

## Maundy Thursday Service 2020

Communion. When I think about Communion, the first thought that comes to my mind is sharing. Maundy Thursday is about sharing an intimate sacred experience. It is a very physical service, that includes not only eating together, but sometimes washing each other's feet while staring into each other's eyes. That is what we learn from the gospels. That is what happened during that last night when the disciples were together with their beloved Master.

*But is this really Holy Communion if we are all at home? Is this sacred ceremony holy, when we have to improvise with our own Kool Aid or who knows what kind of juice, bread, or crackers? Under these conditions, how do we know that this is truly the Lord's Supper?*

The only answer for me is this: We are one in the Body of Christ. In other words, we are one in Spirit. We cannot be separated. This is not just theology. Just as the sun appears to rise and fall, we seem to be separated. But this is an illusion. The sun doesn't rise or fall. We do not see things as they really are.

All Christians are united in Christ. We are co-located, as are all the particles in the Universe. We are together, even when we are physically separated in space and time. When Christians celebrate the Communion, Lord's Supper, Eucharist, or Mass all over the globe, we are one. It doesn't matter if we are in a cathedral in Paris, or at a soup kitchen in New York. This is why Christians use the Lectionary and observe collective feasts and holidays together.

We affirm that with Christ the barriers of space and time are but an illusion. For us Christ is still alive. God is still speaking. Our God is still putting petals on flowers and smiles on faces. We affirm that the Holy Spirit keeps us together, regardless of social distancing. What we have faith in has no boundaries or limitations. Our God is a powerful God, fully capable of meeting us wherever we are in space and time.

The good news in the midst of this outbreak is this: nothing can separate

us, because we are one in Christ. If you gave your life to Jesus you are always standing in the holy presence of God. Even if you can't always feel it, Jesus lives in your heart. There is a spark of Divinity placed in your soul before time. Therefore, even if we are miles away from each other, God's presence unites us.

This God, not me, the minister, makes the elements we take, holy and pleasing. All I do is remind you of the words of consecration. You can be assured that even if you are using V8 and a cracker, as a Protestant, your Communion is consecrated and holy.

So let's do this, you Priesthood of believers. Without further delay, let's remember the first Communion, the last night that Jesus spent together with his disciples before his death.

**Now, let us read: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

*The Institution of the Lord's Supper*

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, **"This is my body that is for[g] you. Do this in remembrance of me."** 25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."** 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

If you haven't done it yet, please, have a little juice in a glass and a piece of bread or cracker ready, so we can celebrate communion together. You can pause the video here if you need to.

Our service of Communion will not be exactly the same as when you do it in church, but perhaps you will find it even more spiritual. In light of the Coronavirus itself, perhaps the intensity of the experience will strengthen our Shiloh UCC community, and remind us that this is not a theory. We are truly one in the body of Christ.

**And now I will read a short service for communion** (I usually use this version when I bring communion to the sick so with the Coronavirus this version seems even more appropriate).

**Greeting: Hear the words of Jesus: Where two or three come together in**

**my name, I am there with them.** Our help is in the name of the Holy One, who made heaven and earth. Amen

***Prayer: Let us pray***

Gracious God, in your infinite love you made us for yourself, yet by our actions, we have fallen into separation. We confess that we are captive to sin and we cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved your with our whole heart.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your great compassion you sent Jesus, Your Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us that we might be reconciled to you in love. For the sake of Jesus Christ have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and follow your ways, to the glory of your name. **Amen.**

***Assurance of pardon:***

Anyone in Christ becomes a new person altogether; the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new. We believe the good news: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

***Communion:***

**The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it (here the bread is broken) and said, "This is my body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me."**

**In the same way, after supper he took the cup (cup is raised), saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."**

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**(While holding the elements) These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.**

And now let us take the elements together.

**Eat this, for it is the body of Christ broken for you.**

**Drink this, for it is the blood of Christ, shed for you.**

***Let us pray:*** We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have

known the presence of Jesus Christ and have received all his gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our savior. Amen.

***Let us pray as our Savior has taught us:***

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

**HYMN #460** “Be Not Dismayed (*God Will Take Care of You*)”

**Benediction:** The blessing of God Almighty: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Thank you for watching and taking communion with me. Even at a distance, we are One in the body of Christ! Stay healthy and safe! Bye-bye!