

~ **Sharing Time as we meet and join in conversation together** ~

~ **Joys and Concerns** ~

~ **A Reflection on the Sacrament** ~

These are strange times, and this is strange way to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion – strange to be distant and still so very much together.

I remember a colleague telling me about how his congregation kneaded their prayers into bread dough on the Sunday before communion. They used a different loaf for communion of course, but the image of praying into the bread of life is a powerful one to contemplate. I thought about that as I made bread recently – about that and the memories I have of my mother kneading bread and the smell of bread warm from the oven as we arrived home from school on a wintery day. You likely have bread memories of your own...

I have a memory – an experience of sacrament and bread that draws me back into the body of Christ in a profound way. The experience – and now the memory – feed me as I needed to be fed – nourish me in a way I had not realized I needed to be sustained.

During my first year studying theology at VST our family moved from Edmonton to Langley to live. We rented the Presbyterian Church manse there between my sister's family in Aldergrove and my brother's in White Rock. Although we had family close by and were warmly welcomed by the church family in Langley, we missed our community of faith in Edmonton at Dayspring Church. I particularly missed my fellow elders as the session had been a diverse but nurturing and cohesive leadership group. I missed it as I miss our time in worship together now – as I miss gathering and passing bread and wine today.

Steve was still working for Edmonton Public Schools at that time – creating an on-line learning tool for teachers, administrators and other district staff. Most of the time he worked from the basement office in Langley but on one occasion I remember that he went to Edmonton for a few days. He was there over the weekend, so he worshiped at Dayspring. They celebrated the Lord's Supper that Sunday. When Steve got home, he pulled an unimpressive looking package from his luggage and handed it to me. "This is from Janet," he said. "She wanted you to know everyone was thinking of you – that she was thinking of you."

It was a small chunk of bread – part of the loaf they had shared in Holy Communion at Dayspring earlier that day – *the bread of life*. In that moment I felt fully connected again to my faith family. I consumed the bread reverently and experienced the sacrament once more as if for the first time.

It is my prayer that even though right now we are unable meet in the same physical space to worship and *break bread together on our knees*, we will still feel connected to our family of faith and to one another as we share in Holy Communion today. The *bread of life* is truly with us wherever we are. **Amen**

~ **Gathering at the Lord's Table** ~

For those who need, the bread waits.

For those who yearn, the wine lingers.

For those seeking transformation, the table beckons.

All are invited,

not because we have faith, but because we trust –

not because we understand, but because we hunger –

not because we know, but because we are loved –

not because we are well, but because we know our need.

The table waits, and heaven's host calls. Our place is here.

This is the table where Jesus hosts – the one who came as a servant – washing disciples' feet, feeding them with living bread, loving them into new life. Come to this table all who hunger and thirst.

We remember with thanksgiving the gracious acts of God throughout history and in all creation. We praise our God that we have been invited – to serve one another without pride, to forgive one another as we have been forgiven, to feast together as members of one family.

Around this table our voices fall silent as we pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. Fill them and fill us with the abundance of Jesus.

~ **Silence** ~

~ **1 Corinthians 11: 23-26** ~

I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you: on the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me." He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me." Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you broadcast the death of the Lord until he comes.

**The one who was buried but rose from the dead
is now present for us in this bread.**

**The one whose wounded hands were offered to the unbelieving
now reaches out in this cup.**

The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving these gifts in which God comes to us so that we may come to God.

~ Sharing Bread and Wine ~

After consuming the elements in your own space, please cross your arms over your chest as a signal that you are ready to continue. We will wait until everyone is ready.

~ Prayer ~

Loving God, we thank you for knowing when we are hungry – even before we know it ourselves. We thank you for the mystery of being joined with Christ in this meal as a community of faith. Grant us the humility and enthusiasm to return again and again to feast together at your table so that we may be continually nourished for the journey. We join in singing our prayer as Jesus taught...

~ Go in peace to love and serve the Lord ~