the Hebrews.

1. Nomadic tribes made their way to Egypt during a severe drought. The O.T. talks of Joseph as perhaps being instrumental in bringing them to Egypt.
2. After a few generations the Egyptians found the Hebrews had become very numerous that they were affecting the economy and culture of the nation. The tribes were then placed under peasant labour conditions. As the Hebrews increased in population their conditions became worse. They were virtually made slaves.
3. Moses crossed the historical scene and was called by Yahweh to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. We remember that the O.T. tells of a number of abortive attempts to leave Egypt.
4. Then came the night of liberation. God (Yahweh) had made a promise with Moses that he would send a plague to strike the Egyptians in order to prevent them chasing the Hebrews as they fled Egypt.
5. To avert the affects of the plague the Hebrew people were told to paint the lintels (that is the top rail of their doorways) with the blood of a slaughtered lamb, so that the plague would pass over them.
6. The Hebrews did not have enough time before leaving Egypt to prepare traditional food. Particularly bread.
In effect they took with them what we would call a damper.
7. This act of the plague passing over the house holds of the Hebrews but striking the Egyptians households; combined with the liberation of the Hebrews into the wilderness or desert areas, constitutes for the Hebrew people the Passover. Every year the Passover has been and is still celebrated by the faithful Jew. Let us now hear briefly how this event is recorded in the O.T.

READING OF EXODUS 12: 21 - 28

FOUR QUESTIONS OF THE PASSOVER

Usually on the night that the Passover is celebrated the youngest member of the family asks four questions regarding the celebration.

Reading Exodus 13: 14 – 16 tells us why the youngest member leads the questions on the Passover Meal.

We will lead those questions throughout our service tonight.

WHY OUR INTEREST IN THE PASSOVER

Jesus appears to have been celebrating the Passover Meal on the night of his arrest and trial. Out of the Passover celebration he framed what we now know as the

“ Last Supper”.

HYMN 345

Voice 2.

BLESSING OF THE PASSOVER ELEMENTS

Some preliminary explanation of some symbols

- five wine glasses
- parsley and egg

Four glasses of wine will be drunk during the Passover ceremony to remind the people of Israel that Yahweh made a number of promises to His people and kept them.

We will try to get a brief glimpse as to what each glass represents throughout our celebration tonight.

The fifth glass of wine is known as the cup of Elijah.

Each Jewish family will fill a cup of wine and set it on the table and leave either front or back door open. An old legend has it that the prophet Elijah will come on Passover night.

We will use the cup of Elijah during our celebration of the communion in recognition that Christ fulfils those aspirations of the coming of the prophet.

The parsley and hard boiled egg.

The parsley and egg require two explanations.

They represent to the people the season of spring and new life. Of course that new life came out of the liberation of Egypt. But also they are symbols that are used to thank Yahweh for giving the Hebrew people every thing that sustains them in life but especially food and drink. We need also to remember that in Europe the Passover meal is celebrated in Spring not in Autumn as we do here.

The other thing to recall is that the hard boiled egg represents the fact that the Pharaoh’s heart was hardened against Yahweh and His people.

Each celebration of the Passover commences with the Haggadah. This is a prayer which goes like this;

“Behold this is the bread of affliction which our Fathers ate in the land Of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in want come and celebrate the Passover with us. May it be God’s will to release us from all evil and all servitude”

MUSIC

Voice 1.

OUR PASSOVER BEGINNS

In dispersed between singing individual verses from Hymn 339 and 342 we will ask the four questions about the symbolism of the Passover Meal.

HYMN NO. 339 verse 1

Question “Why is this night different from other nights”?

These words begin the recital of the wonderful and miraculous story of the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egypt.

The father or leader of the group outlines as I have earlier the basic historical steps that led to the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt.

The father/leader will recall the many things Yahweh did through the ancestors eg Abraham, leaving Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, feeding the people in the wilderness with manna. As these times are remembered the same divine influences that brought about the events of old are stirred again by the process of recollection and remembrance. The Passover celebration offers faithful Jewish people an opportunity to recommit themselves again to Yahweh for the coming year.

Eat roast lamb shanks

We eat roast lamb shanks to remind us of the liberation of the people of Israel from Egypt where they had to paint the lintels of their houses with the blood of the lamb.

We drink the first wine – cup of the joy of salvation.

Why is this cup called the cup of joy. It is the joy of salvation. Joy, because of God calling the Hebrew people out of Egypt and remaining with them throughout their history.

HYMN NO 339 Verse 2

Question “Why on this night do we eat unleavened bread”?

Unleavened bread, like our damper in many respects is cooked without rising agents. It reminds the faithful Jew of how they left Egypt in such a hurry that they could not wait for the bread to rise before cooking it.

Eat unleavened bread

We drink the second wine – cup of deliverance.

This cup in remembrance of the salvation Yahweh brought to the Hebrew people by calling them out of Egypt onto a journey that

eventually saw them enter their own promised land and to become their own nation.

Voice 2.

HYMN NO. 339 Verse 3

Question “Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs”?

The bitter herb which for us is horseradish (it can be another herb) reminds the people of their time of slavery and sorrow when in Egypt.

Eat horseradish by dipping bread in it.

We drink the third wine – cup of instruction.

I am a little uncertain as to whether I have this interpretation correct.

But as I understand it this cup is drunk in an attitude of thanksgiving as the people recall that instruction which Yahweh gave and still gives His people. For example the Ten Commandments, the codes relating to the various celebrations of the religion of the Hebrews, and of course instruction given by both prophet and writers of the O.T.

HYMN NO 339 Verse 4

Question “Why on this night do we have salt water and charoseth”?

Charoseth is made by blending together apples, almonds and raisins.

It can be made from other ingredients.

The charoseth takes on the colour of clay .

This reminds the Hebrew people of the clay

bricks they had to make for the Egyptian masters

whilst slaves in Egypt.

The salt water reminds the people of two events.

The salty tears and sweat of the people as they endure

slavery in Egypt, and the crossing of the Red Sea as

the Hebrews fled from Egypt to gain their freedom.

Dip parsley in salt water

Dip bread in charoseth

We drink the fourth wine- cup of praise.

The cup of praise needs little explanation. It is

drunk in praise of the wonderful things which

Yahweh did and has continued to do for the people of Israel. For example, in choosing them as His people.

In establishing them in a promised land and creating them to be a people as “ a light to the nations”.

HYMN NO 342 Verse 1

Voice 1.

Question “Why on this night do we hold this service”?

We explain the last cup of wine.

The one cup that remains undrunk for the Jewish person is the cup of Elijah. With the cup goes a chair that is vacant waiting for him to come.

The door is open as a sign that they expect him to come to the celebration of the Passover and that he is welcome.

The Jewish person concludes the Passover with the words “ next year in Jerusalem”

HYMN NO 342 From Verse 2 until end

Question “Why on this night do we Christians hold this service’?

Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples. But within that celebration he created a new celebration known to us as the Last Supper, Eucharist or Holy Communion. As part of that celebration he also instituted the Foot washing ceremony. Many Churches include the foot washing ceremony in their Maundy Thursday celebration. However we will not do that tonight.

But here is how John’s gospel records that occasion.

Voice 2.

READING John 13: 1 – 17

HYMN

Living Christ, You Call Us Here

Living Christ, you call us here,
Wash our feet, our hearts;
cleanse our pride, make us one,
be now the Way.

Living Christ, be present here,
host your supper now;
break the Word, shed the light,
be now the Truth

Living Christ, renew us here,
meet us in this feast;
broken bread, wine outpoured,
be now the Life.

Living Christ, you walk with us,

now anoint our lives;
 let us live self-less love,
 be now our Friend.

Words and music by Bill Bennett from "Hope is Our Song" (The New Zealand Hymnbook Trust)

WE BREAK THE BREAD.

READING Mark 14: 22 - 26

In this service Jesus asks us to remember him in a special way using special elements. Those elements as we know them are the bread and wine.

Symbols taken from the Passover Meal and reconstituted to create our Holy Communion. Let us now recall our Lord's death by celebrating His Last Supper and using those elements and words as he did.

Among friends, gathered around a table, Jesus took bread, and having blessed it he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying
 " This is my body which is given for you"

In the same way, he took wine and having gave thanks for it, He poured it out and gave it to his disciples, saying " This cup is the new relationship with God sealed with my life. Take this and share it. I shall drink wine with you next in the kingdom of God".

So now following Jesus example, we take this bread
 And wine, ordinary things of this world through which
 God will bless us.

And as Jesus offered thanks for the gifts of the earth
 Let us celebrate God's goodness.

**Blessed are you O God for you brought bread from
 the earth. Blessed are you O God for you created
 the fruit of the vine.**

In the beginning you watered the earth that men and
 women might have food and drink.

**You gave your servant Sarah bread to strengthen
 her family on their journey and wine to make them
 glad. You called Moses and his people out of
 bondage and refreshed them with food in the**

wilderness.

You gave Mary, Joseph and Jesus, their daily bread to share.

And here at your table you offer us bread and wine for our journey, to nourish us as your daughters and sons.

And so with all your people on earth, we join in the Song of your unending greatness saying together:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Voice 1.

BLESSING OF BREAD AND WINE

Lord Jesus Christ, be present with us now, as we do in this place what you did in an upstairs room.

Breathe your spirit upon us and upon this bread and wine, that they be heaven's food and drink for us; renewing, sustaining and making us whole, that we maybe your body here on earth, loving and caring in the world.

Look the bread of heaven is broken for the life of the world.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

As the bread was once scattered throughout our paddocks as grains of wheat before being gathered into our silos to become one, so may we and all people be gathered from the ends of the earth into Christ's kingdom.

SHARING OF BREAD AND WINE

The broken bread, symbol of Christ's body broken for us.

The cup, symbol of Christ's life shed for us.

Come all is prepared let us celebrate the feast.

Voice 2.**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Most gracious God, you have made us one with your people in heaven and on earth.

Now we give ourselves to you, and ask that our daily living may be in essence the same as the life of your Son our Lord.

May our love be your love reaching into the life of the world, through Christ we pray Amen.

SLIDE PRESENTATION ACCOMPANIED BY MUSIC

HYMN NO 334

BLESING AND DISMISSAL

May the grace of Christ that was won for us on the cross, be present to us this night and ever more. Amen.

THE PEACE

We have made our peace with Christ, let us now make our peace with each other before we leave here tonight.

The peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

Let us share the peace with each other.

(Service prepared by Rev. Ralph Clarke & jon Watson)