



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

A Liturgy for a Home Meal

at Thanksgiving or other times of Celebration

Adapted from The Rev. Josephine Robertson, All Saints', Bellevue, WA by The Rev. Danée Ashley

Concerning the Service

This service was designed for use in the home, as part of the main meal of the day for ordinary time or special occasion (whatever shape that takes). Consider setting the table and surroundings with your favorite and/or special seasonal items in the home. A tablecloth, flowers, and your favorite place settings that express the festive theme of the day or season. The meal may consist of favorite and/or seasonal foods. We sit down to feast with God and for that we bring our full heart, our favorite things.

There is no marker for favorite: God knows you, God created you, God has given you all you have. Bring all of you and God's gifts to you to God's table.

*This service draws from the meal tradition of the early church (before formalized Eucharist) and the modern Eucharistic tradition, but it is not a sacramental meal. We call it Eukharistía: Ancient **Greek** (εὐχαριστία), meaning "gratitude, giving of thanks". And this we can and should do whenever we share the bounty of the earth!*

All Christians are called to bless and so while this meal is not sacramental, it includes blessings of the food and drink shared, and the people gathered.

Similarly, while the service mentions wine you should use whatever beverage makes sense for you and those gathered. In the ancient world wine was safe (when the water was not) and was a staple. Using a beverage that is a staple of your dinner table is always acceptable.

The service has been written so that various parts can be shared out among those present, do not be afraid to let children read and lead! Each part is either meant to be read by a single person, or by all. And this is indicated with "One" or "All." The "One" parts may be shared and a single leader is not required.

This liturgy is appropriate for use via Zoom, FaceTime, or other video software, as a way to worship with the people you call family and friends who are far away.

While this service assumes a small gathering it can be done by an individual who, while physically alone, is nevertheless gathered in spirit with the rest of the church in their prayers and shared practice. In the liturgy, if you are alone you will be speaking on behalf of the One and the All. While loneliness may be an understandable personal struggle to you, this can also serve as a reminder of your fullness and God's faithfulness. In communion with God, you are-in your entirety-offered to God. In liturgies, we are not alone. Liturgies always draw us into the heart of God and into the Body of Christ. If you pray this liturgy alone, you enter into Gethsemane and are directly in communion with God. The invitation to Gethsemane is full of emotional weight and challenge, but it is also an intimate conversation, the proof of one being so wrapped up in God that one can call on God in the most painful of moments. So, if you are the One and the All, know that God receives all of you-joys and challenges-and honors your solitude as the God who understands solitude.

Throughout some sections will be marked [In times of pandemic/epidemic], these portions of the liturgy are meant specifically for times when physical gathering has been banned due to disease. They may be omitted at other times as appropriate.

The prayers for this meal focus on bread, wine [or beverage of your choice], and dessert, but other dishes may be served after the Blessing of the Meal and before the Dessert.

Preparation [In times of pandemic/epidemic]

All We begin by washing, as we were washed in our baptism. We cleanse our hands as we were cleansed in the waters of new birth. We do this not because we are afraid, but because we were commanded to love: and to cleanse our hands, and gather in spirit, is how we love the vulnerable, whom Jesus loved. May we be instruments of love. May the sacrifices we make be for the good of our human family near and far.

Each person present then washes their hands thoroughly with soap and water. Once washed each should help with setting the table as they are able. The food should be set out in the middle with bread and wine and other good things. When all is ready those present take their places at the table and the one designated begins.

Opening

One The meal we eat *this day/tonight* is holy. Not because it is special, but because it is ordinary. Our God made all that is, and called it good. And God who loves and cares for

us gives us food and drink to refresh and renew our bodies. For this reason, all our meals are sacred, if we are only aware.

Blessing of the Meal

This portion of the service follows the shape of the Last Supper, and therefore will sound familiar and much like the Eucharist. However, it follows the shape and pattern (as best we know) of ancient church practice before a formalized Eucharist or priestly caste. The meal is blessed, something all Christians are called to do.

The one who blesses the bread takes the bread and holds it where all may see it.

One On the night that Jesus gathered with his friends he took bread and he blessed it and shared it with his friends, for God who loves us, feeds us. As God's people ate manna in the wilderness and were satisfied, so we share this bread with Christ, and with one another. May it be for us bread from heaven, strength for our bodies, balm for our souls, and may it empower us to be Christ's body in this world.

The bread is passed around the table for all to take their fill.

The one who blesses the wine [or other beverage] then takes the wine (in a bottle or carafe) and holds it where all may see it.

One On the night that Jesus gathered with his friends he took wine and he blessed it and shared it with them. For the God who made us delights in us, and gives us good gifts to delight our tongues, and give joy to our souls. As Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that will not fail, so Jesus offers us the same. May this [wine] be for us the holy drink of heaven, and may it quench the thirst of our souls.

The wine [or other beverage] is then poured out into each person's cup, a generous amount!

The whole company together then blesses the rest of the meal, saying together:

***All* Holy and lifegiving God, *we/I* thank you for the bounty of your Creation laid before *us/me*. *We/I* ask you to bless it, that it may *be to us/be for me* a holy meal. *We/I* give thanks for all those who labored so that it might sustain *us/me*, and *we/I* ask that through it you would give *us/me* the strength to be your good steward/s; to care, and tend your creation, and to care especially for our siblings, all the people of this world. Unite *us/me* through this meal to your Church throughout the world. *We/I* ask these**

**things by the grace of Jesus Christ our Brother and the Holy Spirit our friend and guide.
Amen.**

The meal should be enjoyed by all.

As the meal draws to a close and all have eaten their fill (but before any dessert is served) readings may be read and prayers offered. The readings may be taken from the Eucharistic (Sunday) lectionary or the Daily Office Lectionary. It is suggested that on Sunday the Eucharist lectionary be used, and on all other days the Daily Office Lectionary be used. At least one reading should be used. If more than one reading is used at least one should come from Hebrew scripture. After each reading silence, questions, or discussion is encouraged. If you are alone, consider creating an Agape Journal, where you write out the insights you have encountered through this prayerful practice.

You may also wish to have different readers read the Scriptures for the previous or following Sunday. You can find our lectionary at The Lectionary Page: <http://www.lectionarypage.net/>

You may read a selection from other spiritual writings, lives of the saints, spiritual poetry, or other writings engaging faith to aid in discussion.

Even though we cannot sing together during a pandemic, if you are meeting virtually, you can sing in your own home. If you are meeting in-person, you can listen to music together. Our Music Director, Tim Drewes, and his wife, Cheryl, have put together many hymns and meditative musical selections on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6KXwPQ3X5INZaHsZmPovnA/videos>

We also have Kester Limner and Andy Myers' Taizé style music available there, as well:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLq1K1z88vMP0s2kaTmFeT93cPvzDR3Vw5>

A Psalm

Psalm 65

- 1 You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; *
to you shall vows be performed in Jerusalem.
- 2 To you that hear prayer shall all flesh come, *
because of their transgressions.
- 3 Our sins are stronger than we are, *
but you will blot them out.
- 4 Happy are they whom you choose
and draw to your courts to dwell there! *
they will be satisfied by the beauty of your house,

by the holiness of your temple.

5 Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness,

O God of our salvation, *

O Hope of all the ends of the earth

and of the seas that are far away.

6 You make fast the mountains by your power; *

they are girded about with might.

7 You still the roaring of the seas, *

the roaring of their waves,

and the clamor of the peoples.

8 Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; *

you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.

9 You visit the earth and water it abundantly;

you make it very plenteous; *

the river of God is full of water.

10 You prepare the grain, *

for so you provide for the earth.

11 You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; *

with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

12 You crown the year with your goodness, *

and your paths overflow with plenty.

13 May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, *

and the hills be clothed with joy.

14 May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,

and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; *

let them shout for joy and sing.

The Prayers

Let us pray for the church, the world, and those we love.

You may use one of the Collect of the Day suggestions:

Thanksgiving Day

Almighty and gracious God, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name;

through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Saint Andrew *November 30*

Almighty God, who gave such grace to your apostle Andrew that he readily obeyed the call of your Son Jesus Christ, and brought his brother with him: Give us, who are called by your holy Word, grace to follow him without delay, and to bring those near to us into his gracious presence; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Prayers continue with one of the following prayer forms:

A Litany of Thanksgiving (BCP 836)

You may wish to take turns leading the part of "One."

One Let us give thanks to God for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea.

We thank you, O God.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women, revealing the image of Christ,

We thank you, O God.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,

We thank you, O God.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,
We thank you, O God.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,
We thank you, O God.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in adversity,
We thank you, O God.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,
We thank you, O God.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,
We thank you, O God.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord; To him be praise and glory, with you, O God, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

or this prayer form may be used

Prayers of the People

One We pray for the good Earth you have given us. We give thanks for its bounty, and the generosity with which you share it with us.

We give thanks for your Church, throughout the world and especially here gathered. Continually reform and confront us that we might build a Church worthy of you.

We pray for our nation, our state, and our community. Move the hearts of all our leaders to pursue justice and work for the good of all.

And we pray for those in our lives who are sick, suffering, or in need...

The leader pauses while the people add their own prayers.

Finally, comforting God, we give thanks for the lives of those who have died recently, and pray that they have found their place with you in your eternal kingdom...

The leader pauses while the people add their own prayers.

One Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Dessert

Consider enjoying an appropriate dessert following the meal. This prayer may be used.

One God of joy, may we remember in this moment how sweet your words are to the taste, sweeter than honey to the mouth! You have given us a feast of rich food, satisfying the longing soul; You filled our hungry souls with good things. May the sweetness on our tongues and the richness of your blessing be a calling to joyfulness, a taste of gratitude, a reminder to invite all of your creation to a seat at the table for the banquet feast you have bestowed upon us.

Amen.

The Conclusion

The following prayer may be used at the conclusion of the meal.

One Holy One, draw near to your people this *day/night*, keep watch over those whose hearts are heavy or burdens are great. Send your holy angels to watch over the sick, and to guide the hands of those who tend to them. And we beseech you, comfort us as a Mother soothes her beloved children. May we rest now, and arise in the morning strengthened by your presence. **Amen.**