



**St. Andrew's By-the-Sea**  
*The Episcopal Church  
in Destin, Florida*

**MAUNDY  
THURSDAY**  
**MARCH 28, 2024**

**A homily by the Rev. James J. Popham**

Something happens. Somethings happens when we say the words Christ said at the Last Supper and invoke the blessing of the Holy Spirit over the bread and wine. It is something that defies ready scientific or rational explanation. It is something that has filled pages of densest and deepest theological volumes. It is something that we accept and embrace with a wonder and awe that conquers our curiosity and draws us to gather around the table of the Lord with open hearts and outstretched hands.

Somehow in some fashion, in some unfathomable way, we as a community of followers of Christ not only have invited his presence, but also trusted fully in his real presence among us in this distinctive sacramental way. Just as our predecessors have done since that last gathering of Jesus with his disciples around table in that upper room.

And why do we do this? Why do we gather around table break, bless, and share bread and sip from a common cup? Because Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." And for two thousand years we have done so.

And what we say and do is no mere reenactment of an historic meal among teacher and disciples. We say the words Jesus said. We bless bread and wine as Jesus did. And we do remember this last gathering of Jesus and his closest followers.

But what we do is more than that. When we recite Jesus' blessing, when we call upon the Holy Spirit to bless the bread and wine, we truly invite Jesus into our gathering, into our particular community of his followers. And we trust that in those outward signs of bread and wine, his presence is manifest, and we are blessed with an inward and spiritual experience, even one that defies explanation, but affects us deeply. Something, indeed, happens. We're not just telling a story. We are not just reenacting an event. We are engaging the divine. And...something, indeed, happens.