

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR DOT  
For Holy Communion on Sunday, June 7

On Sunday, June, 7, we will be sharing together a necessarily modified service of Holy Communion in this time of separation from each other for our own safety.

From the earliest days after the resurrection Christians opened their own homes as places for the church to gather. This weekly commemoration and reading of scripture were obviously prior to any formal leadership and structured ceremony in the church such as currently exists in our usual Service of Word and Sacrament. We will resume our more formal service at a future date.

Our service today is in the spirit of those early Christians, emphasizing that though we are separated in body, nothing can separate us from God's love through which we are one body in Christ. For early Christians, meals were a part of this service. It was a time for members to share of what they had, and they were referred to as agape meals. They were occasions of joy as the community celebrated the gift of life through Christ. This liturgy developed for online use includes the theological premise that lay sharing in the preparation and words of consecration over a table blesses the elements received fully and completely. In other words, there is no need for a clergy person to handle them given our current circumstances. This may not be acceptable to everyone and if so you do not need to follow the instructions relating to that part of the liturgy.

Your participation is of course voluntary, as is your decision whether to include any children in this part of the service.

Communion will follow our second hymn in today's order of service. Following are the instructions and liturgy we will use.

Before We Begin: Please read through this liturgy ahead of time and make preparations.

*Before the time of the service you will want to prepare some bread, a slice or a small loaf of any kind of bread or crackers. Let it be something you alone or you with others in your house may break and share. Prepare a cup or cups of juice -- perhaps grape or cranberry - or wine, with or without alcohol, or substitute water, milk, tea, or other beverage, understanding not all things are available at home.*

***Set these elements in the room where you experience worship electronically with our faith community. Perhaps you want to put them on a lovely cloth or fabric that reminds you of a special time or a person deeply connected with you in the communion of saints. Perhaps you will want to include a Bible, icon, or cross, light a candle or place a flower or plant or the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith beside the bread and the cup.***

***Thank you for your preparation.***

***You may want to read as much as you can of this service aloud to be reminded that God speaks to and through you.***

## **Celebration of Holy Communion**

### **Invitation**

For Holy Communion this morning,  
I invite you to lend Christ your table.

On the first day of Holy Week long ago,  
people throughout Judea arrived  
at the dusty gates of Jerusalem,  
primed with “Hosanna” in their hearts  
and Jesus asked to borrow a donkey.

On the Thursday that followed,  
Jesus rented or was given  
John Mark’s mother’s Upper Room  
to celebrate the Passover with the disciples.

On the afternoon of the resurrection,  
Jesus was invited into a house in Emmaus  
and used the bread of that hospitality  
to break and bless.

Lend Christ your table, your bread, your cup and your heart,  
for, as the disciples told the person who loaned the donkey,  
“The Lord has need of it.”

### **Prayer of Consecration**

Leader: We are one bread, one body, one cup of blessing.  
Though we are many throughout the earth  
and this church community is scattered,  
we are one in Christ.  
In your many kitchens, and living rooms,

rest your hands lightly upon these elements  
which we set aside today to be a sacrament.  
Let us ask God's blessing upon them.

**Unison: Gentle Redeemer, there is no lockdown on your blessing  
and no quarantine on grace.  
Send your Spirit of life and love,  
power and blessing  
upon every table where your child shelters in place,  
that this Bread may be broken and gathered in love  
and this Cup poured out to give hope to all.  
Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you.  
Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you.**

### **Words of Remembering**

Leader: We remember that Paul the apostle  
wrote letters to congregations throughout places  
we now call Greece, Turkey and Macedonia,  
and they were the first "remote" worship resources.  
Our online service has a long heritage.  
The Communion words sent to the church at Corinth were these:

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, and when he had given thanks,  
he broke it and said,  
"This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."  
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.”  
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,  
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

### **Sharing of the Elements**

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

**Unison: We are one in Christ in the bread we share.**

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

**Unison: We are one in Christ in the cup we share.**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Leader: Let us pray in thanksgiving for this meal of grace,  
rejoicing that, by the very method of our worship,  
we have embodied the truth that Christ's love  
is not limited by buildings made with human hands,  
nor contained in human ceremonies,  
but blows as free as the Spirit in all places.

**Unison: Spirit of Christ, you have blessed our tables and our lives.  
May the eating of this Bread give us courage to speak faith and act love,  
not only in church sanctuaries, but in your precious world,  
and may the drinking of this Cup renew our hope  
even in the midst of pandemic.  
Wrap your hopeful presence around all  
whose bodies, spirits and hearts need healing,  
and let us become your compassion and safe refuge. Amen**

*Liturgy for this service is adapted from materials recently written for online communion by two UCC pastors, the Rev. Maren C. Tirabassi and the Rev. Thandiwe Dale-Ferguson, who have given permission for their use.*