

SEDER AND COMMUNION SERVICE
UNITY CHRIST CHURCH
APRIL 6, 1993

WELCOME

INVOCATION

INTRODUCTION/EXPLANATION

Tonight, we have gathered for several purposes. The first and foremost is to enhance our spiritual life and awareness as well as our experience of the Easter season. Secondly, we gather to honor the ancestry of our Christian faith..the Jewish tradition that Jesus practiced and taught. A third reason, is to help us reach a deeper understanding of our Jewish brothers and sisters, which will facilitate in the healing of ancient wounds. Another reason, is to look at the historical, universal, and personal.. metaphysical message available to us through which we can live a fuller, richer life as living expressions of God's love. Finally, it is an opportunity to remember Jesus, the Christ, in the way he requested at the Passover feast we have come to call "The Last Supper."

Our celebration this evening will be a combination of listening, learning, and participating.. experiencing a tradition dating back well over three thousand years. Although I have researched this Hebrew tradition quite thoroughly, please be aware that our experience tonight is based on that research and not personal knowledge. I do not believe that that should take anything away from our experience however, as we will be creating our own personal expression, translation, and interpretation of Scripture and the ancient rites.

We will begin with the traditional order of the Seder, also known as "The Lord's Supper," combining explanation and experience. We will not be following the tradition exactly all the way through, as we will be combining it with our Christian tradition, as indicated in the Gospels. The meal we will share is not what is known as "Kasher," or what we call Kosher, which means prepared according to ancient ordinances, but is the same type of food that is now, and for centuries has been eaten in the Holy Land.

Ever since the night preceding the Exodus, Jews, on divine command, have

celebrated a supper before the Lord. All Jews were required to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. This *is* the reason Jesus went to Jerusalem when he was crucified. In time, a special “Order” for the ritual evolved: The Seder. It is an old rite. Later generations have added to it. Jews are permitted to include new interpretations, features, end rites and have done so over the years. But Seder is more than a meal and storytelling. There are a number of adjuncts, symbols that visualize the meaning of the event, and, in particular, are designed to impress it upon the children.

The ‘order’ goes from past, through the present, to the future. Tale and symbols oscillate between a representation of future freedom and a commemoration of past slavery. We are to use the bitter memories of enslavement to promote freedom and build a better future for Israel and mankind.

Our Communion Service will be woven into the Seder, as it most likely occurred when Jesus initiated it. Many Christian churches begin with Communion.. .most allowing no food to be eaten prior, however the Gospels indicate the sacrament was instituted, “While they were eating.” So, now it is time to begin our Seder experience. Relax, end enjoy. I will serve as your guide.

The Haggadah is the guide and reference for the Seder meal. One of the functions of this traditional celebration is to teach the children of their heritage, and how God has worked in their history. It is appropriate that the celebration begins with the blessing of the children. Please refer to your program, and parents please bless your children by placing your hands on your child’s head, reciting the blessing.

SPECIAL MUSIC — EL SHADDAI

BLESSING THE CHILDREN

Each parent places their hands on the head of their child, (one child at a time) and says:

“The Lord bless you and keep you”

“The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.”

“The Lord lift up His face upon you and give you peace.” (Num.6)

SCRIPTURE: EXODUS 1:6-11

This Scripture is a part of the history of the Israelites. It also holds a deeper message for Each one of us. It tells of our spiritual awakening and growth. Israelites, representing illumined thoughts in consciousness which are undergoing spiritual discipline, increase rapidly as we grow in awareness. The “new king who did not know Joseph” is like our Ego state, who does not know our Spiritual identity. The ego finds the new awareness and its accompanying thoughts threatening and tries to subdue and limit them.

The Seder supper, or Lord’s Supper, is a part of the celebration of Fessah, or Passover. This is a seven day celebration commemorating the beginning of the Exodus.. .The freeing of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. The Exodus took place in 1280 BC

Moses, directed by God, went to Pharaoh to demand he let the Israelites go. Although Moses showed many signs of God’s power being with him, Pharaoh refused. After many warnings and plagues, Pharaoh still refused. As a final sign to let the people go, God told Moses he would strike down all the firstborn of Egypt. Moses was to instruct the Israelites to slaughter a lamb, to take some of the blood and put it on the door posts and lintels and to roast the lamb and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They were told to eat is hurriedly, with their clothes and sandals on, standing and with their staff in hand, ready to leave immediately.

The blood on the door posts and lintels would be a sign for God to pass over that house, and not to strike down the firstborn.

Moses was called by God, as each one of us is called by God. This is the part of us that hears the message and confronts the ego... the “king” of our sense consciousness.... to free the awareness to growth and illumination.

In our own lives, each time we harden our hearts as Pharaoh did, we open ourselves to negative experience. Scripture tells us that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart....perhaps that can indicate that sometimes the negative experiences we have are drawn are for growth. Moses kept on trying, and so should we.

Charles Fillmore tells in the Revealing Word, that the lamb refers to the complete transmutation and surrender of the human life to Spirit after it has been purified by fires of regeneration. The blood on the door post and lintel can represent “marking,” or claiming our commitment to Spirit by relinquishing

control of sense consciousness to God's direction.

THE SUPPER BEGINS

The supper begins with the leader, usually the father blessing the occasion, and giving thanks for being free of the burdens of the Egyptians, so in honor of our own spiritual roots in the Old Testament, I bless this occasion, and give thanks for all the great work that God has done in our lives.

Our Jewish brothers and sisters partake of wine in thanksgiving for the Exodus experience. May we acknowledge God's work as well as the metaphysical meaning this has for us, proclaiming our thanks for freedom from the bondage of our limiting error thoughts.

Rehatz—Wash. Washing one's hands before eating or serving food is a requirement of Orthodox Judaism

Karpas—Parsley. Dip and pass parsley.

Yahatz—Divide. Break middle Matzah. "This is the bread of the affliction which the Israelites ate." (Wrap larger piece in napkin and put where designated person can hide it.) "Anyone who is poor, may he come to eat with us." And may we know that all those we love are blessed in this sharing.

THE QUESTIONS:

Traditionally, the youngest child asks four questions to facilitate the telling of the story. Tonight we will have all of our children participate by asking questions. Who will be first?

FIRST QUESTION AND ANSWER.

The Matzah can also remind us of God's ever present substance.

SECOND QUESTION AND ANSWER

Whenever we cling to error thought, we enslave ourselves to it.. .and our lives become bitter.

THIRD QUESTION AND ANSWER

We are all children of a wealthy father. The salty water can represent tears which

season our life with growth experience.

FOURTH QUESTION AND ANSWER

We too, should recline.., to relax, and know that God is in charge.

In the next part of the Seder, I will ask a question, and you will respond with the answer in the program.

(delete if time crunch)

THE SHANKBONE:

Lift the Shankbone.

Question: Why the Pessah?

Answer: God passed over the doors of the Israelites in Egypt, and when he slew the Egyptians.

Lift the Matzah.

Q. Why the Matzah?

A. Because the dough of our Israelites could not rise, owing to the suddenness of their liberation.

Lift the Maror.

Q. Why the Maror?

A. Because the Egyptians made the Israelites life bitter.

THE ROASTED EGG: Reminds us of free will sacrifices offered by the pilgrims in Jerusalem. It also reminds us of new life, and spring which will soon be here.
(deletion would stop here.)

THE WINE: Symbolizes the gifts that God has measured out. Traditionally, four cups of wine are to be consumed. We will, however, raise our glasses and drink four times as indicated.

It is now time to raise our cup for the first time, and to read together the first wine blessing.

WINE BLESSING (1) “Therefore we must thank God in every way for all the miracles——let us hear the Hallel.”

Ps. 113 and 114

Repeat blessing and drink again.

The celebration now focuses on the present. The first part of this section involves the washing of the hands. At this time, I would like to digress.. .to look forward.. .to the Passover supper Jesus shared with the disciples.

JOHN 13:3—8 (And during supper...)
:12—15

Jesus words instruct us to serve each other. He makes it clear that none is “Superior,” that each of us is to serve the other. Metaphysically, the feet represent understanding. The Christ cleanses.. .clears and purifies our understanding. As each one of us serves the other, instead of trying to control each other, our understanding of others is cleansed and the Christ within is clearly seen.

We will now have an opportunity to serve each other, not by cleansing feet literally, but symbolically by washing each other’s hands. You have each been given two paper towels. I will begin by washing the hands of the person on my left, and then drying them. I will then pass the bowl to that person who will wash the hands of the person on their left, likewise around the room. Both before and after you have had your turn, spend the time waiting for the others to finish by meditating on ways you can serve others.

DISTRIBUTION OF SEDER FOOD

Motzi—Matzah / Bless and distribute

Maror——Bitter herbs, dipped in Haroset, symbol of the mortar the Israelites had to make.

Korekh——Putting together a sandwich. “Hillel held that the word of the Torah instructed the Israelites to eat the lamb and the bitter herbs.