



Sharing the Feast of Life

The Open Table

A eucharistic meal

As we arrive, we stand or sit around the edge of the empty worship space, as for Communion. This sheet is all you need.

Welcome

The worship leader welcomes everyone.

We sing:

♪ **Come to us, come to us,
Living Lord, Living Lord,
teach us how to love you:
teach us how to love you.**

Short introduction to the service

Preparation

Forgiveness

We acknowledge the pain and hurt of our world, and our part in that pain, and we seek to know God's forgiveness and healing:

We have wounded your love:

O God, forgive and heal us.

We stumble in the darkness:

Light of the world, transfigure us.

We forget that we are your home:

Spirit of God, dwell in us.

Sisters and brothers, hear the word of the Lord:

we are forgiven; Christ sets us free –

let us journey on with hope.

Let us forgive and love ourselves:

Let us forgive and love others.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

♪ **Taizé chant**

We sing:

**Bless the Lord, my soul,
and bless God's holy name.**

**Bless the Lord, my soul,
who leads me into life.**

... during which we go into the café, washing our hands in the bowls of water in the corridor as a sign of cleansing and to be ready to prepare the food.

We hope most people will want to help with the food preparation, especially making the dough for soda bread.

However, if you wish you can go to the chapel to reflect quietly, read or listen to the material provided.

Preparing the dough

We say together:

**The bread of life, when broken,
fills the kitchens of the world
with your presence, O God.**

**Fill us with the true bread, your Son,
that we may never hunger again. Amen.**

Please go to the dough preparation stations and follow the instructions provided. If supervised, kids can take part in this. If there is not enough room for everyone to make the dough, please stand and witness the work mindfully. When the dough is ready, put it in the ovens to bake. At this point any who wish can join the others in the chapel.

Preparing the vegetable stew

Now please peel the vegetables and chop them into cubes (about 1 cm, so they don't take too long to cook). Put them into the bowls provided. Anyone who prefers (including kids) can instead make place mats and table decorations – materials provided.

Preparing the tables

We work together to take the tables through to the worship space and follow guidance to lay them out to form a hilltop shape (see diagram on last page).

We then place the chairs around the large table that has been created, and lay enough places for everyone – place mats, large plates, cutlery, glasses.


Also on the table we put table decorations, water jugs, salt and pepper, kitchen rolls for napkins, spreadable butter and vegan spread, bowls of fruit, all distributed evenly. A large candle is placed in the centre of the table.

Gathering

When the table is ready, we stand again around the edge of the worship space; those who need to sit can sit on a sofa or borrow a chair from the table.

The Gospel

We sing:

 **Alleluia! Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.
Alleluia! Open our hearts to your Word.**

The reader reads Luke 14:12–24, the parable of the Great Feast. Janet then speaks briefly about it.

Invitation and prayers


The president lights the large candle and says:

The table is now ready,
It is the table of company with Jesus
and all who love him.
It is the table of sharing with the poor of the world,
with whom Jesus identified himself.
It is the table of communion with the earth
in which God became human to live and suffer with us.
So come to this table, whoever you are,
for it is Jesus who invites us to meet him here. **Amen.**

The president invites us to come forward one by one, take a tea-light from the tray and light it from the large candle, offer a prayer either silently or out loud, and then sit at the table, putting the tea-light in a safe position.

The Communion Meal

We sing:

 **Everything is yours, Lord,
everything comes from you:
all we have we offer to you.
Accept our love, Lord, we pray;
receive our gifts, Lord, today.**

... during which the bread (including gluten-free bread), stew, jugs of grape juice are brought in and placed before the president.

Thanksgiving Prayer

May God be with you.

And also with you.

Open up your hearts.

We open them to God.

Let us give thanks to the God of all.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The minister offers our thanks for all God's blessings, including the fruits of the earth and this our 'daily bread'. Then he tells the familiar heart of the story, and we join in to say Jesus' words together:

On the night when Jesus was betrayed,

at supper with his friends

he took bread, and gave you thanks;

he broke it and gave it to them, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;

do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,

he gave you thanks, and said:

Drink this, all of you;

this is my blood of the new covenant,

which is shed for you and for many

for the forgiveness of sins;

do this in remembrance of me.

Spirit of God, come afresh on us

and on these gifts of bread and wine

that they may make us one body in Christ.

Blessing and honour and glory and power

be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking the bread

This bread we break

is a sharing in the body of Christ.

We who are many are one body,

for we all share the one bread.

Taizé chant

We sing:

Eat this bread, drink this cup

Come to him and never be hungry.

Eat this bread, drink this cup,

Trust in him and you will not thirst.

The meal

The president invites everyone to enjoy the meal, and we eat and talk. There may be a quiet period during which we listen to a reading or short talk while we eat, as monks do in some traditions.

When we have finished eating, we say the Lord's Prayer together as our prayer after Communion:

The Lord's Prayer

O God in heaven,

Mother and Father of us all,

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.

Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen.

Clearing and washing up

If you have to go at this point, feel free to do so, but please stay if you can.

Quietly and as part of our worship, we take the plates, bowls etc into the café. Any usable leftover food is put in the fridge or freezer or may be taken home. Some of us wash up and dry, while others stay in the worship space and put the chairs on their racks, take the tables back into the café, clear up any rubbish, and vacuum up if necessary.

Ending

When all (or most) of the tidying up is done, we gather back in the church for the end of the service (no notices!).

The president may thank everyone for trying something different.

Blessing

We say together:

**The blessing of the Creator be ours,
The blessing of the Christ be ours,
The blessing of the Spirit be ours,
The blessing of the Three be pouring for us:
Wildly and generously, hour by hour,
More and more, and for ever. Amen.**

We sing:

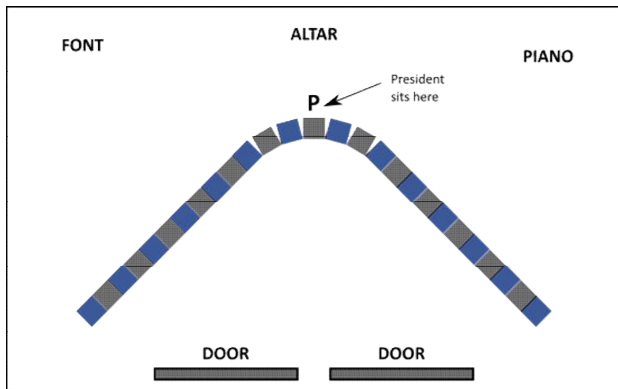
🎵 **Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho:
Your will be done on earth, O Lord.**

Departure

We say the Grace together:

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all. Amen.**

How to lay the tables out in the worship space (very approximate!)



Colour coding

Dark red – president

Blue – worship leader

Green – cantor

Purple – someone else