

# What do you do for love feast?

*These responses come from a Facebook conversation initiated by Jamie Steamer Nace, director of children's ministry at Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.*



Cheryl Shubert/Church of the Brethren

➔ Our love feast is done in community with everyone, men, women, family, and co-ed. It's a lunch type meal of cold cuts, cheeses, rolls, applesauce, carrots, and celery.

**Jeffrey Clouser, Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ On Maundy Thursday, we seat folks in the more traditional way, men on one side, women on the other, and washing feet at the tables. We always have a table for hand washing for those who cannot get down. Our Holy Week service is somber, focusing on the sacrifice of our Lord.

**Ray Hileman, Celebration of Christ, Saint Petersburg, Fla.**

➔ In the fall, we had communion with various cut-up pieces of breads to represent differences and grape juice. We also offer a gluten-free alternative. I ended up with a sweet cornbread. Very meaningful!

We had love feast with East Dayton and Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren. We have never tried this before.

We started having family tables in the 1970s, including footwashing. We offered all three: men, women, and family. We are a mostly older congregation and still offer the option of all three but more prefer sitting mixed. It has been interesting to watch the change.

**Jeannie Campbell, Beaver Creek (Ohio) Church of the Brethren**

➔ We have worship together in the morning and then move to our Family Life Center downstairs for love feast. We sit together at long tables. We have footwashing stations for men, women, couples, families. Our meal is chicken and rice soup (or tomato), a roll with a slice of cheese in it, and grapes. During footwashing, children are taken to a separate room for a "mini" love feast designed to help them understand the love feast experience and unpack its meaning.

**Jamie Steamer Nace, Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ Men and women seated separately. Beef, sop, grapes, bread and water on china dishes. Sang two hymns, read scripture and some other readings. Candlelight and subdued overhead lighting.

**Janet Elsea, Barren Ridge Church of the Brethren, Staunton, Va.**

➔ Evening service held in the fellowship hall. Bread chunks, chopped beef, topped with hot broth. Men and women sit together, separate to wash feet. Soft lighting. Scripture, singing, meditations. Bread and cup.

**Rita Murphy, Hollidaysburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ 2019 marked the 150th anniversary of the first Brethren coming to the Maryland Eastern Shore. It culminated with a joint love feast for all seven churches, hosted by the Ridgely Church of the Brethren. While some churches were too far away for their members to attend, four of the churches had members attend, with deacons of all the churches joining together to provide the materials and organize the event. The readings were done by the pastors of these four churches (with some help from the deacons!). It turned out to be a great success!

**Kenneth Wilson George, Ridgely (Md.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ Stevens Hill joined Harrisburg First at 5 p.m. Shared leadership in the service. We sat mixed with the footwashing off to the side in small circles of three. Beef soup & bread.

**Ann Bach, Stevens Hill Community Church of the Brethren, Elizabethtown, Pa.**

➔ Our congregation had a traditional love feast this evening. We started with a time of self reflection in the sanctuary and then moved to the fellowship hall, where men and women sat at separate tables. Footwashing was done around the tables. Our simple meal included beef and sop. Our theme scripturally was centered around the parable of the Prodigal Son. We had several first-time attendees and young families!

**Dennis Beckner, Columbia City (Ind.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ We do the entire service in the fellowship hall. The men and women sit separately. We wash feet around the tables and also have a hand washing table for those that prefer that.

**Brenda McLearn-Montz, Bakersfield (Calif.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ I have been Brethren since a baby. I'm now ninety four. What I like about this church is that they don't take communion without wearing their prayer cap, which I grew up doing. It's more special to me.

**Lydia Jones Price, Geiger Church of the Brethren, Somerset, Pa.**

➔ All glory to God, in our local congregation the service was inspiring. I had an ulcer attack during the service, and pastor asked us to pray for our individual problems. I declared it to the Lord, and I was made whole. I left the church healthier than before even to this moment.

I participated in love feast, washing of feet, men separate but ate together. Everyone brought food and drinks from various homes and we all participated immediately after the church service.

We later took the bread and wine and the benediction was said at 14:13hr.

**Nzalo Vappa Luka, LCC Nyanya, Abuja, Nigeria**

➔ We shared a meal of beef and sop and Mediterranean food. We eat together but move into two circles—one for men and one for women—to wash feet. I've appreciated silent/somber love feasts in the past, but Peace Covenant's meal and footwashing is filled with stories, laughter and hugs, and I love it.

**Dana Cassell, Peace Covenant Church of the Brethren, Durham, N.C.**



➔ This photo of two of our children participating in feet washing says it all :)

**Paul Liepelt, Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ My kids have grown up attending love feast. My daughter is nine, and this Sunday she washed feet with her friends. She had a friend from school there who's never been to love feast, and my daughter said, "I can wash your feet and if you don't feel comfortable washing mine, that's okay."

**Mandy North, Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ I had the children "wash" dolls' feet, then the dolls "washed" the children's feet. Washing hands in basins like the adults do. Then a picnic. For communion we had crackers and grape Kool-aid. (I emphasized it was pretend—I didn't want to be sacrilegious.) My son said he wants to do it again next love feast, so I'd say it was a success. (These children have not yet been baptized.)

**Karen Mackie, White Branch and Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren, Hagerstown, Ind.**

➔ We invited the area Mennonite church members and another Church of the Brethren congregation to join us for love feast. It was a nice group, and we enjoyed meeting new people. It sure added to our numbers as we usually have a small group for love feast. We hope to continue inviting other churches to our love feast.

**Wendy Boettner, Freeport (Ill.) Church of the Brethren**

## THE BEAUTY AND MEANING YOU HAVE ALL SHARED IS TRULY FROM GOD.

➔ My most memorable love feast was in Nigeria in 2004 or 2005. All from the Jos congregation were seated outside in the compound. I remember the sun going down, the awesome sunset, and the screeching of fruit bats as they returned to the bush for the night. Men and women washed feet separately. Tea was used for grape juice, along with pieces of bread for communion. It was a memory both my husband, Bob, and I will cherish forever.

**Carol Krouse**

➔ Sunday school watched and discussed Christina Singh's message from Annual Conference on footwashing and servanthood. Worship with service as preparation for love feast included bread and cup. Congregation met for carry-in meal immediately following worship. Ended with footwashing. Was fine service of fellowship and reminder of why we claim salvation in Christ.

**Claude Simmons, Staunton (Va.) Church of the Brethren**



**What is sop?** This is not a misspelling of "soup." It is bread soaked in beef broth.

➔ Our love feast is very fantastic and lovely. We conduct it immediately after the church service. Men and women dress colorfully. We start with washing of feet, men on this side, women on the other side. People from different cultures bring delicious meals to share the love. We have a new baptism among us, which we share the love together. It is always memorable. We give God the glory for this wonderful experience. I love the Brethren from the bottom of my heart.

**Ishaya Ibrahim Sanya, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria**

➔ We share simple finger foods such as nuts, figs, dried & fresh fruits & pita bread spread with honey butter. As we eat, we share stories of how the church has strengthened our lives in good times *and* bad. We think of all the dear saints who used to sit at feast with us. You may wash hands or feet, or a sister or brother gets down to do it for you when you no longer can. There is both joy and solemnity to our service but mostly lots of gratefulness and love!

**Leslie Lake, Polo (Ill.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ Immediately after the service we had footwashing, men on a separate side from women. After that we ate variety of food, fellowship that was brought from our various houses. We had communion thereafter in remembrance of what our Lord Jesus taught us to do likewise. All glory to God.

**Diya Hamidu, LCC Center Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria**

➔ We celebrate the October love feast at our regular morning worship time. Families sit together in the fellowship hall for a simple meal of grapes, cheese and crackers. Foot and hand washing is segregated and away from the tables. The entire service is woven together with scripture, prayer, meditation and singing. Most women and girls wear prayer caps.

**Shannon Moore Metcalfe, Greensburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren**

➔ In the fall, we shared love feast immediately following the worship service. We arranged the tables in the shape of a cross with men sitting on one side and women on the other. We shared a meal of beef soup, grapes, and cheese and crackers followed by the bread and cup of communion. The deacons led the service since I was on paternity leave. The service was especially meaningful as the whole body of Christ pitched in to lead.

**Daniel Rudy, Ninth Street Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va.**



Lukas Koskela



Lukas Koskela

Feetwashing at Green Tree, photos by Lukas Koskela, age 10.

➔ My 10-year-old son joined me for the first time. He offered to take pics during feetwashing. What a great way for him to learn.

**Gail Koskela, Green Tree Church of the Brethren, Oaks, Pa.**

➔ Wenatchee Brethren Baptist and Sunnyslope celebrated in the evening. Sop, roast beef, fresh fruit, and cheese slices. Men and women separate footwashing, hand washing table also provided. Bread and cup, hymn singing, and benediction.

**Colleen Michael, Wenatchee (Wash.) Brethren Baptist Church**

➔ We seat men and women separately. Our meal consists of beef, sop, bread and water. I do meditations with each element and, of course, Scripture readings. This year I wrote the meditations from the perspective of Peter. I love this service and consider it to be vital to the life of the church.

**Dave Weiss, Springfield Church of the Brethren, Coopersburg, Pa.**

➔ We celebrated in the evening. It was just a time of really nice fellowship. Men sit on one side and the women on the other side.

I also loved passing our Amish brothers and sisters on our way to church who were heading to their own celebrations.

**Jeffrey Keller, Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren, Quarryville, Pa.**

➔ Evening communion with women, feasting on fruits and local dishes, anointing.

**Toma Ayuba, LCC Madanya Mubi, Nigeria**

➔ We usually do love feast with footwashing on Maundy Thursday.

In the fall, we began with a processional, carrying the cross, the basin and towel, the bread, and cup. There was a lovely hymn that none of us knew, so we turned it into an interpretive reading: 462 in the blue hymnal, "Now the Silence."

Someone came prepared to play the recorder while we were passing the bread and the cup. And special music, a solo of "I Believe."

Such a wonderfully meaningful sharing of World Communion Sunday.

**Nancy Hammond-Chaffin, First Church of the Brethren, Flint, Mich.**

➔ The beauty and meaning you have all shared is truly from God. We have read about many different ways to come together at love feast: some wash feet separately, some together. Some have beef at their meal and some fruit, cheese, and crackers. Some sit at round tables, some at long tables. Some had their service in the morning, some in the afternoon, some in the evening. But, *one* thing is overwhelmingly consistent: people of God gathered together to remember what Christ has done for us and to serve each other in his precious name. Amen, brothers and sisters. Amen.

**Jamie Steamer Nace, Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren**