

Whilst those worshipping at Chapel are joining in a truncated Communion (of sorts) we are not allowed to celebrate Communion remotely at present.

Therefore those of you who join us on the day or at another time you are invited to share in what some refer to as a Love Feast or even as an Agape. Before you start you need:

1. a small piece of fruited cake or a small piece of dry bread if that is all you have. (failing that a cracker or a plain biscuit will suffice)
2. A small glass of water for personal use only (or if you wish within your household a loving cup of water or a larger glass to share)

Until we might celebrate again (all of us) around the Lords Table - this is all we can do.

Yours in Jesus,
John

First Hymn

'All praise to our redeeming Lord' (StF 608)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNnMhzETIb8>

Prayer

Almighty God,
we thank you for your great gift of love -
the love which we are able to share with those around us,
which gives us a sense of self-worth and belonging,
which enriches our lives in so many ways.

You have opened your heart to us -

help us to do the same to you.

We thank you for your love which defies all expression,
constant, total, inexhaustible,
flowing out to us like a never-ending stream.

You have opened your heart to us -

help us to do the same to you.

Almighty God,

we thank you for loving us before we ever loved you,
and for continuing to love us
even when we fail to love you in return.

You have opened your heart to us -

help us to do the same to you.

Deepen our love for you and for one another,
Help us to be faithful and true in all our relationships,
and most especially in our relationship with you.

You have opened your heart to us -

help us to do the same to you.

In the name of Jesus

Amen.

Lords Prayer

Bible readings

1 Corinthians 13:4-13;
Matthew 22:34 –40;

Address.

In 1 Peter 4:8 (New Living Bible Translation) we read: "... continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins". Some translations and indeed some paraphrases replace covers with 'overlooks' or 'hides', each trying in its own way to fully carry the implications behind the final phrase of that sentence. Over the years scholars have looked at the final phrase and pointed out how it can be interpreted in three different ways.

Firstly, it has been argued, love can overlook many sins. In the book of Proverbs chapter 10, verse 12, it points out that love covers all offenses. The argument seems to follow the lines of when we love someone we are, or indeed can be, blind to their faults. It becomes very easy to forgive their faults, how often can we be heard to say "It's just the way they/he/she are/is". It could even be said that love makes patience a lot easier – for example comparing our offspring (as/when/if we had them) with others. How much more beautiful/clever/artistic/athletic in comparison to their contemporaries they appear. It becomes a judgemental thing if we are not careful and we could fall into the trap of believing it – if you have seen the Harry Potter series of films you will remember how Harry's Aunt and Uncle treat him when they place Harry's cousin on a pedestal. There are other similar stories throughout literature and history. However, if we truly love our fellows we must accept our fellows faults, bear with their foolishness and sometimes even endure their unkindness.

Secondly others have said that it could mean that if we love others God will overlook the multitude of sins in us. One theologian pointed out that there are essentially two sorts of people. (A) Those who have no faults (very rare!), no finger can be pointed at them in order to blame, they are moral, orthodox, and very respectable. They can be hard and austere and unable to understand why others make faults and fall into sin. (B) The rest – those of us who have all sorts of faults – yet are kind and sympathetic – seldom or never condemn. It has been said that God will forgive much to the one who loves his/her fellow human beings.

Thirdly and finally it could mean that God's love will cover the multitude of everyone's sins – this is definitely true. Through God's grace we are forgiven, though we do not deserve that for ourselves, He gives us it freely. Jesus came, lived, died and rose again so we could have it in total.

Hymn StF 615: **Let love be real**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkBAxZw5NxU>

The Love Feast cake/bread is eaten in silence

The Loving Cup is normally then passed in silence and each person takes a sip of the water. At this time you may prefer to just take a small drink from your own glass of water

At this time remember in love all those from your past whom you remember with love – family, friends and colleagues, also those you have missed especially during this pandemic.

Prayers of intercession

God of love,
we pray for those many people in our world
who have been deprived of love,
who feel unloved,
or for whom love has been painful.

Touch their hearts with the love of Jesus.

We pray for those for whom love has involved pain -
those who have faced the trauma
of breakdown in their marriage,
or experienced the collapse of friendships,
or romantic engagements;
those who have come from broken homes,
or who have become estranged from family and friends;
those whose children have moved away
to begin new lives of their own,
or whose parents have become frail, confused and infirm;
those whose loved ones have been taken from them by death,
or those who have been forced to leave those
they count most dear
May the knowledge of your unending love
be a constant source of comfort and inspiration.

Touch their hearts with the love of Jesus.

We pray for those who find it hard to love -
those whose love has been betrayed,
those who are scarred by bitter and painful experience,
those who have been subjected to abuse,
those afraid of showing their true feelings,
those oppressed by mental illness.

Touch their hearts with the love of Jesus.

Loving God,
we bring before you the complex world
of human relationships,
capable of bringing such joy but such sorrow,
so much pleasure yet also so much pain.
We thank you for your gift of love
and all the love that surrounds us,
but help us never to forget those who have lost love
or been hurt through it.

Touch their hearts with the love of Jesus.

Grant to us all the knowledge
that your love will never fail,
and never let us go.

**Thanks be to God, in Jesus' name
Amen**

A hymn '**Christ, from whom all blessings flow**' (StF 676)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvgYxnEjv0E>

Blessing

To God who is always forgiving,
always loving,
always offering a new beginning,
be honour and glory,
praise and thanksgiving,
this day and for ever.

Amen