



**COME TO THE TABLE:
PRAYERS FROM THE
COMMUNION TABLE**

Lent 2019: Come to the Table

Our theme for Lent this year is “Come to the Table”. Inside this booklet, you will discover a collection of prayers from some of our elders, spiritual leaders of our congregation, past and present, as they have lifted up the bread and the cup during our celebration of holy communion each Sunday morning. For many of us at University Christian Church, this moment in worship is the most important part of our work together. We may love music, prayers, offering, and sermons, but it is at the table where we renew our walk with Jesus.

As pastor, I have the privilege to break the bread and lift up the cup each Sunday morning, sharing Jesus’ words that he spoke to his disciples during a final supper as the cross loomed over his life.

The Gospel of Matthew 26:26-28 reports, “While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”

Between each phrase, an elder on each side of me lifts up their words in celebration of each element. Every Sunday my heart soars as I listen to their creativity, their spirituality, their love for their church, their heavy hearts for the injustice and confusion of our world, and their reflection of this sacred mystery. So often, their prayers capture the core of my sermon with simplicity and poetic joy.

It is so important in our church that the table is a place of welcome for all, and our elders, through prayers like these and their love, remind our church that the table does not

belong solely to clergy, experts with degrees, or titans of faith. The table belongs to ordinary people who use ordinary words to point us to the living Christ. I remain so thankful to have such co-pastors and co-laborers in this work together.

At University Christian Church (and your church too, I am sure), we share this feast with reverence, for it is holy. Something divine happens to these ordinary elements. We partake recognizing that God becomes accessible to us. To each of us. No matter our stories, our backgrounds, our pain, our questions, or the way our society pulls us apart. Somehow, this ordinary and extraordinary act draws us back into God's care.

During this Lent season or at any time in your life of faith, use these prayers to enrich how you speak to God and how you approach the table. Know that the invitation to "come to the table" is an offer from Jesus, who gathers up the lost and broken-hearted and places them at the front of the line. Know that the invitation is also a welcome from imperfect human beings, who through their fragile words seek to remind all of us that God needs fragile people like us to share a touch of wholeness in our broken world.

May the Spirit guide us as we journey in preparation to the cross and Easter morning.

Rev. Nathan Hill, Senior Minister

University Christian Church

www.uccmd.org

Ash Wednesday, March 6

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works.

If you see one who is poor, take pity on them.

If you see a friend being honored, do not envy them.

Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice.

Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.

Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.

Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.

Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.

For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our siblings?

May the Redeeming One who came to the world to save sinners, strengthen us to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us and save us.

Amen.

- Adapted from a prayer by John Chrysostom (347-407)

Thursday, March 7

Dear Lord,

The crucifixion and resurrection of your son Jesus show us there are more than the earthly bonds we're currently held to. But it is the story of his short life that provides the key, which unlocks the greatest treasures of life here and now; sharing love, giving hope, living in peace and having the courage to walk in faith on the waters of a troubled world. Thousands of years gone by, and we still know not what we do, to each other and your world. Wake us up. Stir our compassion; move us to service and action, for lives of fulfillment and true satisfaction.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

- Jesse Brande

Friday, March 8

Creator God:

We raise this loaf, this symbol of your Son's broken body that was given for the sins of the world. We praise and thank You for Your care and love.

We remain grateful for Your grace, forgiveness, and compassion as we work to serve You by serving and loving others. We ask for your blessings and guidance as we go out into the world where we can help and care for your children. Let this bread strengthen our Spirit so that we can do Your will in Your name.

In the blessed name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

- Janise Allyn-Smith

Dear God,

Thank you Lord for this cup which reminds us of your commandment to love one another. Please give us the courage to speak and act with love for all people.

In Jesus' name we thank you. Amen.

- Dottie Colding

Saturday, March 9

Dear God,

Jesus died for us all on the cross. The enemy drove nails in his feet and in his hands. They forcefully placed a crown of thorns on his head. He begged God to forgive them, because they knew not what they were doing. Even in his suffering and torment, He begged God's mercy on his tormentors. In his pain, he expressed his love for mankind.

Today, we are reminded of the blood that Jesus shed so that we can live holy lives, and that we might ultimately be reunited with our Heavenly Father.

This cup holds a symbol of the blood that Christ has shed for each of us. As we drink this wine, please let us be mindful of the love and sacrifice that was made for us.

I pray that we will let this communion be the turning point in our lives as Christians as we give thanks and praise to God!

- Bessie Colding

Sunday, March 10

Can you imagine...your hearing so great that you can hear every voice individually; you can hear each high note and low note in a register never before experienced; you can hear the passion in a person asking to become a chef or a musician or a teacher; you can hear

the ache in a mother's "Sure, come by another day when you have a moment"; you can hear the loneliness in a friend's silence...

Can you imagine...your vision so clear that you can see colors of various shades and hues never witnessed before; you can see your life's path vividly and all the detours you took that looked more interesting; you can see your God-given gifts laid out before you with so many unopened or unused; you see faces without covers that show every emotion clearly, honestly, unapologetically...

Can you imagine...your hands lingering on the unimaginable softness and strength of spirit; you feel every effort we are called to be; you reach out to everyone every time with hands of love and giving; you give to God the things that are God...

Can you imagine...knowing that you are loved unconditionally; you know what you were born to do and know where you fell short; knowing that God is, was and always will be...

- Linda Bock

Monday, March 11

Dear Lord,

When the demands of our daily lives overwhelm us and stress creeps in, you are our peaceful refuge. When we search for understanding of a world often filled with hate and violence, remind us, that compassion and love are doomsday weapons in the war against such evils. When sadness and despair darken the days of those among us, move us, to cast your light upon them. And when youth is a distant memory and our mirrors tell us lies, remind us, this meal we share is an invitation to a new beginning and a life everlasting by your side.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

- Jesse Brande

Tuesday, March 12

Dear God,

To someone who has given us those things which we need to sustain life: the sun to warm us, food to feed our bodies, water to quench our thirst, the church to feed our spirit and an inquisitive and inventive mind; we somehow feel that we have fallen short of the mark in showing our gratitude to You. Especially, when You have given us the greatest gift of all: your Son, Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed on the cross so that we may live. As we partake of this cup, let us remember its meaning and encourage us to extend a hand to others, to help those who are in need and respect those whose ideas may differ from ours. Let us go forth with a renewed faith in mankind.

Amen

- Virginia Nesmith

Wednesday, March 13

Lord, Our Father,

As we pass this bread to one another remind us that the forgiveness of sin and everlasting life it represents came at the ultimate price, your son's life. No greater sacrifice, no greater gift. Help us grow in faith so that we can pass forgiveness and compassions on to others in times that test us. Purge the selfishness from our souls and nurture the Good Samaritan within us. Open our eyes so that we might see the opportunities before us to serve you. Open our ears so that we might hear your call. Open our mouths so that we

might speak your words. And open our hearts to others so they may know we are Christians by our love, by our love, yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

- Jesse Brande

Thursday, March 14

Most Gracious God,

When we gather at this table we feel the loving presence of Christ. Help us to put aside the things that weigh heavy on our hearts and minds. Surround us with your forgiveness for we know we are imperfect people. Bless this cup, give us the spiritual food we need for the coming week and uniting our hearts in faith and love.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

- Anna-Mae Kobbe

Friday, March 15

Let us pray:

Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is represented by this bread, the bread of life. Jesus, like bread, was "proofed" – taking on a human form, God incarnate; He was "punched down" denied time and time again; and Jesus was "broken" crucified, only to rise again so that we might have salvation.

We knead this bread to make it rise and to give it shape. We need our Lord Jesus' living, loving example to shape our lives and to help us rise above our humanness and to take on the glory of the Lord. May this bread of life, God's gift to all, strengthen us on our

journey to LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS, AND WITH ALL OUR SOULS, AND WITH ALL OUR MINDS and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen

- Linda Bock

Saturday, March 16

God, Our Father,

Today, we celebrate our differences as we are all brought to the same table, the table you've set for us. United by one faith, help us to understand the things that to often divide us pale in comparison to the promise that brings us all to this place... our eternal Spring. That we might see one another through this cup of sacrifice and salvation, in your brighter light. That we might seek to listen and learn from one another. For knowledge and understanding are fuel for compassion and caring. Because each day we walk in your world, you shine on us all that's fair; in the rustling grass we can hear you pass; you speak to us everywhere.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Jesse Brande

Sunday, March 17

I'm sure you have heard of the five-second rule; you drop something on the floor (usually food), pick it up, and determine that it couldn't have acquired many germs because the five-second rule was in effect.

On one of the early-service Sundays, I was the Elder serving communion with Rev. Nathan. On that Sunday, communion was served by intinction. Everyone had been served

and we began to serve each other. The minute Nathan pulled a piece of bread from the large loaf, the bread fell on the floor. I quickly picked up the bread, put it back on the plate, and we served each other. A bit later, I said to Nathan, “Is there a five-second rule in church?”

If any of you were in church that morning and saw what happened, you were very kind. Not a one of you said anything to me. I assume your head was bowed praying, and you missed the whole thing. I’ve always had a fear of dropping the tray with communion cups but never of having bread fly off the plate.

As I’ve reflected on what happened, the five-second rule seems like a metaphor for our relationship with God. When we do something that disappoints God, I can imagine God acknowledging our failings with a “Not again!” or “When will she learn?” Because of the promise of forgiveness and God’s unconditional love, I’m sure it takes no longer than five seconds for God to smile and let us pick up the bread and eat of the Holy feast.

Amen.

- Anna-Mae Kobbe

Monday, March 18

Dear Lord,

We confess we are a self-righteous people often undeserving of your love, We give into our ego, so we push and we shove.

We all too often use our humanness as an excuse for our sinful ways, We have much to regret and ask once again for your forgiving stays.

And even as we ask your forgiveness we already know it’s given for a love everlasting your son was risen.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

- Jesse Brande

Tuesday, March 19

Creator God,

In lifting this cup of Remembrance and Promise this morning, we are lifting high the cross of Christ and proclaiming Your great love. We partake with gratitude, all the gifts that are ours in Christ crucified. Fill us now with the power of Your spirit and help us to keep our minds and hearts focused on You. Thank You for calling us to be Yours.

Amen

- Janise Allyn-Smith

Wednesday, March 20

Dear Heavenly Father,

We are thankful for your gift of Jesus offering his body represented by this bread so that we may know and understand your will and to follow him in carrying out your will during our lifetime. May this bread strengthens us and give us the courage to share the teachings of Jesus who taught us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength and to love our neighbor as yourself. Help us to recognize that everyone is a child of God and a neighbor to one another.

May sharing in the bread of life help us to speak up, act on and have the courage to support love, kindness and peace within ourselves, within our community, among our

families, and throughout the world. We thank you for Jesus, who through his death and resurrection, opened the way for us to enter into eternal life.

Amen

- Linda Bock

Thursday, March 21

Dear Lord,

You, through your son Jesus, have shown us once again that we need to challenge ourselves and test the waters of change, uncertain what we might find, but knowing you will be watching over us. Strengthen our spirits to be good neighbors, good Samaritans, at all levels portrayed in your teaching. From our interpersonal relationships to the world at large, help us to walk faithfully and boldly along the one road, which is often the road most difficult to navigate, yet always leads to you. With faith, hope, peace and love, fill us up and send us out.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

- Jesse Brande

Friday, March 22

Our Father Creator,

We come to this table humbly asking for your forgiveness, with a grateful heart. We thank you for the gift of your Son.

This bread represents your Son's body that was broken for us; His body that endured such torture and pain, only to be crucified and die. We know the sacrifice He made, so that we may live free. Free from the sin that drags us down; free from the fear that holds us

back, free from the hate that breaks our hearts; free from the pride that pushes others away; free from the guilt that erodes our spirit.

You rose from that death, Jesus, to live again...to live in our hearts, to be a companion, guide, inspiration, and Lord. We feel your presence with us today, Jesus, and are humbled by it.

It is through your life in us that we find the strength to trust in you; to live another day; to walk in faith; to step out of our comfort zone to do your work; to love a little more; to hate a little less.

Oh dear Lord, change our hearts. Give us new life! Bring us home!

We thank you, we love you, we trust you, and we worship you – Our blessed Lord Jesus. Amen.

- Hanford Smith

Saturday, March 23

Dear God,

We come to the table again this morning.

We lift up so many Thanksgiving prayers in this week. We are grateful for our families, friends, our neighbors, our communities, our church, our nation, the diversity we share together make our lives so beautiful. Most of all, God, we are so thankful for Jesus! this table reminds us that Jesus, you prepare this table for us, you welcome us and you broke the bread for us, and feed us. Jesus, you renew our lives every time we share this special meal with you. You are the true gift. You are our Thanksgiving.

You hear our prayers, you feel our heavy hearts, you comfort our wounded heart. God, thank you for your steadfast love for us. Help us to remember your love through breaking this bread together. In Christ's name we pray. Amen

- Yunkyong Hill

Sunday, March 24

Dear Heavenly Father,

We gather at your table, remembering your gift of love in Jesus Christ so many, many years ago. With great sadness, we also remember His broken body as He hung on the cross. As we break bread together, let us remember the sacrifice that You made for us.

Empower us with your spirit as we eat this bread and may it encourage us, especially at this time, to reach out and share bread with those who are not as fortunate.

In His name we pray. Amen

- Virginia Nesmith

Monday, March 25

Heavenly Father,

You have called us to be open and welcoming to all as we gather together to share in the cup of salvation. May this reminder help us to reach out and bring others to know Christ who did not come into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. May this cup help us to see the God in all of us, to be compassionate and nonjudgmental and to love one another as you love us unconditionally and to open our hearts to showing the Christ in us and to bring out the Christ in all your children.

Amen

- Linda Bock

Tuesday, March 26

Dear God,

We come to the table again this morning. We lift up so many Thanksgiving prayers in this week. We are grateful for our families, friends, our neighbors, our communities, our church, our nation, the diversity we share together make our lives so beautiful. Most of all, God, we are so thankful for Jesus! This table reminds us that Jesus, you prepare this table for us, you welcome us and you broke the bread for us, and feed us. Jesus, you renew our lives every time we share this special meal with you. You are the true gift. You are our Thanksgiving.

You hear our prayers, you feel our heavy hearts, you comfort our wounded heart. God, thank you for your steadfast love for us. Help us to remember your love through breaking this bread together.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen

- Yunkyong Hill

Wednesday, March 27

Bless now, O God, this cup before us. May we receive it from the hand of the Christ who fills it. As we drink, may we remember the love poured out for the forgiveness of sins, and may be changed by the gospel it carries. Purge us of every evil thing, every grudge we carry, every selfish thought we hold. Open our eyes that we may love all people, and set

our hearts toward them, even as you have turned toward us with mercy and compassion,
in Jesus Christ, Amen

Janise Allyn-Smith

Thursday, March 28

God,

As we return to your table again today, lift us up to higher expectations of ourselves as Jesus did with his disciples. He constantly challenged them to look beyond the conventional and often cruel normalcies of his time to a better more just life for all humankind. It is no different today. We must seek to understand each other more clearly, especially those that appear to be different for we might find that we are actually more alike.

Free us from our misguided generalizations and judgments of our fellow man so that we might walk a mile in their shoes. Understanding them is the first step to truly understanding you. Through this bread of salvation may our eyes be open to see the world and its people in your way, and may we joyously follow your path of compassion and true discipleship together.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

- Jesse Brande

Friday, March 29

Dear God,

Thank you for calling each one of us with our own names,

Thank you for inviting us at this table in this morning,

Thank you for feeding us when we are hungry and tired,

Thank you for the cup of drink when we are thirsty and lonely,

Thank you for the helping hands, when we are in trouble,

Thank you for remembering us when we are in pain,

Thank you for holding us together as a church family, so we can share our lives together.

Thank you God that we are truly grateful to be at this table. This cup of salvation reminds us of your “overflowing” love for us.

Thank you for loving us, so we can love others, too.

We pray in the name of Christ, who showed us how to love. Amen.

- Yunkyong Hill

Saturday, March 30

Heavenly Father,

We are grateful for this cup that represents your son, Jesus’ sacrifice offering his life so that we may have the gates of heaven open to all. What an amazing eternal life-giving gift. Please help us not to take this cup for granted. Please forgive us our sins so that, as unworthy as we are, we are welcomed into heaven. And whenever we see the splinter in another’s eye, help us to take a hard look at our own and see the log that you are more than willing to remove so that our vision is clearly on your love for all and in helping us also love one another.

Thank you again for the cup of salvation and the hope of heaven. Amen!

- Linda Bock

Sunday, March 31

Dear God,

We bring our sins, our regrets, and our grief but also our hopes and dreams of a fresh start, a new path, and the chance to follow your call to walk closer with you.

Bless these emblems that represent the broken body and shed blood of your son. May all who eat and drink at this table be blessed and transformed according to your will.

We ask all this in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen.

- Anna-Mae Kobbe

Dear God,

Thank you, Dear Lord, for bringing us together. As we share this bread, we thank you for your love and grace. Please give us strength and courage to stay above the fray of life's temptations and challenges. In the blessed name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

- Dottie Colding

Monday, April 1

Gracious God,

In the harshness of humanity that often offers up unfairness and inequality in this world, you are the great equalizer. Your promise of life everlasting is for all who come to this table with faith, regardless from whence they came. There is no greater love than what you offer and no greater gift. But while we live out our Christian lives, it is our mission to see, as you see, the opportunities to provide; love, faith, hope and peace, every day, and in every way.

The teachings of your son are the blueprint for this mission and our hearts, heads and hands are our tools.

May we use them more effectively in your work.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

- Jesse Brande

Tuesday, April 2

Heavenly Father,

We praise you today for the life of your son Jesus Christ. Please forgive us for our sins, cleanse our hearts and minds of evil thoughts, and renew our spirit. As bread was broken and scattered over the mountains and brought together again, let pieces of this bread that is scattered throughout the congregation, bring us together as one; to glorify your name, to uplift one another and to behave in the spirit that is pleasing to you.

In Your name we pray. Amen

- Virginia Nesmith

Wednesday, April 3

Dear Lord,

You brought your son into this world as a baby in a manger and he left this world a common man crucified at the hands of fear and hate. But he rose from the dead proving love and faith survive and hate dies in the arms of compassion. In these often to self indulgent times strengthen our spirits to reach out and be good neighbors, good Samaritans, at all levels. From our interpersonal relationships to the world at large, help us to walk faithfully and boldly along the one road, which is often the road most difficult to

navigate, yet always leads to you. May we nurture faith, breed hope, live in peace and act in love?

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

- Jesse Brande

Thursday, April 4

Dear God,

We come together today with grateful hearts to give you thanks. Thanks to you for your unconditional love. Thanks to you for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, whom you sacrificed on the cross to save us from our sins.

This bread symbolizes the body of Christ. As we partake of this bread, may we be forever mindful of the resurrected Christ who dwells with you, and within us. Christ, who is preparing a place for each of us with you!

Lord, let us never lose sight of the magnificence of your Son, Jesus Christ!

In His name we pray. Amen.

- Bessie Colding

Friday, April 5

Gracious Lord,

Jesus your son lived not as a king, but as a common man just like one of us. A man with a message of hope; the breeding ground of better lives for all men, faith; the path that leads us to serve you, by serving others, and peace; the fulfillment of a life lived in the practice of love for one another. He left this world from the cross with that message and a call to action. To rise up against injustice and hate, shielded in the armor of love and

compassion. He knew that evil is a coward, that when tested by his message of hope, faith, and love, will fail. But it is up to us to live bravely that which this common man has taught us.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

- Jesse Brande

Saturday, April 6

Great and Gracious God,

Thank you for the wonder of your world. For the gifts of time, creativity, and energy that encourage us in so many different ways. We thank you for insight and courage to try new things; for giving us hope and new beginnings. Marvelous is the work you do in us. Marvelous is the work you call us to do.

The bread that sustains our life is Christ. Let us share this meal as it feeds our souls.

Amen.

- Janise Allyn-Smith

Sunday, April 7

Lord,

We gather around your table today as a community made up of a rainbow of colors and cultures, and we are very grateful that is our weekly experience at worship. While this is "the air we breathe" we know that most Christians around our nation and world are worshipping with people who look just like them and share a common race and culture.

Help us never take our diversity for granted but celebrate it as God's gift. Yet also help us remember that we are not devoid of any vestige of racial prejudice but carry old tapes

deep in our psyches. Some of us have been deeply wounded by racism—and some of us are the conscious or unconscious beneficiaries of white privilege.

Whatever our journeys help us keep our focus on you, Lord and help us work hard to be an anti-racist, pro reconciling church. Unite us around this sacred table and keep us growing in our understanding of and love for one another. Amen.

- Marshall Dunn

Monday, April 8

Gracious Lord,

We confess our lives are easily lead astray by the distractions of a world that tells us we're not complete unless we posses more, which often leads us to give less. Strip away the layers of doubt that cloud our faith and remove the barriers we place to serving your will for us. Turn inward the judgments we place on others to examine our own lives and faith.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

- Jesse Brande

Tuesday, April 9

Dear Lord,

We are grateful and humble at this table. You gave us life, you called us, you love us, you sustain us, even when we are away from you. Thank you God for sharing this holy table of feast with us. This special table reminds us your never-ending steadfast love in our lives.

Thank you God for the bread we are about to take. Bless this bread that reminds us that Jesus life was not done on the cross. We have to continue to live his life as we take this bread. God, give us compassion, and wisdom so that we can live like Jesus.

As we share this bread, help us to share our lives with the hungry and the weak. Help us to feed our neighbors as you feed us when we are hungry.

Thank you Jesus for your presence near us, among us, with us, and in us.

In the name of your son Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

- Yunkyong Hill

Wednesday, April 10

Dear Lord,

Thousands of years after your son's crucifixion we still come to this table to celebrate his life, his teachings and the promise he brought of life everlasting. That the compassionate love he shared with all men, is also within us, meant to be shared with those less fortunate than ourselves. For when we lift others, we are lifted as well. And if we follow his example, at the end of our days the measure of our lives will not be what we have, but what we have given, the things we've learned and the things we've taught, the love we've spread and the lives we've touched.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

- Jesse Brande

Thursday, April 11

Loving God,

We accept our invitation to gather at this table as individuals and as a collective body of believers who follow Christ. We know this table is unique; it is set with love, forgiveness, new beginnings, grace, second chances, salvation, and peace. Help us to appreciate these blessings so that our lives may be a testament of our relationship with you. As we eat this loaf, we acknowledge our love for your son, Jesus.

Amen.

- Anna-Mae Kobbe

Friday, April 12

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for loving us so much that you sacrificed your son and had his blood spilled out for our salvation. Jesus accepted the cup to show us how we can accept the cup offered to us.

Some cups are filled with tears – may they be tears of joy more than sorrow; and if sorrow may we be aware of the tears of all your children not just our own and to bring hope to those in need.

Some cups have water – may it be clean and refreshing and help all of us whose lips are parched and whose bodies are dehydrated on our walk of life.

Some cups carry milk – may it nourish us and strengthen us to to be worthy enough to be called Children of God.

We have cups of air – may it fill our lungs and give us a strong voice to speak out for justice and righteousness and to let others know of our love for you with our very being, and to love one another as you love us.

May this cup before us, filled with Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, bring us the salvation we have been promised by his death and resurrection.

We pray all this in your name. Amen

- Linda Bock

Saturday, April 13

My Lord,

I gather round your table to share bread and wine and the message this meal brings. That I am not one, but all who believe. That living in faith and action in Jesus name is my calling; stewardship to my fellow man is my mission; the care a keeping of your world is my duty; forgiveness is both divine and mine to give and be given; and the good fortunes you've bestowed on me are meant to be shared. And when my time on this earth is done, my life with you in heaven will have just begun.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen

- Jesse Brande

Palm Sunday, April 14

Almighty God,

We praise You for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. On this day Jesus entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of

palm along his way. Help us remember the palm branches as signs of his victory, to hail him as our king, and to follow him in the way that leads to eternal life.

Amen

- Janise Allyn-Smith

Monday, April 15

Dear God,

Throughout our lives and even during our day to day moments, we've seen before us tables with plates and cups filled with so many things; sometimes they overflow and sometimes we have to look very closely to see just exactly what there is before us. Sometimes our plates are filled with unpalatable offerings and our cups filled with tears. And sometimes, as in this moment, our plate holds the bread of life and the cup – the hope of salvation.

We lift up the too many people, us included, who don't know all about you; or who don't understand the precious gift offered up by your son, Jesus; or who don't/won't share the good news among family, friends and within their communities and all that your communion table offers by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

May we try to take time out throughout our day to recognize how blessed we are to be able to share at this table of love all that was offered us. May we appreciate the little we do have or the overabundance there is, as it makes us better servants in sharing and caring for one another.

We are thankful for your amazing grace that fills our being to carry out the work you have called us to do. Amen

- Linda Bock

Tuesday, April 16

Dear God,

Help us to find in this simple loaf those things which will draw us closer to you. At this table may we feel the presence of Christ's love and may we forget for the time being all those things which would divert our attention from you. Surround us with your loving care as we retreat from the challenges of our lives. Give us the spiritual food which we need for the coming week and unite our hearts in faith and praise.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

- Anna-Mae Kobbe

Wednesday, April 17

Thank you for the blessing this bread and this cup represents, and for the lessons learned from your son's life and teachings. He asked the world and people of his time to change what they had believed for hundreds of years, to embrace him as the messiah that god had sent. Not a king, but a common man, just like one of us. A man with a message of hope, faith, peace, love and life everlasting for all who believe. Help us to embrace his teachings and test the waters of change in today's world. To leave the safety of our boats and walk without the fear and doubt that weighs us down.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

- Jesse Brande

Maundy Thursday, April 18

Dear father of all – sinner and saint,

We come before you unworthy of your unconditional and never-ending love. We are eternally grateful for you, as our guide, mentor, healer, protector, our bridge over troubled waters; and love incarnate.

Thank you for being there for us in good times and bad, through hardships and heartaches, and even for those times when we don't return love through our words or by our actions towards all your children.

Forgive us for the far too many times we don't listen to or pay attention to what you are calling us to be and do. Although we are undeserving of your love, we know you and your love is there for each of us.

Please strengthen our faith. Please help us to listen FOR your voice and TO your voice in our daily lives; and to tune out the noise and distractions that keep us unaware of your presence in our everyday lives. May we your offering of love for the hope of heaven, to the glory of your name Jesus! Amen

- Linda Bock

Good Friday, April 19

Our Father Creator,

We thank you for your presence at this table. It is only through your Grace and the sacrifice of your son, Jesus that we are worthy to be here. It is this cup and the new covenant that it represents, that brings us here.

We are here because we know that we can't do it without you, without your essence, your spirit in our heart.

How do we not hate, when it is so easy to hate; how do we not lash out when it is so easy to lose control; how do we not seek peace when it is so easy to fight? It is only your blessed Holy Spirit that can begin to heal us. Pour out that Spirit upon us as we partake of this cup, so we can go into the world and love instead of hate; hold our tongue instead of lashing out; and bring peace where there is none.

Thank you, Jesus, for the comfort in knowing that you are there for us - we only need ask, and you will be there ... come to us now, Jesus, come! Amen!

- Hanford Smith

Holy Saturday, April 20

“What is happening? Today there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence, and a great stillness, a great silence because the Creator sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still, because God slept in the flesh and raised up those who were sleeping from the ages. God has died in the flesh, and the underworld has trembled.

Truly God goes to seek out our first parent like a lost sheep - visiting those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free the prisoner Adam and his prisoner Eve from their pains, he who is God, and Adam's son.

I ORDER YOU, O SLEEPER, to awake!

I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell.

Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead.

Rise up, work of my hands, you were created in my image.

Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you.

Together we form only one person and we cannot be separated!”

- Adapted from an ancient liturgy for Holy Saturday, http://www.vatican.va/spirit/documents/spirit_20010414_omelia-sabato-santo_en.html

Easter Sunday, April 21

In the midst of violent storms, deep sadness, and seeming defeat,

Christ is risen!

Despite shattered dreams, broken promises, and painful mistakes,

Christ is risen!

Out of our lowest moments, our ravaged earth, and our deep need,

Christ is risen!

Against the forces of darkness, greed, and injustice,

Christ is risen!

Hallelujah! Praise to the Holy Trinity,

Creator, Son, and Spirit, Redeemer of All.

Christ is risen!

- Rev. Nathan Hill, 2012

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