

At UMC.org, you find the following article: *We Are Nourished by Communion*.

“Like baptism, Holy Communion is regarded by Protestants as a sacrament. That is, it’s an act of worship ordained by Christ and is a means of grace. This does not mean that we become any more worthy of God’s grace by taking part in Communion. Rather, we open ourselves to the divine love that’s already there; we become more ready to receive that love and to respond to it.

As with baptism, we use common, physical gifts of the earth, bread and wine — though in United Methodist churches we prefer unfermented grape juice. All Christians are welcome at our table, whatever their denomination. Holy Communion is a family meal, and all Christians are members of Christ’s family. Therefore, in each congregation, when we receive the bread and cup, we join with millions of brothers and sisters across the ages and around the world.

Holy Communion (or the Lord’s Supper) is a mystery too deep for words. Its meaning will vary for each of us and from one time to another. But three essential meanings are caught up in this proclamation in our Communion service: “Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again” (*The United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 14).

“Christ has died”

In part, Communion is a time to remember Jesus’ death, his self-giving sacrifice on our behalf. As he said to the disciples at their last meal together, “Do this in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24). In remembering his passion and crucifixion, we remember our own guilt; for we know that in our sin we crucify Christ many times over from day to day. So the Lord’s Supper is a time of confession: “We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart....We have not heard the cry of the needy” (*The United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 12).

“Christ is risen”

But Communion is not a memorial service for a dead Jesus. It’s not a time to wallow in our own guilt. It’s a time to celebrate the Resurrection, to

Disciple Life

The Wesleyan Way

Week # 30



Start the Conversation:
Provoke One Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

What do you think about when you take communion? What does this sacrament symbolize to you?

recognize and give thanks for the Risen Christ. The bread and wine represent the living presence of Christ among us—though we do not claim, as some denominations do, that they become Christ’s body and blood.

In Luke’s Resurrection story, the Risen Christ broke bread with two of his followers at Emmaus, “then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him” (24:31). So, as we’re nourished by this meal, our eyes are opened; and we recognize Christ here in our congregation, our community, and our world. What’s our response? Thanksgiving! In fact, another of our words for Communion, the Eucharist, means thanksgiving.

“Christ will come again”

In Communion we also celebrate the final victory of Christ. We anticipate God’s coming reign, God’s future for this world and all creation. As Jesus said, “I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29).

We believe that we’re partners with God in creating this future, but the demands of discipleship are rigorous. In the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, in the fellowship of Christian friends gathered at his table, we find the nourishment we need for the tasks of discipleship ahead.

— From *The United Methodist Member’s Handbook, Revised and Expanded* by George E. Koehler (Discipleship Resources, 2006).

Carry the cross  and follow me.
Luke 14:27, NRSV

WEEKLY VERSES

A Week's Worth of God's Word

as found at Crosswalk.com

Monday

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. Psalms 95:1-2 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Joy knows no better explanation than laughter and song. We sing to the Lord because we are joyful! Our music is not inhibited or held back, but exuberant and as full of sound as it is of heart. Thanksgiving brings us into the Father's presence and it is our joy at being saved that leads us to sing.

MY PRAYER... O most wonderful and glorious God, thank you so much for saving me from sin, death, law, and futility. Thank you for saving me and giving me the assurance, through your Holy Spirit, that I can come before you with exuberant and overflowing joy. Your love and grace have not only given me hope but have made me your child. Hear my heart and be blessed by my songs of praise. Through Jesus I pray and because of Jesus I will shout your praise forever and ever. Amen.

Tuesday

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way - in all your speaking and in all your knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:4-5 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...The apostle Paul was amazing. He is writing one of the most problematic churches and yet finds reasons to give thanks for them. First, he is thankful for them because Jesus died for them. When God extends his grace to others, how can we not do the same? Second, he recognizes the areas of their abuse are also a reason to give thanks - they may have distorted it, but when reined in to honor God, these gifts could bless their church. Even though he has tough words to follow, Paul's example reminds us that a child of God is something to be cherished, even if they have problems.

My Prayer: Gracious Father, give me the heart to see reasons to be thankful for all of your children. I confess that it is often so easy for me to view others based on how they view me, share my theological opinions, or how much trouble they cause me. Forgive me, for I know if you had done the same with me, I would have never been one of your children. Please help me rejoice in your children. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.

Wednesday

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:15 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Peace - that illusive state of grace that incorporates all of life's well-being. Because of Jesus, we have true shalom -wellness in body, soul, and spirit. His relationships with others, his victory over sin, death and the grave insures that we can have peace, too! So as we receive the Spirit of Christ into our hearts, we can live with our brothers and sisters, no matter how flawed, in a state of peace. Besides, as Paul changes metaphors on us, we are the Body of Christ and of course a body does not want to be at war with itself. So live in peace with others, and do so with thanksgiving.

MY PRAYER... Blessed Father of all believers, please give me a heart to love your people. I know as the character of Jesus permeates my life, I will appreciate the preciousness of each of your children more and will come to see those difficult family members as the grit out of which you will fashion my pearl. I pray you give me grace till my heart matches my commitment to love all of your children. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.

Thursday

Enter [the Lord's] gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalms 100:4-5 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE... Worship is always about entering - entering into grace, entering with thanksgiving, entering to share with others, but most of all entering into the Lord's presence in a special way. But our entering is not the basis of worship. Instead, worship is about the Lord's faithfulness, goodness, and enduring grace. We come to God like so many before us, who are waiting with God for us. We come to praise him for all he has been, all he is, and all he will be. We come to enter and worship.

MY PRAYER... Faithful God, the Almighty Rock of Israel, the God on whom the generations trusted, you alone, LORD, are God. I praise you for your enduring grace and mercy. I praise you because I want my heart tuned to your will. I praise you, because I want to prepare for my longest lifetime, the one in your presence. I praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday

Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Some things you don't change, swap, or update. In an age when computer processors make major leaps every few months and software companies release new upgrades every year, we get programmed into looking for the new and improved version of everything. The simple but profound truth is that Jesus is Lord. No update need-

ed. No rival worthy. No change necessary. In fact, if we stray from this as the basis of our life, we put all we hold dear at risk. But if we continue, if we grow, if we root ourselves in this truth and make it the undergirding reality of our lives, then our future is secure and our victory assured!

MY PRAYER...Holy God, I thank you for the simple, challenging and enduring truth of Jesus' Lordship. Through your Spirit, I pray that you will conform my life to more closely reflect his lordship in my work, my family, and daily influence. Through the Lord Jesus I pray. Amen.

Saturday

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Philippians 3:17 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Everything! All! No matter what we say, no matter what we do, it is to be offered as a gift of thanks to God with Jesus' name, power, and honor attached! This makes all of life our worship and thanksgiving to God. There's no such thing as going to worship; if we live, if we talk, if we act it's worship. So how has your worship been lately?

MY PRAYER...Almighty and Most Holy God, I want all of my life to be lived out to your glory, a living testament of thanks to you for the grace you have given me in Jesus. While I do not always do this as well as I would like, I lovingly offer you my words, my actions, my heart and my mind to bring you glory by doing your will. Please, use your Spirit to remove the areas of self-deception from my life so that weakness and hypocrisy will not rob my discipleship of its intended worship of your majesty. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Sunday

Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...We are receiving the triumphant and glorious victory of God in his Kingdom. We will join with the angels and the saints of old and live with the Father forever in victorious and never-ending joy. But this Kingdom doesn't begin just when Jesus returns. This Kingdom has started now in his Church, his people, those in whom God's will is cherished and obeyed. So our worship should be filled with awe that the holy God of Israel is also the lowly God in Jesus who has redeemed us and made us to be a holy people unto himself. What else can we do but worship with heartfelt thanksgiving and wonder-struck awe?

MY PRAYER...Holy and Righteous Father, all things are yours. Thank you for sharing your blessings, your promises, your hope, and your victory with us in Jesus. Please help me to live a more thankful, victorious life before my unbelieving friends and as an example to my children so they may come to share your glorious Kingdom and ultimate victory. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.