



This service is designed for use by a small gatherings of God's people outside of the assembly of the full community. It draws from the Eucharistic tradition, but it is not a sacramental meal. All Christians are called to bless, and this includes blessings of food and drink shared and the people gathered. The people assemble with greetings and conversation. Candles are lit by individuals as they arrive, accompanied by a moment of silent prayer. One person acts as the leader to keep the flow of the worship moving. Prayers and readings are divided among the rest of the group.

The leader opens with Call to Worship

Call to Worship

One Oh, how good and pleasant it is,
when brethren live together in unity!
– Psalm 133:11

Opening Prayer

An appropriate prayer is offered to set the tone for worship. Collects from The Book of Common Prayer, especially the collect appointed for the day, are always appropriate.

Music Offering

Please feel free to hum along! Singing in a mask is discouraged by health officials due to concerns for higher CO2 rebreathing when singing.

The First Reading:

Acts 4:32-35

One Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy

person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The Second Reading:

John 20:19-31

One When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Teaching

In small groups of approximately three, remaining at appropriate physical distance, choose questions to discuss for approximately twenty minutes.

This week's reading in Acts demonstrates what truly sacred ground might look like. It's at the feet of the apostles who are giving their testimony of the Resurrection. This speech creates a space for outrageous acts of giving

and receiving. It's also a great show of unity and togetherness—they are “of one heart and soul”—that gives hope to the nascent church and, across the centuries, to us as we step together into our Easter journey.

- Where do you find sacred spaces in your life? In your church?
- What might complete unity and togetherness look like in your life? In your congregation? In society as a whole?
- In what ways does your worshipping community embody the spirit of the Acts 4 church?
- How might the idea of an ongoing act of believing and obeying change our life outside of the church? Within the church?
- When has Christ broken through your barriers to reach you? How might his invitation to touch his wounds help during a difficult time?
- Why did Christ retain the scars of his crucifixion, post-resurrection?

Prayer of Blessing

Before leaving your small groups, standing and remaining at appropriate physical distance, spend approximately five minutes praying for one another in turn. Begin by asking what each person would like prayers for and then have the other members of the group lift them to God.

Prayers of the People

The whole group gathers for prayer. Prayers may be formal and prepared ahead of time, or come forth from the group at the time of worship.

Prayers are always offered for:

- *The Universal Church, its members, and its mission*
- *The Nation and all in authority*
- *The welfare of the world*
- *The concerns of the local community*
- *Those who suffer and those in any trouble*
- *Those who have died*

One Brothers and sisters, peace be with you. Let us pray to our merciful Lord, saying, “Our Lord and our God, have mercy on us.”

Lord Jesus Christ, you have given your Church the gift of your Holy Spirit. May that same Spirit comfort and strengthen us as we proclaim your resurrection to the world. *Silence.*

Our Lord and our God,

All **Have mercy on us.**

One God of wisdom, teach and counsel the leaders of the nations. Fill this world, O God, with justice and peace. *Silence.*

Our Lord and our God,

All **Have mercy on us.**

One God our provider, you have given us this pleasant earth as a goodly heritage. May we use its resources wisely and always according to your purpose.

The people are invited to add their thanksgivings, followed by silence.

Our Lord and our God,

All **Have mercy on us.**

One Righteous God, you are pleased when we live together in unity: may the people of this region be at peace with one another. May our work be rewarding and our needs be met. *Silence.*

Our Lord and our God,

All **Have mercy on us.**

One Merciful God, you are a strong refuge for those in trouble. Protect all those who suffer various trials. Reveal yourself to those for whom faith is a struggle. Make all your people glad by the living hope that is found in you. *The people are invited to add their petitions, followed*

by silence.

Our Lord and our God,

All **Have mercy on us.**

One God of life, may the dying and the dead rest in hope. Give us faith that you do not abandon anyone, even to the grave. Preserve us for the great inheritance you give us through the resurrection of your Son from the dead. *Silence.*

Our Lord and our God,

All **Have mercy on us.**

Confession

One Let us confess our sins against God and one another.

All **Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

One Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord

Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

All **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 for ever. Amen.

Blessing of the Meal

This portion of the service follows the shape of the Last Supper, and therefore may sound familiar and much like the Eucharist. However the elements are not consecrated, they are blessed, something all Christians are called to do. In times of pandemic, each person brings their own bread and wine. It is the time of prayer together that is shared, not the food. Begin by having the person who will lead the prayer over the bread to invite each person to make ready the food they brought. When all are ready, the prayers are offered.

One On the last night that Jesus gathered with his friends he took bread and he blessed it and shared it with his friends, for God who loves us, feeds us. As God's people ate manna in the wilderness and were satisfied, so we share this bread with Christ, and with one another. May it be for us bread from heaven, strength for our bodies, balm for our souls, and may it empower us to be Christ's body in this world. *Silence.*

One On the last night that Jesus gathered with his friends, he took wine and he blessed it and shared it with them. God who made us delights in us, and gives us good gifts to delight our tongues, and give joy to our souls. As Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that would not fail, so Jesus offers us the same. May this wine be for us the holy drink of heaven, and may quench the thirst of our souls.

All **Holy and life-giving God, we thank you for the bounty of your Creation laid before us. We ask you to bless it, that it may be to us a holy meal. We give thanks for all those who labored so that it might sustain us. Through it may you give us the strength to be your good stewards; to care and tend your creation, and to**

care especially for our siblings – all the people of this world. We ask these things by the grace of Jesus Christ and in power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The gathered join in eating. As this requires removing mask, care must be taken to ensure proper physical distancing continues. Music may be appropriate.

Music Offering During the Meal

Please feel free to hum along!

Sending Blessing

One person offers a blessing on the group gathered as they are sent into the world to do the work God has given each to do.

All **Amen.**

One Go in peace to love and serve the
 Lord

All **Amen.**

This service includes the work of The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, The Rev. Josephine Robertson, All Saints Episcopal Church, Bellevue, WA and Renew Community House Church.