

Lindford Methodist Church and St Francis Maundy Thursday Agape meal

Dear friends at St Francis and Lindford,

We were supposed to be sharing a light meal and an Agape Communion on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April. This short service sheet is for people on their own and families in their own homes to remember the first Maundy Thursday evening and how Jesus shared the Passover meal with the disciples telling them to 'do this in remembrance of me'. The disciples had no idea what challenges and fears they were about to face in the next few days, but neither did they know in advance about Easter day. We are all mightily blessed to have that to look forward to. I am assuming that you are sitting to eat your own meal this evening and using these words as an integral part of that meal. Have a piece of bread and a glass of whatever you would usually drink with your meal on the table ready. We pray:

Yours, Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory, the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours; yours, Lord, is the sovereignty and you are exalted over all as head. Now, our God, we give you thanks and praise your glorious name

Lord, you are steadfast in your love and infinite in your mercy; you welcome sinners and invite them to be your guests. We confess our sins, trusting you to forgive us. We have yielded to temptation and sinned.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and keep us in eternal life.

Reading : Matthew 26:17-46

(Eat your supper meal as you think about the reading and all that happened on that night)

Seventy years ago my late husband was a prisoner of war over Lent in 1943, 1944 and 1945. In that camp they had a wonderful chaplain who led them through each of those seasons with a glorious celebration of Easter day at the end. John always said that until that time he had never even begun to understand what Lent, the Cross and Resurrection were all about. Many of us will feel like that once the present dark days are over. There are feelings of isolation, uncertainty and a lack of knowledge and understanding both for ourselves and our families and friends. Please know that we have a God who does not stand outside the human condition but became a part of it and 'for all, for all' lived, died and rose again. He is with us in our suffering tonight and tomorrow but that we shall celebrate on Easter Day knowing that death is not the defeat it appears but paves the way for the triumph of God's love and sacrifice over pain and evil.

St Mark writes that Jesus, on the night before his death, took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" and he did the same with the cup after supper saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

We break this bread and drink this wine to share in the body of Christ. (eat and drink your bread and wine)

We sit at the table of the Lord gathered at his supper where the fearful are made new in love. The doubtful are made strong in faith. The regretful are made whole. We come old and young as there is room for all. We are in the world to walk in God's light, rejoice in his love, and to reflect God's glory.