

Littlewood United Episcopal Chapel Fremont, CA

On Saturday, August 12th, we held a Love Feast among family and friends who've attended our worship services over the year. Ten adults and nine children were present. Our small meal greatly confirmed and strengthened bands of fellowship, recalling among us the mercies of an all-wise God.

Love Feasts were common among 18th century Anglican Evangelicals, especially those connected to pious religious societies. Though some Puritans earlier had Agape meals, the Society at Fetter Lane did much to renew the practice, especially for Whitefield and Wesley.



Our Feast followed the Wesleyite practice, the centerpiece being a preaching service following a few Testimonies. The Rev. Dcn. Casey Fargo, a moderate Presbyterian, charitably attended as our preacher. In addition to private hymns, Psalms 147 & 133 were sung from the New Version while several collects and a benediction were read from the BCP. From Tate & Brady, Psalm 133 nicely reads,

“How vast must their advantage be! how great their pleasure prove! Who live like brethren, and consent in offices of love!”

The early church suspended the Agape meal largely due to inordinate eating, but in primitive times it was joined to the eucharist. Eighteenth-century practice kept the common meal very small, often a morsel of seeded-cake with a draught of tea (or water) carried by a wicker basket and two-handled Loving Cup. Of course, we used John Cennick's famous hymn at meat.



To our surprise, Mr. Fargo declared his wish to begin regular Class Meetings, following the same General Rule used by 18th century Wesleyites. Consequently, six of us are gathering in Class every other Saturday--agreeing to watch, exhort, and pray for each other (thereby keeping a General Rule for the 'continued evidence of our desire for salvation'). After a trial period of three months, we will then tender vows to the Rule, formalizing the Evangelical fellowship.

Our difficulty was growing a rather small family circle into a class meeting. With the help of the reverend deacon, we finally made the turn. Indeed, we are probably the only 'methodistic' class meeting in the Bay Area (and likely California) that uses an authentic Rule. By adhering to Wesley's Old Plan, we hope to promote both private and public duties, to the prosperity of our souls, and the glory of our Heavenly Master.