



Embrace the Sweetness of Shrove Tuesday

Welcome to this feast on the threshold of the Season of Lent!

This day is called different things in different communities: Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, Pancake Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday. Pancakes/Fat/Gras (fat in french) all come from the practice of using up the fatty foods before you fast from them during lent. “Shrove” derived from shrive, refers to the confession of sins as a preparation for Lent, a usual practice in Europe in the Middle Ages.

The liturgy for this evening’s dinner is a corporate prayer. We recognize that these words are not your own and act as scaffolding for an authentic interaction between us and our Creator. You can feel free to pass on your participation, not read something you truly do not believe, or stay in silent observation when that feels better for you. We are grateful you are here and invite you to participate as best as you can tonight.

Before we begin eating:

Leader: We give thanks to Creator God for gathering us together on this night, in this gift of a home, and on the abundant gift of this land. We gather as Treaty 6 people on the Cree, Dakota, Nakota, and Saulteaux territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis.

All: We are grateful to you, God, for the Indigenous peoples of this land. Tonight, we remember our covenant with one another and ask you to bless these people with your great abundance.

Leader: May this evening give you glory, God, as the ultimate Covenant keeper. May our worship and prayer tonight equip us to keep our treaty covenant, to be merciful peacemakers, truth-speakers and advocates for reparations and justice.

Washing our hands: Matthew 15 1-11

Leader: In a few gospel accounts, Jesus’ disciples were caught eating with dirty hands. When the Pharisees asked Jesus why he allowed such a lackadaisical approach to God’s laws, Jesus turned this into an opportunity to speak about cleaning our souls rather than cleaning our hands.

All: Jesus said, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”

Leader: Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.” So, let us take a moment to reflectively wash our hands, asking in our own words for Jesus to cleanse us from our attempts to do things our own way and soften our hearts to receive His love tonight.

Take a few moments to wash your hands, then grab a plate of food and sit down.

Blessing the feast: *(you don't have to read the scripture references in parenthesis)*

Leader: We are called to practice joy by celebrating.

Women: Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. (Psalm 34:8)

Men: Seize life! Eat bread with gusto, and drink wine with a robust heart. Yes - God takes pleasure in our pleasure! (Ecclesiastes 9:7)

All: We thank you for the abundance of gifts you freely offer us: our senses and especially our taste buds!

Leader: Tomorrow, all around the world, the Church begins a Lenten fast

All: But tonight we feast! He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever. (Psalm 136:25)

People over 40: The best thing we can do is eat, drink, and enjoy what we have earned. And yet, even this comes from God. (Ecclesiastes 2: 24)

Leader: We celebrate this day and say, “This is God’s moment. This is the day the Lord has made.”

People under 40: Everything God created is good and to be received with thanks. Nothing is to be sneered at and thrown out. God’s Word and our prayers make every item in creation holy. (1 Timothy 4:4-5)

All: We praise you, Creator, King of the universe, for you have brought us together tonight to enjoy your gifts: food, drink and community. Amen.

As we begin to eat, if you need a conversation prompt at a lull point, share about your comfort food and how it became your comfort food.

Before we eating dessert:

Leader: Many things in the Bible are described as “sweet,” such as obedience to God’s laws, scripture, desires realized, wisdom, community, and encouraging words from friends.

All: We are constantly invited by God to come,

Women: all who are thirsty, come to the waters;

Men: and you who have no money, come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Leader: God asks us today, Why spend money on what is not bread and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the most decadent fare. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. Seek me while I may be found, and call on me when I am near.

All: Thank you, God, for your unconditional love and presence freely offered through your Holy Spirit.

Leader: As we enjoy our dessert, let's celebrate how we have recently experienced God's goodness. It could be through scripture, obedience to God's commands, community, or physical or emotional well-being practices.

As we begin to eat our dessert, after the first person shares how they have experienced God's goodness, they can invite the next person to go. You are free to pass if you don't want to share. Find someone to pair up with if you are not at a table. Once you are done, get your final tea or coffee for our last session.

Leader to begin the next song with a call and response song they know about God's goodness.

*Hail Jesus! You're my King!
Your life frees me to sing
I will praise You all my days
You're perfect in all Your ways*

*Glory, glory to the Lamb!
You will take us into the land
We will worship in Your name
And proclaim that "Jesus reigns!"*

*Hail Jesus! You're my Lord!
I will obey Your word
Because I want to see
Your kingdom come
Not my will but Yours be done*

*Hail, hail Lion of Judah!
How powerful You are!
Hail, hail Lion of Judah!
How wonderful You are*

While we enjoy our final beverage:

Leader: Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change (James 1:17). You've had a taste of God's goodness. Now, like infants at the breast, drink deep of God's pure kindness. Then you'll grow up mature and whole in God. (1 Peter 2:1-3)

People over 40: It is sometimes hard to believe that our relationship with God is better than receiving gifts from God.

People under 40: It is sometimes easier to believe that our happiness will come from pursuing our own agendas. What if enjoying the gifts is all there is to life?

Leader: The good news of Lent is God longs to make more room in us to receive life abundantly. God themselves is much greater than the gifts they give us. And the Kingdom of God is so much bigger than those at this table. Lent is about allowing the Spirit to work on the aspects within us that prevent our table from being larger, more inclusive, more just.

People over 40: The spiritual life is a life in which we are increasingly able to be led and guided to challenging places where we would rather not go. It is not for masochism or self-flagellation. It is not to be hard on ourselves. It is because we are in love. Being so fully and totally in love with God means we will go to places God leads where we would rather not go. (Henri Nouwen)

People under 40: Give us all eyes to see and ears to hear your voice of love. Please give us the courage to know that you are the way, the truth and the life. God, help us to believe there is far more to our lives than the food we put in our stomachs and more to our identity than our outer appearance. (Matthew 6:25-26)

All: Stretch our hearts this Lent to be a people whose generous hospitality reflects your heart God.

Leader: In this lenten season, would we receive deep joy through people, work, plans, projects, ideas, meetings, buildings, hobbies and music when we see and hear them as reflections of God's presence, glory and Kingdom. Let us pray these words of Thomas Keating, asking God to spark our imagination for a life-giving Lenten fast practice.

All: Holy Spirit of Truth, teach us how to release our over-identification with our bodies, feelings, emotional programs for happiness, intellectual powers, cultural conditioning, and idealized image of ourselves. May we be free to be our true selves and do Your will.

Leader: Thanks be to God, for their faithful love endures forever. May God's love free us to be a larger container of God's love, mercy and justice in the season of Lent ahead.

All: AMEN!!!