

# AN AGAPE FEAST

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*Because of our inability to join in a Eucharist in this time of isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, this liturgy is for use by our community to share a “virtual common table.” We draw on elements of a Franciscan agape meal; St. Francis himself used to bless and break bread, and share it with his brothers. The liturgy is adapted from the Iona Abbey Worship Book. This practice is ancient, going back to the hospitality Abraham showed to his visitors. While not the full celebration of the Eucharist, there is a relationship, in much the same way that we have made the cross on our foreheads with water from the font as a reminder of our Baptism.*

## WELCOME

*As members of the Body of Christ, we gather as we can from our individual places. We come as different people to serve One God, who calls us to unity as the family of God.*

### CALL TO THE FEAST

**Leader:** Out of darkness came light

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

**Men: in the running wave and the flowing air,**

**Women: in the quiet earth and the shining stars.**

**Leader:** Out of the dust came life;

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

**Men: in the human face and the gentle heart,**

**Women: in the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul**

**Leader:** Out of justice came freedom;

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

**Men: in the need to grow and the will to love,**

**Women: in the chance to know and the power to choose.**

**Leader:** And God looked at the creation,

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

## WORD

### PRAYER OF ADORATION (Scripture: Psalm 34:1)

**Leader:** I will keep on thanking God with constant words of prayer.

I will glory in the living God: the humble will hear and be glad.

**Leader:** Let us pray:

Living God, our loving parent; you cherish your creation and We praise you.  
With earth, air, water, fire: in our element as your children, We praise you.  
With our lips, with our lives, in all our diversity, each one made in your image, We praise you.  
Because, in Jesus, you came to share our human lives, our sorrow and joy, We praise you.  
Because your Spirit is at work today: encouraging, enabling, surprising us, We praise you.  
Poor as we are, you give us hope:  
Salt of the earth, you give us meaning and purpose and We praise you.

**All: Amen.**

### **PRAYER OF RELEASE (Scripture: Mark 9:50)**

**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 became bland.**

**Leader:** You trusted us with your Word,

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

**Leader:** You lit a flame in our midst,

**All: but we hid it under formality, smothered it with our fears, bound ourselves to old ways.**

**Leader:** God, in your mercy:

**All: Be with us. Release us from bondage.**

*(silence)*

**Leader:** God of new life, 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 God, One who releases us from our bonds,

**All. We thank you.**

**Leader:** Have salt in yourself, and be at peace with one another.

### **THE PEACE**

**Leader:** May Peace and All Good be with you (*"Pace E Bene"*)

**All: And also with you.**

### **GIVING THANKS FOR THE WEEK**

*People are invited to speak single words or brief phrases of thanks for something that happened during the week.*

*(a brief silence)*

Give thanks to the Lord who is good.

**God's love is everlasting.**

Come, let us praise God joyfully.

**Let us come to God with thanksgiving.**

For the good world; for things great and small, beautiful and awesome; for seen and unseen splendors;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For human life; for talking and moving and thinking together; for common hopes and hardships shared from birth until our dying;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For work to do and strength to work; for the comradeship of labor; for exchanges of good humor and encouragement;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For marriage; for the mystery and joy of flesh made one; for mutual forgiveness and burdens shared; for secrets kept in love;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For family; for living together and eating together; for family amusements and family pleasures;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For children; for their energy and curiosity; for their brave play and startling frankness; for their sudden sympathies;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For the young; for their high hopes; for their irreverence toward worn-out values; for their search for freedom; for their solemn vows;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For growing up and growing old; for wisdom deepened by experience; for rest in leisure; and for time made precious by its passing;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For your help in times of doubt and sorrow; for healing our diseases; for preserving us in temptation and danger;

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For the church into which we have been called; for the good news we receive by Word and Sacrament; for our life together in the Lord;

**We praise you, Lord God.**

For your Holy Spirit, who guides our steps and brings us gifts of faith and love; who prays in us and prompts our grateful worship;

**We praise you, Lord God.**

Above all, O God, for your Son Jesus Christ, who lived and died and lives again for our salvation; for our hope in him; and for the joy of serving him;

**We thank and praise you, Eternal God, for all your goodness to us.**

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good.

**God's love is everlasting.**

Gracious God, it is good for us to gather as your beloved in community. We treasure your presence with us in word and meal, song and prayer. Be with us in these days when gathering together as often as we would like is not possible. When we must be apart for reasons of safety, we trust that you surround us with your sheltering wings. Encourage us in connecting as we are able, reaching out to our neighbours in need and being persistent in prayer. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our constant companion.

**Amen.**

## MEAL

### INVITATION (Scripture: Psalm 34:8)

**Leader:** We are all invited to the common table to share in an Agape Feast. At this table, gathered from where we are, we come as siblings in the Holy Family of God. Taste and see that God is good!

*The meal can be bread (or something simple, like crackers, or a granola bar) and a cup of something to drink (wine, or cider, or grape juice, or water). Each person eating from the food they have in front of them, joining in a meal shared with others at the same time.*

**PRAYER** (at the conclusion of each one drinking and eating)

**Leader:** As we eat together, and as we drink together, we thank you, God, for our daily bread for the food which delights and nourishes us and for the companionship that sustains us.

We thank you, too, for drink to quench our thirst and for the Living Water with which you surprise and enrich and transform our lives.

We give thanks for this meal where all can share, a foretaste of the Holy Realm. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

## SENDING

### BLESSING

**Leader:** Giving God,

    bless all who have gathered as your Presence and Life around this meal.

    May we know the fullness of your presence at every meal and in all our sharing.

**All: Amen.**

*Suggested songs:*

“Stay Here” (WOV #667)

“Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” (EvLW #708)

“Taste and See” (EvLW #493)

“Bread of Life from Heaven” (EvLW #474)

*Adapted from:*

<https://www.ofsusaecumenicalinterfaith.org/agape-celebration>  
<https://www.ghtc.org/docs/Carolyn/Litany%20of%20Thanksgiving.pdf>  
<https://elca.org/publichealth>