



Seder Meal
Thursday - March 28, 2024
6:30 p.m.

C.C. Jones Building, 309 Holleman St., Apex

Sunday Christian Education Hour: 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Connection Card and Prayer Request

To our guests, if you would like to share your contact information you may use this QR code or pick-up a Connection Card / Prayer Card and place it in the offering plate. We are eager to walk with you as we encounter God who comes to us in baptism, at the Lord's Supper and through the Word.



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The Story of Passover

Passover is the oldest and most important of Jewish religious festivals, commemorating God's deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and his creation of the Israelite people. In its earliest forms it marked the beginning of the Jewish religious year (Ex 12:1; because of changes in calendars, later Judaism observed the beginning of the year in the Fall with *Yom Kippur* and *Rosh Hashana*). It is based on the rituals of ancient Israel preserved primarily in Exodus 12-14 in which Israelites celebrated their deliverance by God from slavery in Egypt. The term Passover refers to the tenth and final plague God brought upon the Egyptians to persuade Pharaoh to let the people go, the death of all the firstborn of Egypt. In obedience to God's instructions, those who believed placed the blood of a lamb on the door posts of their homes, so that God would "pass over" those homes. The festival actually celebrates the entire sequence of events that led to the Israelites' freedom from slavery. While thoroughly based in those historical events, the celebration encompasses much more as it becomes a vehicle to celebrate the very nature of God and His gracious work in the world. It is in this larger dimension that Jesus adopted the Passover service as a sacramental remembrance of God's new work of deliverance in the Christ, and allows Christians to celebrate this ancient festival.

Purpose

The Passover meal is known as the **Seder**, which means "order," because the meal and service are done in a prescribed sequence. This sequence is presented in the **Haggadah** ("telling"), which outlines the steps of the meal as well as the readings and songs for the participants. While there can be a great deal of variety in how the service is conducted, and so should not be seen as rigidly structured, the basic elements and order have remained unchanged for centuries

This blend of tradition and innovation conforms to the purpose of the celebration: to tell the story of God's actions in history in a way that brings it out of the past and makes it a present reality for everyone in the community, young and old, as if they personally are part of the story.

Leader Introduction/Instructions:

Tonight we celebrate Passover, which is *Pesach* in Hebrew. We will do that by participating in a Seder meal. It is based on the traditional Jewish celebration of Passover, but adapted into a uniquely Christian celebration. We will retain as much as possible from traditional Jewish observance. This reminds us that God did not begin his revelation of himself in the world with Christians, but to Hebrews, to Israelites, to the Jew first. It also reminds us that Jesus was not a Christian, but a Jew. It is only in recognizing that connection we have to four thousand years of God at work creating a people that we can truly appreciate who we are as people of God.

Seder means “order,” which simply means that the celebration will follow a certain order, marked by drinking from four cups of the fruit of the vine. This “order” is given in its entirety in the *Haggadah*, the booklet that is the “telling” of the Passover story. Tonight’s leaders will walk us through the meal in accordance with the order. Please give them your attention, and follow their lead.

This service is a sacred time of worship. But even though it follows a strict order it is not formal. In Judaism, Passover is not a public service of worship, but is celebrated as a family meal. The parents or grandparents lead the service, and it is much more of a celebration than anything solemn. So, relax and have fun with the service as part of this extended family.

While this is a traditional Jewish celebration, it is also a Christian festival. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us that it was at a Passover meal that Jesus inaugurated what we now celebrate as the Lord’s Supper, Communion, or Eucharist.



Opening Song: It is Good

It is good to praise the L-rd and make music to Your Name,
oh G-d most High. To proclaim Your love and faithfulness all the
day and through the night

Lai, lai, lai...

You make me glad by Your deeds, oh L-rd, so I sing for joy at all
Your hands have made. How great are Your works,
oh L-rd, El-him baruch ha Shem

Lai, lai, lai...

May I dwell in Your courts, oh L-rd, there to flourish like the
trees of Lebanon. Planted in the House of Ad-nai, there to live
forevermore!

Lai, lai, lai...

Paul Wilbur ©1983 Integrity's Hosanna! Music CCLI# 222069

Beginning of the Seder

Leader: Welcome to our Passover Seder. Let us ready our hearts
to celebrate and tell the story of deliverance, freedom, and
redemption. Tradition teaches us that we must all consider
ourselves as slaves in Egypt, that we must all consider
ourselves to have walked in darkness, so that we might
celebrate the deliverance in the Exodus as our own
deliverance. It is in that spirit of community that we enter this
Passover celebration.

Woman Leader/Mother: As the Israelites prepared for the
exodus by obeying the commands of God through Moses, so
in removing the leaven, we symbolize our willingness to obey
God in preparation for celebrating the deliverance he has
already brought to his people. Let us find and put away the
leaven from this place to prepare for our own experience of
deliverance. And as we do, let us search for any hidden sins in
our hearts that might prevent us from celebrating the joy of
this festival.

Younger children search for and collect all the hidden pieces of leavened bread in order to remove the Chametz and prepare the room for the celebration of the Passover. When the bread is collected, preferably in a basket so that all can see it, have it carried out of the room to symbolize our preparation for participation in the Seder.

Explanation: *Even though we have called people to reflection, this should not be a solemn occasion. The children should be allowed to have fun searching, and the remainder of the service should be marked by joy and celebration, as well as a certain amount of freedom and informality. Remember, the context of Passover is a family meal.*

Leader: We praise you O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who hallows our lives with commandments, and who has commanded us to prepare for Passover by removing the leaven.

People: Any leaven that may remain among us, which we have not seen and have not removed, may it be as if it does not exist, as if it is the dust of the earth.



Song: I Will Celebrate

I will celebrate, sing unto the Lord. I will sing to Him a new song.
I will celebrate, sing unto the Lord. I will sing to Him a new song.
I will praise Him, I will sing to Him a new song
I will praise Him, I will sing to Him a new song

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, Hallelu, hallelujah.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, Hallelu, hallelujah.

Lighting the Passover Candles

Explanation: *The actual Seder begins with the lighting of the Passover candles. Traditionally, the mother of the home lights the candles, just as she lights the candles that signal the beginning of Shabat (Sabbath). The candles symbolize the presence of God and mark this as sacred time.*

Mother: Now in the presence of loved ones and friends, and before us the symbols of our rejoicing, we gather for our sacred celebration. With the household of Israel, our elders and young ones, linking and bonding the past and the future, we once again hear and obey the divine call to service. Living our story that is told for all peoples, whose conclusion is yet to unfold, we gather to observe this Passover, as it is written:

People: Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.
Exodus 12:17 NIV

Mother: We assemble in fulfillment of the commandment:

People: Then Moses said to the people, "Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast.
Exodus 13:3 NIV

Mother: We praise you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has preserved our life so that we may again celebrate this festival. As we kindle the festival lights, we pray for the light of God in our midst that we might see anew the meaning and significance of this celebration.

The Woman Leader lights the Passover candles. A woman at each table lights the candles for each group.

Leader (as the candles are being lit):

This is a traditional Hebrew blessing for the lighting of the candles:

Barúch atáh Ádonai Elohéinu, Mélech ha-olám, ashér kidshánu be'mitzvo-táv, ve'tziváanu le'hadlíq ner shél yom tóv.

(Blessed are you O Lord our God, ruler of the universe,
Who hallows our lives with commandments, And bids us kindle
the festival light.)

Mother: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe,
who hallows our lives with commandments and bids us kindle
the festival light. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the
universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us
again to this season. May our fellowship be consecrated, O God,
by the light of your presence shining upon us and bringing us
peace.

People: May the lights we now kindle inspire us to use our strength
which you so freely give us to help and not to hinder, to love and
not to hate, to bless and not to curse, to serve and worship you, O
God of freedom!

The First Cup: The Cup of Sanctification and Freedom

Leader Introduction to the First Cup:

Passover is about memory and fulfilled promises. But it is also about
hope, the hope that comes from a God who has fulfilled promises.
So, we celebrate redemption as memory, but we also celebrate
redemption as hope. The God of the Exodus is still God, and so we
know that what has been is also a promise of what will be.

Leader: Our story tells us that in various ways, with different
words, God gave promises of freedom to His people. With four
cups from the fruit of the vine we celebrate and we recall God's
promises to Israel and to us.

People: "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Exodus 6:6-7 NIV

Leader: In the four cups that we drink tonight we celebrate these four "I will" promises of God: Freedom, Deliverance, Redemption, and Thanksgiving for fulfilling His promises that allows us to be His people.

The Leader fills his first glass. Cups have already been prepared for all other participants individually. The Leader continues by holding the cup in his right hand so the people can see it.

Leader: We take the first cup and proclaim the holiness of this day of freedom. Blessed is God who fulfills his promises, who is ever faithful to his servants who trust in Him. In every age oppressors rise against us to crush our spirits and bring us low. From the hands of all these tyrants and conquerors, from the power of anything that hinders us from being His people, the Lord rescues and restores us. We praise you, O Lord, who makes holy your people.

People: "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Exodus 6:6 NIV

Leader: Let us drink the first cup.

All those gathered drink the first cup.

The Washing: Preparation

In preparation for the meal, there is a ceremonial hand washing. This is not a sanitary action but is symbolic of the "clean hands" with which one comes before God (Psalm 24:3-4).

Leader: We will now prepare for the meal by washing our hands, symbolizing the sacredness of this occasion, and the purity of heart and hands that we are called to exhibit as God's people.

Those gathered wash their hands in preparation for the celebration of the Passover Seder. Since this is a symbolic action, only a very small amount of water should be used.

Karpas - The Green Vegetables (Parsley)

Leader Introduction to Karpas:

Twice during the Seder two elements representing a mixture of positive and negative experiences or emotions are incorporated into the service. In the first, we will eat vegetables or herbs with salt water; in the second, we will eat the sweet charoset with bitter foods. The contrasting elements remind us that life is often a confusing mixture of joy and sorrow, of bitter endings and sweet new beginnings. It is not our goal to eliminate the negative experiences and pretend that life is all sweetness and happiness, for that would be both futile and dishonest. Rather our goal is to rejoice in the fact that God works in all the circumstances of life, just as he heard the cries of slaves and brought deliverance.

Leader Introduction to the Reading:

Our Scripture reading for this section of the Seder is taken from the Song of Songs. It is clearly a love song between a man and a woman, which is appropriate for this time of year and the celebration of newness. However, the significance of this reading is the symbolism seen in a husband and wife of the love of God for His people expressed in His willingness to enter into a covenant with them.

Leader: Passover is a springtime festival, the season of rebirth, renewal, and new life. The days are filled with more light than darkness. The earth is becoming green with new life.

The Leader takes a sprig of fresh Parsley and holds it up for the people to see.

Leader: This vegetable, called Karpas, represents life, created and sustained by the Lord our God. We are filled with joy at the goodness of God in loving us and caring for us, and bringing into our lives all good things.

Men: My lover spoke and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me."

Song of Solomon 2:10-13 NIV

Women: Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens. Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

Song of Solomon 2:2-4 NIV

People: Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

Song of Solomon 8:6-7 NIV

Leader: And yet as good as God intended life to be, it is often mixed with tears.

The Leader lifts up the bowl of salt water so all can see.

Leader: Tonight, we are not simply celebrating springtime or love. We are celebrating the freedom and wonderful deliverance that God brought to us as slaves in Egypt. But we do not forget that life in Egypt was hard and filled with pain and suffering and tears. Let us never forget that the struggle for freedom begins in suffering, and that life is sometimes immersed in tears.

People: Blessed are you O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

Everyone dips a spring of parsley the salt water and eats it.

The Breaking of Bread: The Matzah

Each table has three Matzot on a covered plate. Table leaders will follow the directions of the Leader and remove the middle Matzah.

Leader: Now I will break the middle Matzah in two. Later we will share it together as the Passover offering itself was shared in this service in Jerusalem. Among people everywhere, the sharing of bread forms a bond of fellowship and community.

The Leader obviously breaks the middle Matzah in half, as everyone else or the group leaders do the same. Participants hold the two halves of the broken Matzah. The Leader returns one half of the broken Matzah to the plate with the other two and leaves them uncovered. The other half he holds in front of him.

Leader: For the sake of our deliverance, we will say together the ancient words that join us with our own people and the beggar in the street. For our redemption is bound up with the deliverance from bondage of all people everywhere. It is only the grace of our Lord God that sets us free!

People: This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry come and eat. All who are needy come and celebrate Passover with us. Now we celebrate it here. Next year, may we celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. Now we are slaves. Next year may we be truly free.

Participants return the Matzot to their plate. The Leader wraps the Afikomen (the second half of the broken Matzah) in the napkin and places it on the side of the table.

Leader: I will now hide a portion of the Matzah which we will use as the Afikomen, the dessert of our meal. It is a symbol of the redemption for which we all long and which we know will come, but yet which we do not yet see.

Children are asked to close their eyes as the Afikomen is hidden when the leader is finished the evening continues..

The Leader fills his second cup of wine, cups are already filled for participants.

The Story of Passover

Leader Introduction to the Passover Story: The Passover story is the heart of the Seder and was traditionally told as a parent telling the story of the Exodus to his children. It is the story, the testimony, of those who have seen and heard the self-revelation of God in history that sustains the identity and commitment of a people.

Leader: The Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, tells us that our children will ask questions about who they are as God's people. The Lord has instructed us that we should tell them the story so that they might know the Lord. It is both a duty and a privilege to answer the four questions of the Passover and to recount the gracious acts of our God.

Child: Why is this night different than all other nights? Why on all other nights do we eat bread with leaven, but on this night we eat only unleavened bread? Why on all other nights do we eat of all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat bitter herbs? Why on all other nights do we not dip herbs at all, but on this night we dip them twice? Why on all other nights do we eat in the normal way, but on this night we eat with special ceremony?

Leader: We will now answer the four questions concerning Passover that you have asked.

People: Once we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord in His goodness and mercy brought us out of that land with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Leader: Had God not rescued us from the hand of the destroyer, surely we and our children would still be enslaved, deprived of freedom and human dignity.

People: Once we worshipped idols and were enslaved by our sins, but God in His goodness and mercy forgave our transgressions and called us to be His people.

Leader: Therefore, tonight is different than other nights because we have gathered to remember who we are, what God has done for us, and to tell to our children the story of God's grace and deliverance.

People: Praise be to God who is everywhere. Praise be to God who has brought us freedom and has delivered us from all that enslaves us!

Mother: God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would be a great people, a promise he renewed to each generation, to Isaac and Jacob. As time passed Jacob's children came to live in the land of Egypt where his son Joseph was advisor to Pharaoh. But years passed and another Pharaoh came to power who did not remember Joseph and did not know his God, so he enslaved the Israelites. He forced them to work hard making bricks of clay and straw with which to build his cities. As the people increased in numbers, he feared that they might rebel against him, so he ordered every newborn boy drowned. They knew only toil, suffering, and tears.

Leader: They cried out from their cruel oppression, hoping that God would remember the promises He had made to the fathers. And God heard their cry and remembered the covenant He had made with Abraham. Through a wise mother and sister, God saved the life of the boy Moses from the ruthless hands of Pharaoh. After he had grown up, God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, and promised Moses that He would be with him.

Mother: And yet when Moses asked Pharaoh to free the Israelites, he refused and increased their labor. So God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh and the land of Egypt so they might know that the Lord is God, and let the people go.

The Leader takes the second cup and holds it.

Leader: In a moment we will drink the second cup, the cup of deliverance, and we will celebrate in joy God's deliverance from slavery. A full cup is a symbol of joy. Yet our joy is diminished because the Egyptians, who are also God's children, suffered from Pharaoh's evil ways. Lives were sacrificed to bring about the release of God's people from the slavery of Egypt, and we do not rejoice at the death of any of God's children. As we recount the plagues, we will spill a drop of wine from our cups for each plague to recall the cost of sin, and the consequences of evil in our world.

Everyone takes the second cup and holds it. **DO NOT drink from the second cup yet.** As each plague is recited, a single drop of wine is removed from the cup, either with a finger or spoon, and placed on a plate. Traditionally, a finger is used to symbolize the finger of God's judgment on sin.

Leader: Blood. Frogs. Lice. Swarms. Cattle Disease. Boils. Hail. Locusts. Darkness. Death of the First Born.

Leader: As innocent people suffered and died long ago because of the oppression of tyrants, so people today still suffer from evil in the world. Our newspapers are filled with accounts of ethnic cleansing and bombings. We cannot celebrate God's deliverance for ourselves without longing that all God's children experience freedom from their bondage. So, we will spill another drop from our cups to recall the cost of evil in our world today.

Everyone removes a single drop of wine from the cup and places it on their plate. Everyone replaces the second cup on the table without drinking.

Leader: We pray...Heavenly Father, God of peace and harmony,
You would have Your children on earth live together in peace

and quietness. Frustrate the plans of all evil men who would stir up violence and strife; spoil the weapons of those who delight in war and bloodshed; and according to Your will, end all wars in the world. Lead us to confess the truth of Your Word that from the lusts of our own hearts come wars and fighting among us. Mercifully hear our prayer and grant us peace in our days. Amen.

Mother: Pharaoh continued to refuse to let the people go until the last plague, the death of the firstborn of all of Egypt, convinced him to release the people. By following God's instructions and putting the blood of a lamb on the door posts of the houses, the Israelites were spared this plague as death "Passed Over" their houses.

The Leader removes the symbolic lamb bone from the Seder plate and holds it up for all to see.

Leader: This is the symbol of the Passover lamb that was killed so that our children might live. It reminds us not only of God's wonderful grace in providing for us life and not death, it also reminds us that we are called to obedience in response to God's gift of life. The sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem were a reminder of that grace and that gift of life.

The Leader replaces the bone and removes the egg from the Seder plate and holds it up for all to see.

Leader: The egg is a symbol of mourning, and is to remind us that the Temple in Jerusalem, the place of sacrifices, is no longer standing, and so sacrifices are no longer offered. But since it has no beginning and no end, the egg is also a symbol of new life and hope, and reminds us that God's grace is not confined to sacrifices in a temple.

The Leader replaces the egg.

Mother: Even as the Israelites were leaving, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army after them. Trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Sea of Reeds, the Israelites had nowhere to go. But God told Moses to lift his staff over the sea, and God parted the waters. They were able to pass

through the midst of the sea. When the Egyptians tried to follow, the waters closed back over them. When the Israelites saw that they were free, Moses' sister Miriam led them in rejoicing and praising God.

People: We Praise you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who hears the cries of the oppressed, who brings freedom to the captive, and who creates for yourself a people.

The Leader takes the remaining half of the Matzah and holds it up for all to see.

Leader: Tonight we eat Unleavened Bread because our ancestors in Egypt had to leave in such haste that they could not wait for their bread to rise, and so had to bake it while it was still flat.

People: Do not eat [the Passover] with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste-- so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt.
Deuteronomy 16:3 NIV

The Leader replaces the Matzah and takes the Maror (horseradish) and holds it up for all to see.

Leader: Tonight we eat bitter herbs to remind us of how bitter our lives were as slaves in Egypt. As sweet as our lives are now, we must never forget the bitterness of our bondage.

People: The Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.
Exodus 1:12-14 NIV

The Leader replaces the Maror (horseradish) and takes a spring of Karpas (Parsley) and the bowl of Charoset and holds them up for all to see.

Leader: Tonight we dip twice. We have already dipped the Karpas. We will also dip the Charoset to remind us of the

sweetness that God can bring into the most bitter of our circumstances.

People: I have suffered much; preserve my life, O LORD,
according to your word. *Psalm 119:107 NIV*

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to
my mouth! *Psalm 119:103 NIV*

The Leader replaces the Karpas (Parsley) and Charoset.

Leader: Tonight we eat with special ceremony because in each generation, every person should feel as if he or she has actually been redeemed from Egypt. We tell the story because we are the redeemed of the Lord, and we can sing a new song of praise because of His grace. And yet it is not a new song, because it has been sung by countless people through the centuries as generation after generation have experienced the deliverance and redemption brought by our God.

People: Once we were slaves but now we are free!

Telling of the Story: Dayenu (It Would Have Been Enough)

Leader: God has shown us so many acts of kindness and grace.
For each one, we say *dayenu*. If only the Lord God had taken
us out of Egypt...

People: Dayenu!

Leader: If only the Lord God had taken us out of Egypt and not
passed judgment on the Egyptians...

People: Dayenu!

Leader: If only the Lord God had passed judgment on the
Egyptians and not parted the sea for us...

People: Dayenu!

Leader: If only the Lord God had parted the sea for us and not taken care of us and fed us manna in the desert for 40 years...

People: Dayenu!

Leader: If only the Lord God had taken care of us and fed us manna in the desert for 40 years and not given us the Sabbath rest...

People: Dayenu!

Leader: If only the Lord God had given us the Sabbath rest and not brought us to Mount Sinai and given us the Torah...

People: Dayenu!

Leader: If only the Lord God had brought us to Mount Sinai and given us the Torah and not brought us into the land of Israel...

People: Dayenu!

Leader: For all these, alone and together, we say...

People: Dayenu!



Song: Dayenu

Children are invited to grab a percussion instrument to play on this song.

Chorus:

Da-da-yenu, da-da-yenu, da-da-yenu, dayenu, dayenu (2x)

Had he brought us out of Egypt and not judgment on the Egyptians, it would've been enough for us—Dayenu. (Chorus)

Had he brought judgment upon them, and not split the sea before for us, it would've been enough for us—Dayenu. (Chorus)

Had he split the sea before for us, and not fed us with the manna it would've been enough for us—Dayenu. (Chorus)

Had he fed us with the manna, but not given Sabbath rest
it would've been enough for us—Dayenu. (Chorus)

Had he given Sabbath rest, but not led us to Mount Sinai,
it would've been enough for us—Dayenu. (Chorus)

Had he brought us to Mt. Sinai, but not given us the Torah,
it would've been enough for us—Dayenu. (Chorus)

Had he given us the Torah, but not led us to Israel,
it would've been enough for us—Dayenu. (Chorus)

Had he led us to Israel, but not given us Messiah
it would *not* have been enough—Dayenu. (Chorus)

The Second Cup: The Cup of Deliverance

The Leader takes the second glass, and raises it for all to see.

Leader: With the second cup we celebrate the deliverance that God has brought to us. We are privileged to thank God, to praise Him, to reverence Him, and to rejoice in His grace. He has brought us forth from bondage to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from darkness to light, from slavery to redemption.

People: "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.'"

Exodus 6:6 NIV

We praise you O Lord our God, who has freed your people.

Leader: We praise you O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth. Let us drink the Second Cup.

We all drink the second cup.

The Meal

The Leader removes all three remaining pieces of Matzah and holds them in front of him as he recites the blessing.

Leader: We Praise you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe,
who brings forth bread from the earth.

The Leader takes the top and middle Matzoth (the half from which the afikomen was broken) and breaks pieces to distribute to the group. The leader at each table or group should also perform this action, using only the top and middle Matzoth, and distribute pieces to everyone; so each person may have the Matzah and break their own. The bottom Matzah will be used later.

Leader: Let us all offer a blessing for the bread.

People: We Praise you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe,
who has made us holy with your word, and has commanded to
eat unleavened bread.

We eat a piece of Matzah.

The Leader distributes a small piece of Maror to each person, or if the prepared Maror is used, passes a bowl of Maror for each person to dip a small amount onto their plate. They will need enough for the next two actions. The leader at each table or group should also perform this action, or each place setting can have a small piece of Maror. If the prepared Maror is used, a small piece of Matzah can be used to dip the Maror.

Leader: With bitter herbs, let us remember how bitter our slavery was in the land of Egypt. As we eat, let us allow the bitter taste to bring tears of compassion for the pain that our fathers and mothers felt long ago. But let us also weep for those who are still enslaved and have not yet experienced the deliverance that our gracious God brings.

People: We Praise you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe,
who has made us holy with your word, and has commanded to
eat bitter herbs.

We eat the bitter herb.

Leader: As we are reminded of the bitterness of our slavery, so too are we reminded of the hope that we have in our Lord. We will now begin to make the Hillel sandwich by placing a small amount of Maror on a piece of Matzah.

The Leader takes the bottom or the third Matzoth and breaks it in two. On one half he puts another small piece of Maror and places it on a plate (or if the prepared horseradish is used, he dips some onto the Matzah). The leader at each group, or each person, should also perform this action. The Leader then takes the bowl of Charoset and holds it in front of him.

Leader: The Charoset is a sweet mixture of apples [dates], honey, and nuts. It symbolizes the mixture of clay and straw that the Israelites used to make bricks for the cities of Pharaoh. But the apples of the mixture also remind us of something else. Apple trees set fruit before the tree has leaves, and then grow leaves to protect the fruit. Tradition tells us that in slavery in Egypt, the women of Israel gave birth to children under the trees of the orchard to try to avoid the decree of Pharaoh, with no assurance of their safety and future. That hope in a future from God sweetened the misery of their slavery. Often, life is a mixture of the bitter and the sweet, of sadness and joy. Let us now add the sweetness of the Charoset to the bitterness of the Maror.

The Leader takes the Matzah and Maror and dips it into the Charoset. The leader at each table or group should also lead this action. If the Charoset is very thick, it may have to be spooned onto the Matzah after a symbolic dip. The remaining piece of Matzah is used to make a "sandwich" of the Maror and Charoset.

Leader: In the days of the Jerusalem temple, Rabbi Hillel ate a sandwich of the Pesach, the Passover lamb, with bitter herbs and Matzah. Since the temple is no longer standing and the Passover lamb no longer offered, we cannot eat the lamb with our sandwich. So instead, we use the Charoset to take the place of the Pascal lamb to remind us of the hope we have in God, of the sweetness that He can bring into the most bitter of our circumstances.

We eat the Hillel sandwich.

Leader: We have broken bread together and have told the story of our deliverance. Let us now eat together in celebration of our freedom.

We take a moment from our celebration to share in food together. As we eat the Seder plates are removed from the table. Thank you to those who brought desserts for us to share as we share in this Seder meal together.

When everyone is finished our plates are removed from the table and the Seder plates are returned to the table.



The Afikomen

The afikomen (the Matzah after supper) that has been sought out by the children that are gathered in the room. Once the afikomen is found it is broken into small pieces and distributed.

Leader: "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'"

Luke 22:19 NIV

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 6:35 NIV

When Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples, it was at that time that He instituted The Lord's Supper.

People: For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:26 NIV

We all eat the afikomen.

The Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption

Leader Introduction: Many believe that it was this third cup that Jesus offered up to the disciples when he celebrated the Passover.

Leader: "In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." *Luke 22:20 NIV*

Leader: B'oruch atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech ha-olam b'orey pree ha-gafen.

People: Blessed art Thou, O Eternal, our GOD, King of the universe, Who createst the fruit of the vine.

All drink the third cup as our attention shifts to the prophet Elijah. Note that the room has been set with a table setting and an empty chair for the prophet Elijah.

The Prophet Elijah

Leader: This cup is for Elijah the Prophet. Elijah did not see death but was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. It has been the hope of God's people that Elijah would come at Passover, to announce the coming of the Messiah, the son of David. As the prophet Malachi said 400 years before Jesus' birth:

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. " *Malachi 4:5 NIV*

This cup has traditionally been left untouched, awaiting the time when Elijah would appear to share the Passover. A child is asked to open the door as we symbolically await Elijah's arrival.

Leader: Elijah's cup is filled and the door is opened, yet we live in the light of the New Testament. As Christians aware of Jesus' life and ministry we no longer need to wait for Elijah

Leader: As Jesus spoke in the 17th chapter of Matthew we read:
The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.
Matthew 17:10-13 NIV

Wonderfully enough, it was John the Baptist that saw Jesus and said, "...look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
John 1:29 NIV

Observations for our Christian Passover Celebration

The open door waiting for Elijah can now be closed, because Jesus told us that Elijah has already come. Our door can also be closed. We are no longer waiting for Elijah or the Messiah to come; instead, we rejoice that they have come and Jesus Christ will return in His glory.

Other items on the Seder Plate which have not been touched are:

The Beitzah, (the egg), which speaks of the sacrificial system that no longer is in practice, because The Temple does not exist in Jerusalem, Israel.

The Shankbone of the lamb, reminding us that lambs are no longer sacrificed since there is no Temple in Israel.

Our Scriptural need for sacrifice has been met by the shedding of blood for the remission of our sins, by our Messiah, Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God.

The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Thanksgiving and Hope

We turn to the fourth and final cup in our Passover, also called the Hallel or cup of praise before the Lord.

Leader: Let us all say:

People: Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?" Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.

O house of Israel, trust in the LORD— He is their help and shield.
O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD— He is their help and shield.
You who fear him, trust in the LORD— He is their help and shield.

The LORD remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron, he will bless those who fear the LORD - small and great alike. May the LORD make you increase, both you and your children. May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man. It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to silence; it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. Praise the LORD.

Psalms 115 NIV

Leader: This cup of praise speaks of the time when The Lord will gather all Israel unto Himself,

"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.'"

Romans 11:26 NIV

To believers in Jesus Christ, this cup represents the hope and expectation of our Messiah's return and our gathering unto Him.

Those gathered lift the cup of praise:

Leader: B'oruch atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech ha-olam b'orey pree ha-gafen.

People: Blessed art Thou, O Eternal, our GOD, King of the universe, Who has created the fruit of the vine.

Everyone drinks the cup of praise.

Leader: The traditional conclusion of the Seder is a hope for the future expressed by Jews throughout history: "Next year in Jerusalem." We will conclude our Seder with the same expression of hope and faith in God, as we await the coming of the new Jerusalem.

L'shanah habah b'rushalayim (next year in Jerusalem).

People: Next year in the New Jerusalem!



Closing Song: Next Year in Jerusalem

L'shana haba'ah b'Yerushalayim
L'shana haba'ah b'Yerushalayim
L'shana haba'ah b'Yerushalayim
L'shana haba'ah b'Yerushalayim
(Repeat)

People: Next year in the New Jerusalem!

The Leader extinguishes the Passover candles. The leader at each table or group should extinguish the candles on their table.

The service of *Pesach* (Passover) is now complete, in the order and customs that are traditional of this beautiful Feast of the Lord.

Material for this Christian Seder was drawn from Dennis Bratcher,
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This Lenten season, gather with us as we walk in God's Word to the foot of the cross.

Good Friday — Fri., March 29, 7 p.m. (Jones Building, Apex)

Easter Sunday Services and Breakfast

Easter Sunrise — 6:30 a.m. (Jones Memorial Park)

Worship with Communion — 7:30 a.m.

Easter Breakfast — 9 a.m. (Bring dish to share)

Worship with Communion — 10:00 a.m.