

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” John 6.51

“The people gather in the quiet and darkened nave of the church. The main altar is bare, except for two lighted candles. If the people have brought offerings of bread, wine, olives, cheeses, etc., members of the altar party will receive them and place them on the main altar. On the two front sides of the church (the pews below the pulpit and the lectern) are placed the two covered boards for serving food.” – from the Maundy Thursday Program of Christ Church.

Dear Friends,

We are halfway through the Lenten Season. The Day of Resurrection, known commonly as Easter, will soon be upon us. But before we get to that wonderfully festive day, we must make our way through Holy Week. We will spiritually walk where Jesus walked, and experience some of the thoughts and feelings that his disciples and friends thought and felt. Much of what we do during the week is familiar ground, but this year, but every year we work at getting through another level of meaning in our worship and fellowship. This year, this will take particular focus in our ***Maundy Thursday Worship***.

This year, the entire service will take place in the nave of the church, where we will once again share in an *agape* meal. Participants are asked to bring an offering of food or drink with them – as was the custom in the very early church. Pita bread, hummus, olives, cheeses.....wine and sparkling ciders and flavored waters....think of those first Eucharistic feasts shared by those first Christians.

After the reading of scripture and the prayers, we will bless the offerings of food at the altar, and it will be placed on serving tables in the nave. Then comes the Eucharistic Prayer over the bread and wine, and the communion of the people. We will then share our simple meal together, much as Jesus and his friends did at their last meal together on the eve of his crucifixion.

At the end of the meal, we will remain in the church for the Stripping of the Altar, and the preparation for the *Maundy Thursday Vigil* or “Watch”, in which parishioners will take turns during the night watching and praying before the Altar of Repose, until the beginning of the Good Friday Liturgy.

Jesus said, *“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”* Every Sunday we gather and we remember his words. We gather because we believe – we believe that he indeed is the life of the world. We take the bread into our hands and the wine onto our lips because we feel his presence around us, within us, and between us.

I invite you to come and join us on this solemn night. May we feast together, placing ourselves in solidarity with those very first disciples, and with all who have sought to follow the Christ over the centuries. Bring an offering of simple food to share. Invite a friend or family member to share with us, too. Dare I say that this somber yet beautiful night will place you in the very presence of those first believers? I do. May this Lent and Holy Week find you ever faithful to our Lord and ever seeking his presence in all you think, in all you say, and in all you do.

Peace,
Mother Lisa+