



SEASIDE United Church of Christ
THE UCC CONGREGATIONS OF MDI
MAUNDY THURSDAY 2021

The Seder Meal with Communion

1. Lighting of the Festival Lights
2. Kiddish:
The Blessing of the Feast
The first cup, The Cup of Thanksgiving
3. Haggadah:
The *Story* of Deliverance from Egypt
The second cup, The Cup of Salvation
4. Prayer of Thanksgiving
For the Deliverance from Egypt
5. The Solemn Blessing of the Food
6. The Paschal Supper
7. *The third cup: The Blessing Cup*
8. Communion
9. The Final Blessing
The fourth cup: The Cup of Melchisedech.

The Jewish Seder commemorates events basic to the Jewish understanding of God. Jesus, a

Jew, refined that understanding by emphasizing a God of Love.

“The Passover meal, the seder, memorializes the first Passover and the exodus by bringing it into the present. The elements of the meal embody central elements in the story, and the words make clear that the story is not simply about the past, but it is also about the present... For the empire of Pharaoh, substitute the Roman Empire or any other empire, and the subversive nature of this story is not difficult, “To comprehend”

(Borg & Crossan, The Last Week, p. 117).

A Christian Seder celebrates both the powerful Jewish belief in the God of Exodus and the

Process and the image of God revealed to us in Jesus the Christ.

1. Lighting of Festival Lights to Music by Hope Rowan

Commentator (Hannah): According to an ancient Jewish custom, it is the task of the mother to light the festival lights in every service, which takes place in the Jewish Home. Besides an obvious practical purpose, this gesture symbolizes the coming of Christ the Messiah, the Light of the World. The solemn blessing of light at the beginning of the Easter Vigil service finds its origin in this Jewish custom. We are reminded also of the lighted candles on the table of our Eucharistic banquet.

Kenny lights the candles on behalf of the Mother.

Mother (Janet): Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who has sanctified us by Your commandments, and commanded us to kindle the festival lights. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season. May this place be consecrated, O God, by the light of Your countenance, shining upon us in blessing and bringing us peace.

All: Amen.

2. Kiddish, The Blessing of the Feast

On this table (in your homes) is a bowl of salt water and a plate containing matzo, bitter herb, haroset, green herb, beets, an egg, and an orange.

Before the facilitator (Joe) are large pictures of wine and of grape juice.

Commentator (Hannah): Every food used in the Jewish Passover meal was blessed before it was eaten. Similarly, the bread and wine which are to be consecrated are blessed by the celebrant during the offertory of Communion.

Facilitator (Joe): Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who has chosen us above all people, and has exalted us above all tongues, and has hallowed us with Your commandments. In love You have given us, O Lord our God, seasons for gladness, holy days, and times for rejoicing; this day of the feast of the unleavened bread, the time of our freedom, an assembly day of holiness, a memorial to the exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us and have sanctified us above all peoples,

and You have given us Your sacred seasons for our inheritance. Blessed are You, O Lord, Who does sanctify Israel and the festivals.

*The first cup of wine is poured, the **CUP OF THANKSGIVING**, and those in each home distribute from the single large pitcher.*

Commentator (Hannah): Four times during the Paschal Meal the wine & juice are passed. This act of distributing from a common bowl to all present was a symbol of unity.

At the Last Supper, Christ passed this first cup of unconsecrated wine to the apostles saying: "Take this and share it among you, because from now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the Kingdom of God comes. (*Luke 22: 17-18*). The consecration was to come later, after the meal, at the pouring of the third cup, The Blessing Cup.

**All: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe,
Who did create the fruit of the vine.**

All drink from the first cup of wine. The facilitator washes their hands.

Commentator (Hannah): The washing of hands during the Paschal meal symbolized the interior cleansing necessary for those partaking in the ritual just as the celebrant in some Christian traditions washing their hands during the offertory.

It was probably at this point of the ritual that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, as an expression of Jesus' new commandment of love and to show the dignity of service in the new dispensation.

Facilitator (Joe): Blessed are you, O Lord our God, God of the Universe, Who has hallowed us with your commandments and has commanded us concerning the washing of hands.

All take up from their plates a green herb, dip the herb in salt water, symbolic of tears and sorrow, and say together:

All: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who did create the fruit of the soil.

All eat the green herb. The server then brings in a plate on which are three large matzos, pieces of unleavened bread, each wrapped in a napkin. The facilitator uncovers the upper piece, and lifts it on the plate.

Commentator (Hannah): Unleavened bread was prescribed for the eight days of Passover, to commemorate the first Passover; for in the flight from Egypt there had been no time to make leavened bread. The bread which Jesus used when celebrating Passover was unleavened, a custom which has been carried over to today.

Facilitator (Joe): 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 redeem us from all evil and from all servitude.

3. The Haggadah: The Story of Deliverance from Egypt

*A second cup of wine is poured. **The Cup of Salvation***

Commentator (Hannah): At the ancient Passover meal, the son asked the father four traditional questions about the Passover. The questions we ask tonight are similar but have been adapted to bring to mind the relationships between Hebrew & Christian Scripture.

Youngest Child (Kemy): Why is this night different from all other nights?

Facilitator (Hope): On this night we proclaim 'This is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' (*Ex 13:8*). We who are followers of Christ know that as God, through Moses, rescued the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, so Christ redeemed us as well.

Youngest Child (Kemy): On all other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread. Why on this night do we eat only unleavened bread?

Facilitator: (Hope): When Pharaoh let our ancestors go from Egypt, they were forced to flee in great haste. They had not time to bake their bread; they could not wait for the yeast to rise, so the sun beating down on the dough as they carried it along baked it into a flat unleavened bread.

Youngest Child (Kemy): On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs. Why on this night do we eat especially bitter herbs?

Facilitator (Hope): The Jews of old ate bitter herbs on Passover night because our fathers were slaves in Egypt and their lives were made bitter. We who are followers of Christ do not hesitate to taste of bitterness as a reminder of Jesus' passion and death. "Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." (*Luke 14:27*)

Youngest Child (Kemy): On all other nights we do not dip herbs in any condiment. Why on this night do we dip them in salt water and haroset?

Facilitator (Hope): We dip the bitter herbs into the haroset, sweet jam, as did the Jews of old, as a sign of hope. Their bitterness of slavery was sweetened by the hope of freedom. We who are the followers of Christ are reminded that by sharing in the bitterness of Christ's sufferings, we strengthen our hope.

Youngest Child (Kemy): On all other nights we eat without special festivities. Why on this night do we hold this Passover service?

Commentator (Hannah): This is Holy Week, a time that joins for us the Old and the New Covenant. At this season, the Jewish people celebrate the feast of the Passover. More than 1400 years before the time of Christ, the Chosen people were suffering in slavery in Egypt. God raised up Moses as their leader and Moses tried to secure their release from captivity. Despite the hardships of nine successive plagues that God sent to them, the Egyptians still refused the pleas of Moses. Then an "Angel of the Lord" was sent to strike down the first born son of every family; by God's command, each Jewish family had sacrificed a lamb and sprinkled its blood on the doorposts and the angel, seeing the blood, passed over their homes and their children were spared.

Then, finally, Pharaoh permitted the Jews to leave.

They fled in haste, to wander amid the hardships in the desert for forty years before coming to the promised land. And God commanded Moses that the Jews should make a remembrance of the day of deliverance (*Exodus 12:14-28*). Thus the Passover became the great Feast of Sacrifice, of deliverance and thanksgiving. Each Passover meal revolves around the retelling (The Haggadah) of this Providential Act.

We who are followers of Christ see the working of God's concern for God's people. As God sent Moses to rescue the Israelites from captivity in Egypt, so God lovingly sent Jesus to redeem us. At this time Jews and Christians often celebrate their own feasts in their own ways and, especially when we do so together, we can see in these celebrations the common bond of the symbolism of the Exodus.

Jesus was a Jew and today we wish to draw upon the traditional Jewish Seder and the words of the Christian Scriptures to help us more fully appreciate Jesus' observance of this Jewish heritage, whose laws and traditions he kept with his friends and followers—particularly on Maundy Thursday.

Mark, Matthew, & Luke's accounts of Christ's sacrifice for us each begin with Jesus' celebration of the Paschal meal: "Now on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus to say, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" (Matt 26:17, see also Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7-9).

The facilitator lifts each of the ceremonial foods.

Facilitator (Joe):

The Paschal Lamb (beets) symbolizes the Jewish sacrificial lamb and Christ, our Paschal Lamb.

The Egg symbolizes freedom and new life.

The Matzo (unleavened bread) represents the bread baked by the Jews during their hasty flight from Egypt and Jesus as the Bread of Life.

The Bitter Herbs reminds us of the slavery and suffering in Egypt.

The Greens dipped in Salt water symbolize cheer and sorrow

The Haroset (sweet jam) reminds us of the mortar used by the Jews in building the palaces and pyramids of Egypt during their centuries of forced labor.

The Orange is a new addition representing the full inclusion of women and the LGBTQ community in the life of our faith traditions.

The Wine (juice) is drunk from a common bowl to signify unity. We drink four cups because the Book of Exodus records four different words spoken by God when God sent Moses to deliver the Jews and the name of God in Hebrew, YHWH.

4. Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Deliverance from Egypt

Commentator (Hannah): This prayer of gratitude for the deliverance from Egypt which the leader now speaks or chants is similar to the Call to Worship. And the Hillel Psalm, the great Psalm of Praise, which all chant in reply, are like the *sanctus*, a hymn of joyful praise. Hillel, our English Alleluia, means literally, "Praise the Lord." These psalms were often prayed by Jesus.

As a preface to the Hillel Psalm, the facilitator lifting their cup of wine says:

Facilitator (Rob): In every generation each one ought to regard themselves as though s/he had personally come out of Egypt, as it is written: "And on that day you will explain to your on, "This is because of what Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt.'" (*Exodus 13:8*)

Therefore, it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, extol, bless, exalt and adore the Lord who did all of these miracles for our ancestors and for ourselves. God has brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to festive day, from darkness to a great light, and from subjection to redemption. Let us then recite before, God a new song.

The facilitator replaces their cup of wine (leads Psalm 113 recitation).

All: Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.

Facilitator (Rob): When Israel came out of Egypt, the House of Jacob from a foreign nation,

All: Judah became God's sanctuary and Israel God's domain.

Facilitator (Rob): The sea fled at the sight, the Jordan stopped flowing,

All: The mountains skipped like rams, and like lambs, the hills.

Facilitator (Rob): Sea, what makes you run away? Jordan, why stop flowing?

All: Why skip like rams you mountains, why like lambs you hills?

Facilitator (Rob): Quake, earth, at the coming of your Master, at the coming of the God of Jacob,

All: Who turned the rock into pools of water, the stony hills into fountains?

Hallelujah, Praise the Lord!

5. The Solemn Blessing of the Food

Commentator (Hannah): Here are blessed the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs, symbols of the slavery in Egypt from which God freed the Jews.

The facilitator takes the cup in their hands and says:

Facilitator (Janet): Blessed are you, O Lord our God, God of the universe, who has redeemed us and has redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, and has permitted us to live unto this night, to partake on it of the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs. So may the Lord our God and the God of our ancestors, permit us to live unto other festive seasons and holy days. May your will be done through Jacob, Your chosen servant, so that your name shall be sanctified in the midst of all the earth, and that all peoples be moved to worship you with one accord. And we shall sing new songs of praise unto you, for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls. Blessed are you, O Lord, Who did redeem Israel.

All: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, God of the universe, who did create the fruit of the vine.

All drink the second cup of wine. The facilitator takes the upper matzo and blesses it with the following prayer:

Facilitator (Janet): Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who did bring forth bread from the earth.

Commentator (Hannah): As in the case of the wine shared from a common bowl, the breaking and distribution of a single piece of matzo to all present signified unity. "The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf." (1 Cor. 10:17). For the head of the house during the Passover meal to dip a piece of bread in haroses and give it to one of the guests was a customary token of affection. This lends special poignancy to the act of Christ dipping a piece of bread and handing it to Judas.

The facilitator breaks the upper matzo into small pieces and distributes a piece to each person present. Holding the matzo in their hands, all say:

All: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who has sanctified us by Your commandments and has commanded us concerning the eating of unleavened bread.

All eat the matzo.

Facilitator (Janet): Let us combine the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs and eat them together, as it is written.

Each person places a piece of bitter herb and some haroset between two pieces of matzo, and all say together:

All: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who has sanctified us by Your commandments and has commanded us concerning the eating of bitter herbs.

The matzo and haroset along with the other ceremonial foods are now eaten.

6. The Paschal Supper takes place.

Please partake in our simple soup supper.

7. The drinking of the third cup: The Blessing Cup

When the meal is finished, the facilitator takes the large half of the middle matzo from the plate, breaks and distributes it to all present.

Commentator (Hannah): The second matzo is now brought forth. It was the custom to conclude the Passover meal with this piece of unleavened bread. It was most probably at this moment that Christ took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them saying: "This is my body which will be given for you." (*Luke 22:19*)

All hold the particle of matzo in their hands, while the facilitator says:

Facilitator (JJ): Let us bless the Lord.

All: May the name of the Lord be blessed from now unto eternity.

Facilitator (JJ): Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who did feed the entire world with Your goodness, with grace, with living kindness and with pity. God gives bread to all flesh, for God's living kindness endures forever. And in God's great goodness, food has not been, and shall not be lacking for us, forever and ever, for the sake of God's great name; for God feeds and supports all, and does good unto all, and prepares food for all God's creatures, which God did create.

All: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who feeds all Your creatures.

All eat the particle of matzo.

*The third cup of wine, **THE BLESSING CUP** is then poured.*

Commentator (Hannah): Luke tells us that Jesus “did the same with the cup after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be poured out for you," (*Luke 22:20*).

(adapted from Psalm 115)

Facilitator (Joe): What return can I make to Yahweh for all God’s goodness to me?

All: I will offer the chalice of salvation: and I will call upon the Name of Yahweh.

Facilitator (Joe): Yahweh, I am your servant.

All: I will offer you the thanksgiving sacrifice, invoking the name of Yahweh.

Facilitator (Joe): I will pay what I *vowed* to Yahweh; may God’s whole nation be present, in the courts of the house of Yahweh, in your heart, Jerusalem.

All: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, God of the universe, Who did create the fruit of the vine.

All drink the Blessing Cup, the third cup.

8. Communion

ANTHEM:

Hope

WORDS OF INVITATION:

Acolyte (Kemy): God in Christ breaks down the walls that make us strangers to ourselves and divide us from one another. We are the Body of Christ. Around this table, we enact our faith. Our tables are open to all who desire to do justice and live in the hope & love that is present whenever two or more gather in Christ’s name.

Joe: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

Joe: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

Joe: Let us give thanks to God most high.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION:

Joe: On the night of the Passover... ALL ARE WELCOME!

All: Amen

Matzo & wine/juice are shared in everyone's home.

9. The Final Blessing

*The cups are filled for the fourth time, **The Cup of Melchisedech.***

All lift their cup and say:

All: Praise to you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has created the fruit of the vine.

We drink from the last cup of wine/juice.

Moderator (Hannah): May the Lord bless and keep you!

All: Amen.

Moderator (Hannah): May the Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you!

All: Amen.

Moderator (Hannah): May the Lord look upon you with kindness and give you Peace!

All: Amen.

Moderator (Hannah): May Almighty God bless you, the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen!

RECESSIONAL:

Hope

Thank you for joining the UCC Congregations of MDI as we celebrate the Lenten Season & Holy Week virtually this year!

Please join us tomorrow at 7:00pm on Zoom, as the Bar Harbor Congregational Church facilitates our Good Friday Service.

Special Thanks to Hannah, Hope, Janet, JJ, Kemy, Rob, Lee and everyone that helped with tonight's service.



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