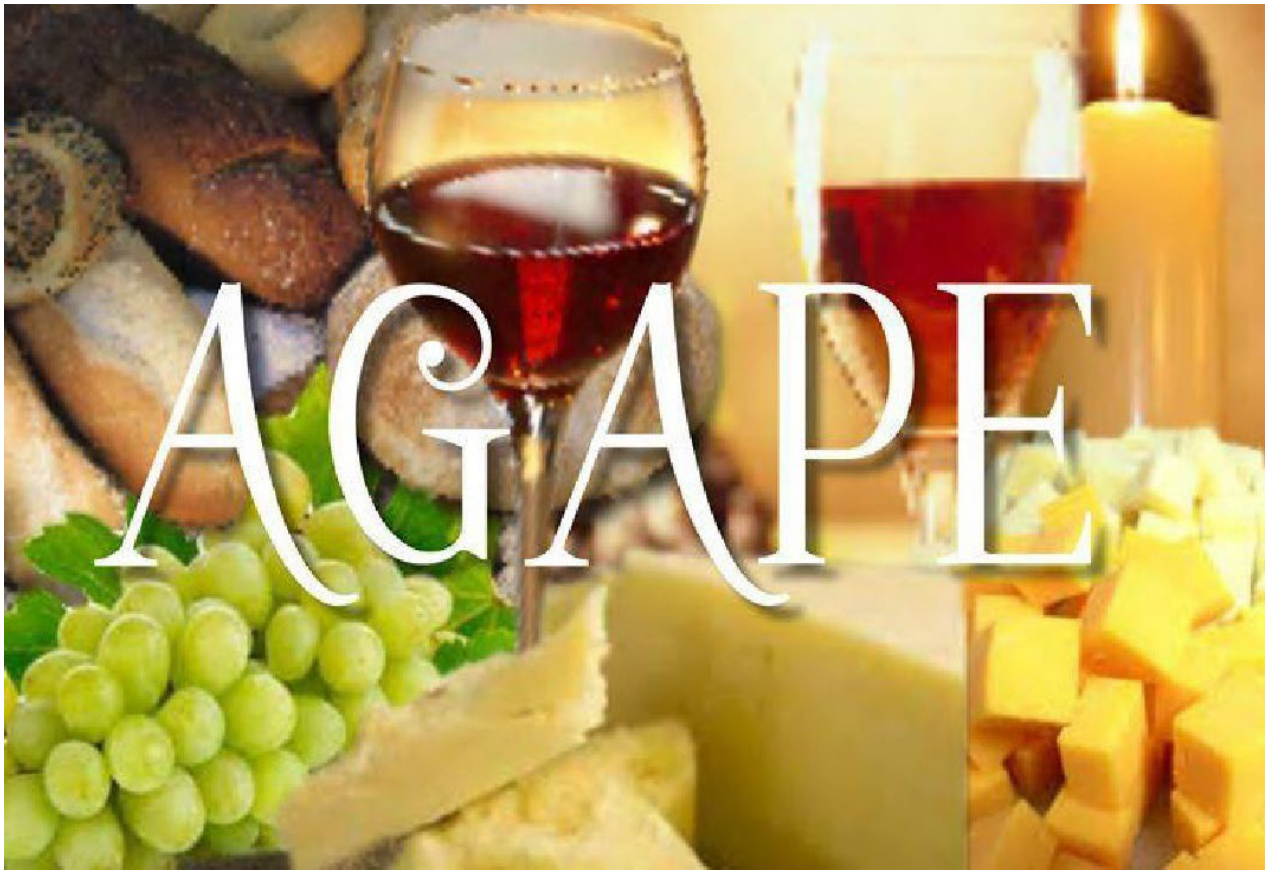
# Agape Meal and Maundy Thursday Service




April 2, 2026, 6 p.m.

## St. Paul's Episcopal Church Canton, Ohio

# What is an Agape Meal?

An Agape meal is an ancient feast of a communal meal shared by Christians, ‘agape’ - uh-gah-pay - being a Greek word that reflects God’s unconditional love.

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus shared a meal with his disciples. He shared this meal in the home tradition and setting of the Passover meal. The washing of feet, the sharing of bread and wine, and the new commandment to love one another all happened in a home, in a room where Jesus drew his friends together as host, teacher, friend, and master who was there to serve them all. This evening marks the beginning of the Three-Day celebration of Christian Passover.

This service recognizes the profound connection between the Celebration of the Eucharist and the meals we share in daily life. It reminds us of the holiness, the “sacramentality” of all meals, the holiness of all food, and the presence of the Risen Christ whenever we break bread.

# The Music

Singing is one of the most important forms of prayer. A few words sung over and over again reinforce the meditative quality of the prayer. They express a basic reality of faith that can quickly be grasped by the intellect, and that gradually penetrates the heart and the whole being. These simple chants also provide a way of praying when one is alone, in the day or at night, or even in the silence of one's heart while one is working.

**-Taken from “Songs & Prayers from Taizé”**

# + The Gathering +

### *Gathering Song: The Song of the Supper (pg.14)*

*Leader:* The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.
*People:* God's mercies never come to an end. (Lamentations 3:22)

### *The Welcome*

*Leader:* Welcome to this meal, in the Name of Christ.
*People:* We come as different people, united in Christ as family.

*Leader:* We come to share in God's love for the whole world.
*People:* We come to receive the gifts of God's abundance, not only in food and drink, but also in the gifts God desires to give us in each other and in the reading of holy scripture.

### *A Call to the Feast*

*Leader*: Let us proclaim the goodness of creation:
Out of darkness came light;
*People*: And the power of God was revealed in the running wave and the flowing air, in the quiet earth and the shining stars.

*Leader:* Out of the dust came life;
*People:* And the image of God was revealed in the human face and the gentle heart, in the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul.

*Leader:* Out of justice came freedom;
*People:* And the wisdom of God revealed in the need to grow and the will to love, in the power to know and receive all as gifts of God.

*Leader:* And God looked upon creation,
*People:* And behold, it was very good.

*Leader:* The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.
*People:* God's mercies never come to an end. (Lamentations 3:22)

*Leader:* Father, we spread this table to remember the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, your Son. Accept all we offer you this day. Bind us together in his love and in the love he has commanded us to bring one another; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

# + The Word +

**The First Reading:** **Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14**

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:
This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it
shall be the first month of the year for you.
Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month
they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household.
If a household is too small for a whole lamb,
it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one;
the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.
This is how you shall eat it:

Your loins girded, your sandals on your feet,
and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly.
It is the passover of the LORD.
For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night,
and I will strike down every firstborn of the land of Egypt,
both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments:
I am the LORD.
The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live:
when I see the blood, I will pass over you,
and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.
This day shall be a day of remembrance for you.
You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD;
throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

**Psalm 116:1, 10-17**

1 I love the LORD, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.
10 How shall I repay the LORD * for all the
good things he has done for me?
11 I will lift up the cup of salvation * and
call upon the Name of the LORD.
12 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people.
13 Precious in the sight of the LORD *
is the death of his servants.
14 O LORD, I am your servant; *

I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.
15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.
16 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people,
17 in the courts of the LORD's house, *
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Hallelujah!

*Presider:* Let us pray.
Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts, and give us the will to serve others as he was servant of all, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. ***Amen.***

**The Second Reading:** **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## + The Meal +

## + The Blessings +

**Over Wine**
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You create the fruit of the vine; and you refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May the time come quickly when we can share that cup again, even as you are with us now in our very thirst for you. Glory to you for ever and ever. ***Amen.***

**Over Bread**
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You bring forth bread from the earth; and you have fed us on our way with the bread of life in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. Let us be fed again soon with that bread of life. And as grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power for ever and ever. ***Amen.***

**Over the Food**
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the fast that is before us, so that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

**The Third Reading: John 13:1-17, 31b-35**

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, `Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

***Song: Stay With Me (pg.16)***

## † Foot / Hand Washing for Maundy Thursday †

*Presider:* Jesus washed the feet of his friends as an act of love, service, and preparation. We will take turns washing one another's feet or hands as a way to love and serve each other.

*You are invited to wash each other's hands or feet if you so desire. Clergy are present at each station to assist.*

*Presider:* Blessed are you, Lord God. The basin and the towel are signs to us of your Son's servanthood. You have made us partakers of Christ and of one another. As we go forth, give us grace to count others more important than ourselves, to love our enemies, to make peace. Send the Spirit of truth to keep alive in us what Jesus taught and did, that our words may carry his good news, and that our lives may bear the shape of the cross of the One who lives and reigns with You and with the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. ***Amen.***

## † Intercession †

*Presider*: Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church and for all people according to their need.

*Leader:* Father, on this, the night he was betrayed, your Son Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet. We commit ourselves to follow his example of love and service. Lord, hear us.

*People:* **and humble us.**

*Leader:* On this night, he prayed for his disciples to be one. We pray for the unity of the church. Lord, hear us.

*People:* **and unite us.**

*Leader*: On this night, he prayed for those who were to believe through their message. We pray for the mission of your church. Lord, hear us.

*People:* **and renew our zeal.**

*Leader:* On this night he commanded them to love but suffered rejection himself. We pray for the rejected and unloved. Lord, hear us.

*People:* **and fill us with your love.**

*Presider:* As our Savior has taught us, so we pray.

*People:* 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.***

## Greeting of the Peace

*Presider:* Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. We meet in his name and share his peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People:* **And also with you.**

## Eucharist

*All remain seated while the Presider (standing) offers the Eucharistic Prayer.*

## Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty. Lord our God, we give you thanks and praise.

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us and bring us back to you. He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you. He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying,

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed,(-- this very night --) he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, "This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me."

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us.

Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.
**Blessing and honor and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. *Amen.***

## The Breaking of the Bread and the Communion

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered and made one bread, so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

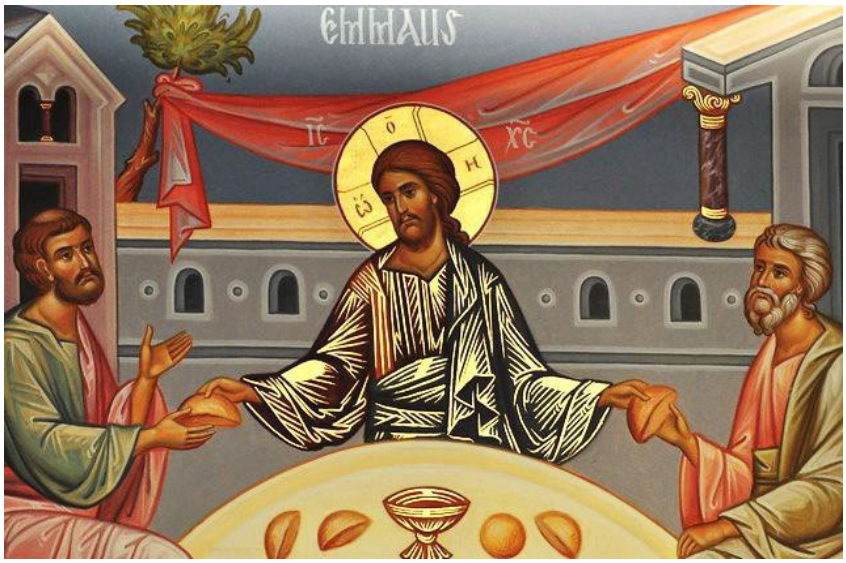
The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*The following prayer is said:*

*Presider:* God of all, we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living he declared your love, gave us grace and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life, we who drink his cup bring life to others, we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world.

*People:* **Keep us in this hope that we have grasped, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.**

*The candles are extinguished. All move into the sanctuary. The lighting is dim.*



**REMOVAL OF THE RESERVED SACRAMENT**

*The consecrated bread is taken to the Lady Chapel, to the Altar of Repose where it remains until the Good Friday Service.*

**STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR**

*Sit or kneel as you prefer*

*Members of the Altar Guild remove all decorations and hangings from the altar, commemorating how our Lord was stripped of his clothing. During the stripping of the altar, Psalm 22 is read or chanted by one person. The congregation is invited to observe the stripping in silence.*

**Antiphon:** They divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing. (*said before and after Psalm 22*)

**Psalm 22** ***(Chanted by Cantor) (BCP, 610)***

1My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far
from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
2God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and
by night, but find no rest.
3Yet you are holy, enthroned on
the praises of Israel.
4In you our ancestors trusted; they
trusted, and you delivered them.
5To you they cried, and were saved; in you they
trusted, and were not put to shame.
6But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by
others, and despised by the people.
7All who see me mock at me; they make mouths
at me, they shake their heads;
8"Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver —
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"
9Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

10On you I was cast from my birth, and since my
mother bore me you have been my God.
11Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.
12Many bulls encircle me, strong
bulls of Bashan surround me;

13they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

14I am poured out like water, and all
my bones are out of joint; my heart is
like wax; it is melted within my breast;
15my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you
lay me in the dust of death.

16For dogs are all around me; a
company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shriveled; 17I
can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me; 18they divide
my clothes among themselves, and for my
clothing they cast lots.
19But you, O LORD, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
20Deliver my soul from the sword, my
life from the power of the dog! 21Save
me from the mouth of the lion!
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.
22I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
23You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand
in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
24For he did not despise or abhor
the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me,
but heard when I cried to him.
25From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
26The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the LORD.
May your hearts live forever!

27All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD; and all the families
of the nations
shall worship before him.

28 For dominion belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.
29 To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I
shall live for him.

30 Posterity will serve him; future generations
will be told about the LORD,
31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.

**Antiphon:** They divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.

*When the stripping of the altar is completed, and the clergy leave the chancel area you may depart in silence.*

*The main lights go off.*

**PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S LITURGY:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Priests: | The Revs. Joe and Kay Ashby |
| Greeters: | David Lewis |
| Lectors: | M.L. Schultze |
| Eucharistic Ministers, Crucifer/ Thurifer | |
| Douglas Colmery, Brenda Denning, David Rotthoff | |
| Camera/Audio: | David Lewis |
| Altar Guild: | All |

## Upcoming Services

Friday, April 3, Good Friday, Noon (Stations of the Cross)
Evening Joint Service with Crossroads United Methodist, 7 p.m.

Sunday, April 5, Easter Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m. followed by reception in the Guild Hall.

Adapted from "Agape Meal for Maundy Thursday", published by the Anglican Diocese of Perth; and from A Prayer Book for Australia, pp. 139-141 From riteplanning.com.

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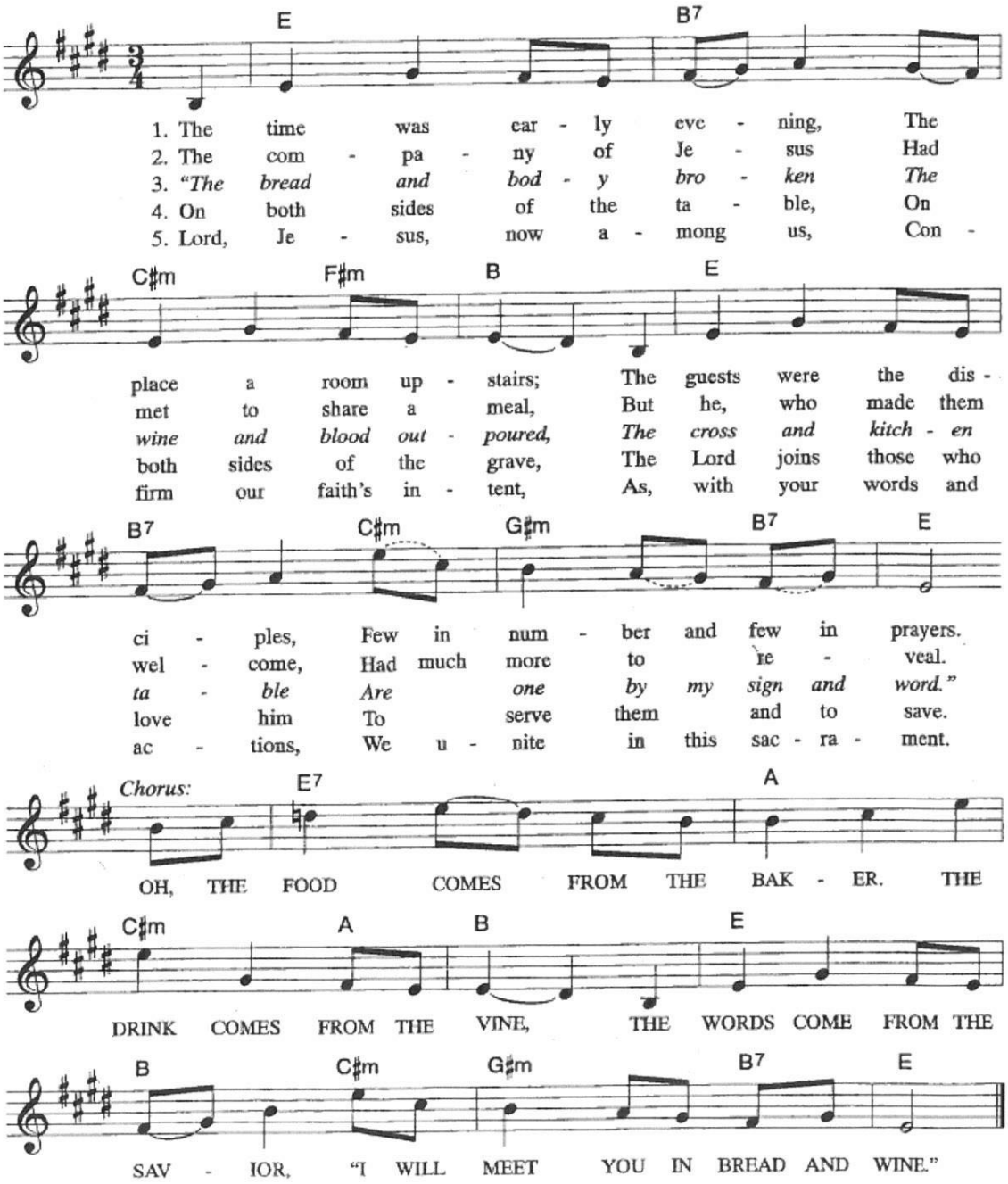
# Maundy Thursday

Gathering Song – The Song of the Supper John Bell (Tune: *Afton Water*)

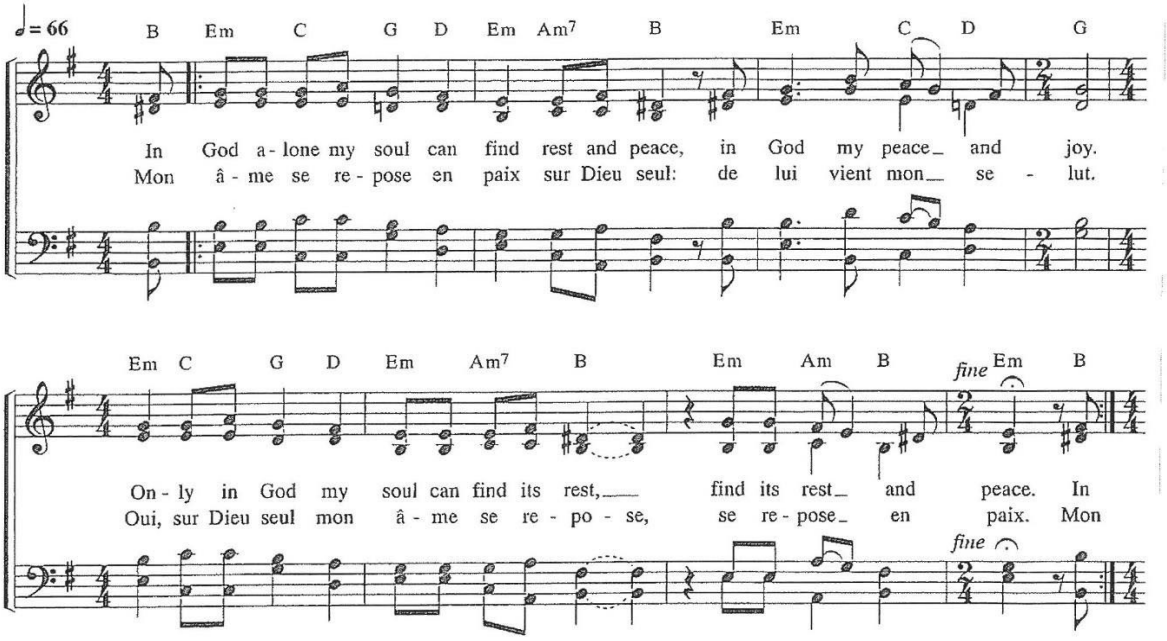
*Verses 1-3 sung by soloists, verses 4-5 sung by all.*

***All join in singing of the refrain (chorus)***

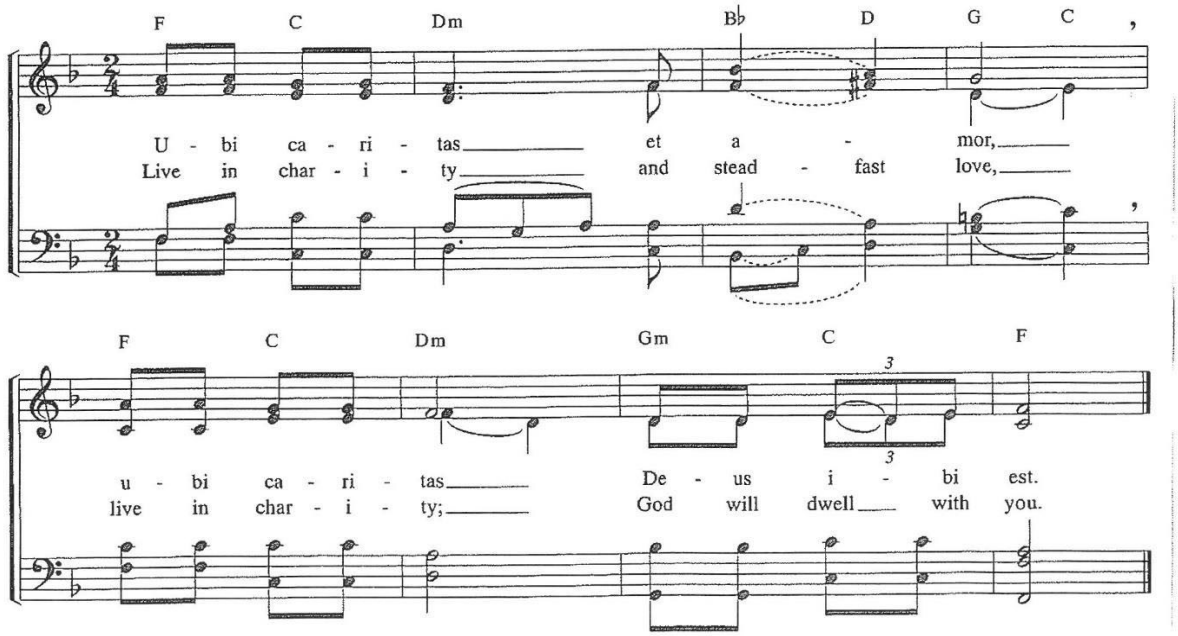


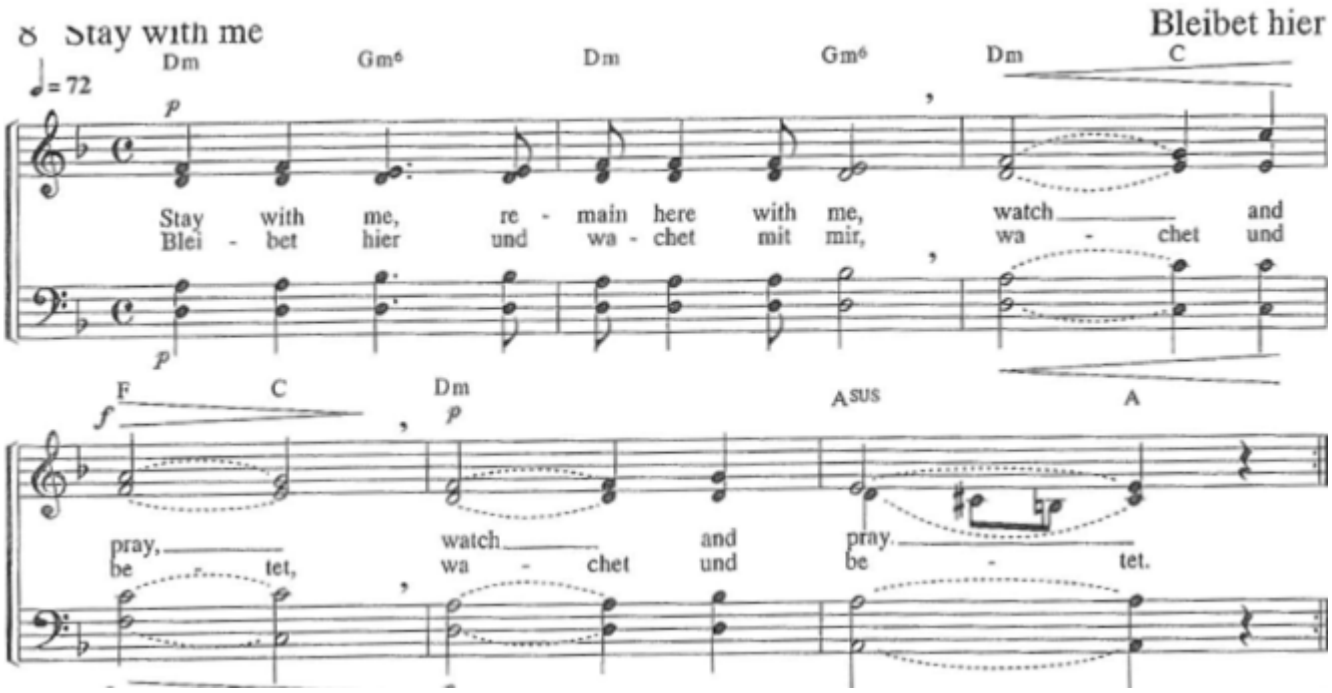
**Communion Music**
**You are invited to sing in unison or parts**

## In God alone — Mon âme se repose 19




## 49 Live in charity — Ubi caritas



**After Second Reading, you are invited to sing in whole or in parts**

# The Episcopal Church's Mission

The mission of The Episcopal Church, as stated in the Book of Common Prayer's catechism, is "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ." In step with that mission, we follow Jesus into loving, liberating, and life-giving relationships with God, with each other, and with the earth.