

World Communion Sunday
Luke 22:15-20
A Sermon by Rev. Garrett Walkup
Woodbury UMC
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The first Sunday in October is designated as World Communion Sunday, and according to the ancient scrolls and manuscripts of Google, World Communion Day was first established in 1936 by the Presbyterian church and spread from there across many Christian denominations to celebrate our oneness in Christ with all our brothers and sisters around the world.

At Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter where we get together with family, a big part of that is foods that we prepare and eat

When we take communion we don't gather and celebrate because we are getting a homecooked or exquisite meal, instead we get tasteless dehydrated wafers and a drop of grape juice. Not really a recipe for drawing people to gathering around the table

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

You don't have to be a theologian or expert in church history to understand that verse. And you don't need to understand ancient Greek or Hebrew to understand what Jesus meant when he said "do this in remembrance of me."

I think our challenge, like anything else that we do regularly is, how do we fight against communion being a repetitive, empty ritual?

How do we keep it authentic, relevant and needed?

I think our approach is to keep it a connecting experience, a humbling experience, and a sacred experience.

A connecting experience

Just like A Christmas Carol, communion connects us to our past, our present, and our future.

Past-it puts us in the room where it happened on the night he was betrayed with the disciples and with Jesus

Partaking of his presence is therefore not a physical eating and drinking but an inner communion with his person which uses the outward action as an expression of inward faith. Almost like your very own trip to the Holy Land, you were there!

Communion is a multisensory, we can, as Psalm 34 says, "taste and see the Lord is good"

Present-millions are taking communion right now

- humanitarians on the ground in the poorest places on earth
- missionaries fumbling through language barriers in remote villages
- chapel services in homeless shelters and prisons
- it takes us to the moon-Buzz Aldrin took it July 1969
- it connects us with people that we absolutely disagree with on certain issues
- it connects us with our church community
- with people who have done good things, world changing things

Future- 1 Cor. 11 “For often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes again”

When we take communion, we not only are saying we remember what you did, we are also saying “we take this now because of what you will do”

A humbling experience

The lord’s supper is sharing and serving.

I lead a service at the Lutheran Home in Southbury a few years ago and as I kneeled down to give the communion wafer to a resident, he opened his mouth. He wanted or needed me to place it on his tongue. I have to admit it rattled me. I had never done that before. It was humbling that’s for sure.

Recently I had a patient that wanted communion but due to his illness he was a choking hazard. After clearing it with his nurse, I crushed a wafer into tiny pieces and put drops of juice in a cup.

As someone who has served it to thousands of people. It is a humbling act to serve, and an honor.

But it also is a humbling act to receive it. As it should be.

I personally appreciate in this church that if you want communion you need to get up and come forward, putting your hand out.

As Jesus did, with washing his friends’ feet right before, we need to have an attitude of humility before, during and after we take it.

Lastly communion is a...

Sacred experience

The last supper was on the night of the Passover Feast. This feast commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Here is a quick reminder synopsis...

God sent a series of plagues on the Egyptians for not letting his people go, the final plague was to kill the firstborn son of every family in Egypt. But to Moses, the Lord provided instructions so his people would be spared.

Each Hebrew family was to take a lamb, slaughter it, and place some of the blood on the door frames of their homes. When the destroyer passed over Egypt, he would not enter the homes covered by the blood of the lamb.

The lamb dies instead of anyone in the home, the Israelites were liberated.

Jesus made shocking changes to the Passover feast menu, there was no lamb at this meal, except himself, the lamb of God. He was the lamb that set the captives free.

He is the broken bread. It is his blood that spares our lives.

Through Jesus, the Passover has been continued and fulfilled.

Communion is a sacred experience.

When Sarah and I got married I wasn't very involved (which was probably a good thing) but I do remember the biggest stressor was the invitation list.

Who gets invited, who would come if we invited, who should be invited but for some reason probably would not come, and based on venue capacity the dreaded cut list

Some hold strict ideas of who should be eligible to take communion in fact I have been turned down from receiving it

Do you remember in school standing in the cafeteria with your lunch tray wondering where you could sit? What a traumatic experience! We all have had moments when we were wondering if we were welcomed and accepted.

So who can take communion? I share the beliefs of the Methodist church and Olive Garden, when you're here, you're family!

1 Cor 11:28 Let a person examine himself then and so eat from the bread and drink from the cup

The Lord's supper is at the Lord's table which is on level ground and his invitation is to all who believe.

One of the things that drew me and my family to this church is you all are committed to building a bigger table for anyone who wants a seat

So if you are wondering if you can or should take it, ask yourself this question...

Are in need of nourishment that Jesus can provide?

Then come to the table.

eucharist- means thanksgiving

The table has been set for you

Amen