

Good still dark morning from a chilly hill in Rockport....

These will be brief “words” today..... I’m thinking about generosity this morning, as in the generosity of all those who helped us to have a successful “yard sale” yesterday – both those of us from within the church who were able to help with the whole affair, and those who came to our sale and bought many “treasures” so we would be able to send a good sized check to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to aid those most in need around the world. Generosity comes in many forms – willingness to serve, willingness to share one’s possessions with others, willingness to give from one’s pocketbook, willingness to share in spirit. Thank you to each one who helped to make yesterday’s sale a success. AND, if you’re of a mind, after church come downstairs and buy a few more “treasures” as we still have the tables set up with many items looking for new homes. We’ll take down the tables this afternoon and share what is left with Goodwill Industries or other places that work to meet the needs of those who need help in many ways. Generosity is a good thing. We can use more of it in this crazy, challenging time, don’t you think?!?

Note – I will be taking a week away from the church this coming week beginning tomorrow. Next Sunday, Rev. Dick Hanks will fill our pulpit. I will take a break from sending out “Fall Meditations” this coming week. As much as I love writing, I need a moment or two of respite from thinking too hard and writing down those thoughts.... I do plan to send out this morning’s sermon via Facebook later today for those who like to tune in to the church’s Facebook page.

Blessings to all reading these words and thanks to everyone who helped make yesterday’s (and this morning’s!) yard sale a success.... We will be sending UMCOR a check for over \$700! Susan

“Take this and divide it among yourselves”
A Sermon for the Federated Church of Thomaston
Thomaston, Maine
Sunday, October 3, 2021
Rev. Dr. Susan Stonestreet
Scripture: Luke 22:14-20

When the hour came, [Jesus] took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to [the apostles], saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

Luke 22:14-20

Will you pray with me. Bountiful and nourishing God, unite us in the hearing, the understanding and the sharing of the acting out of Jesus’ last meal with

his disciples. Sharpen our openness to the power of communion in our lives together. Lead us into new and renewed ways of offering compassion and hospitality to all who come to seek out your sustenance in this faith community. Show us how to take the cup and the bread that are Jesus Christ enfleshed and divide them among ourselves and with others in new ways. Amen.

This morning our focus is on holy communion, not only because we will share in the holy meal today, as we usually do on the first Sunday of the month.... but because it is World Communion Sunday, around the world today. I did a little research this week to find out how this day in the Christian church came about. It was “a gift of the Presbyterian Church to the larger ecumenical church. The first celebration occurred at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1933 where Dr. Hugh Thompson Kerr served as pastor.

John A. Dalles, a PCUSA [Presbyterian] pastor who has researched the history of World Communion Sunday noted in 2002 that “David S. Bell (the late Clerk of Session and church historian at Shadyside) recalled that Dr. Kerr first conceived the notion of World Communion Sunday during his year as moderator of the General Assembly in 1930. [His son], the Rev. Dr. Donald Craig Kerr, was sixteen in 1933. He has related that World Communion Sunday grew out of the Division of Stewardship at Shadyside. It was their attempt to bring churches together in a service of Christian unity – in which everyone might receive both inspiration and information, and above all, to know how important the Church of Jesus Christ is and how each congregation is interconnected one with another.

The concept spread very slowly at the start. People did not give it a whole lot of thought. [Rev. Kerr’s son continues,] it was during the Second World War that the spirit caught hold, because we were trying to hold the world together. World Wide Communion symbolized the effort to hold things together, in a spiritual sense. It emphasized that we are one in the Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” (www.presbyterianmission.org)

And aren’t we struggling to hold things together now.... the Covid pandemic with over 700,000 dead in our country alone, political in-fighting and between political parties, social unrest, natural disasters.... Can’t we get a break here somewhere? Apparently not. And so it seems all we can do is try to “hold things together” as best we can.

Yesterday was a good example of our holding things together for the sake of those individuals and families around the world who are struggling in ways most of us could never imagine. We held a “yard sale” downstairs in Leach Hall with all

the proceeds to go UMCOR, that's the United Methodist Committee on Relief. This arm of the United Methodist Church works globally with many other organizations to help those in the greatest need to "hold things together" in their lives.

People bought "treasures" they didn't even know they needed or wanted yesterday downstairs and in turn helped those whose needs and wants are massive beyond measure. We don't have a final tally yet, but we think we took in at least \$700, and perhaps more. Go downstairs after the service this morning and see what "treasures" you can find and buy so we can add to the check we'll be sending to UMCOR.

Wanting to try to "hold things together" is why Dr. Kerr came up with the idea of World Communion Sunday in 1933. At that time it was an experiment in trying to "hold things together" among all the Christian denominations of the day. Today World Communion Sunday is still an experiment in trying to "hold things together" not only in Christian churches, but in this crazy, stress filled, exhausting, angry and sick time we are experiencing.

Holy communion is an act, an action that does something. In the act of holy communion we believe Christ lives. In our sharing in that act Christ lives in us. Jesus lived and ate with his companions. He died at the hands of those who would *not* hear his message from God. He lives in us in *our* hearing of his message and in our eating at his holy table, whenever we come together to share in the blessing of the sustenance we receive from being the church of Jesus Christ together.

My favorite theologian and writer, Frederick Buechner, writes of holy communion, "To eat any meal together is to meet at the level of our most basic need. It is hard to preserve your dignity with butter on your chin, or to keep your distance when asking for the tomato ketchup. To eat this particular meal together is to meet at the level of our most basic humanness, which involves our need not just for food but for each other. I need you to help fill my emptiness just as you need me to help fill yours. As for the emptiness that's still left over, well, we're in it together, or it in us. Maybe it's most of what makes us human and makes us brothers and sisters."¹¹

In our text for today, the story of the telling of the first holy communion, Jesus invites his disciples to share bread and wine with him. The verse that most stands out for me is 22:17, "Take this and divide it among yourselves...." We are not to covet what we have and keep it from others. We are to share. We are to

have “lawn sales” for the benefit of those whose needs are so much greater than our own. We are to divide what we have among others as we try to “hold things together” as best we can in this challenging, scary and exhausting time.

Let the people say, “Amen.”

Federated Church in Thomaston
United Church of Christ United Methodist Church
All Are Welcome
Sunday, October 3, 2021 – World Communion Sunday

Rev. Dr. Susan Stonestreet, Pastor Alice Billheimer, Organist/ Choir Director
Lector: Jackie Harjula
Guest Musicians: Susan Stonestreet, Ron Anderson and Neil Stetson

Please be respectfully silent once our worship service has begun.

An asterisk () indicates where you are invited to stand.*

***Bold print** indicates that the people speak these responses & prayers.*

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude “His Eye Is on the Sparrow” Susan on harmonica

Call to Worship

Leader: We come together with Christians around the world this day to share in Holy Communion!

People: We come together seeking fellowship with one another and longing for the day it may be so for all people.

All: We come together with faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love. Let us worship God!

***Opening Hymn** “This Is My Father’s World” 144 Blue hymnal accompanied by Ron & Susan

An Invocation....

Responsive Reading “Faith is a gift of God” (see bookmark insert)

A Moment of Silence

Special Music “The Family Bible” sung by Neil with Ron on guitar

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Scripture Reading Luke 22:14-20

***Gloria Patri No. 70 Glory Be to the Father....**

Message “Take this and divide it among yourselves” Rev. Dr. Susan Stonestreet

***Hymn of Meditation** “How Great Thou Art” 77 Blue Hymnal accompanied by Ron & Susan

RESPONDING IN FAITH

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns with God and Each Other

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer.....

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.

Offertory “Let Us Break Bread Together” 618 Blue hymnal Ron on guitar

***Doxology No. 95 Blue Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow....**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Service of Holy Communion for World Communion Sunday

***Closing Hymn** “Some Glad Morning” (I’ll Fly Away) (see insert) accompanied by Ron & Susan

Benediction

Postlude Ron on guitar

Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, October 10, 2021

Guest Preacher – Rev. Dick Hanks

Job 23:1-9, 16-17; Psalm 22:1-15; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

Prayer List -- Hold in your prayers all those affected by the corona virus and the families of those who have died from the virus.... And all those families affected by the use of addictive drugs and alcohol among their members.... And all those dealing with the ravages of cancer near and far..... And add a prayer for Frances Hernandez, recovering from brain surgery, Tammy Whirty, a friend of Margie’s, dealing with cancer challenges, and, from Jackie a request for prayers for Kyle Cloudier, **and** continued deep prayers for Hank and Lucy as Hank endures his cancer journey with the help of Hospice, **and** continued prayers for Ursula recovering...and for “Cody,” who doesn’t live locally but needs prayers for guidance; **Kristin Parker O’Neal, Jo Ann Parker’s daughter, who has had brain surgery;** Enid, Ann Foster, Carol Moss, Fred

Bagnall, Harriet Williams, Julie Pollitt, Zeke Bryant, Sally Harjula Elliot, Helmut Steger, John Flaherty, Doug and BJ Thomson, Heather Van Buskirk, **Tiffany, Lucy's granddaughter**
Please feel free to contact Susan by phone (207)322-1948 or by email freerangepastor@gmail.com to add or drop the names from the prayer list AND to let her know if you would like for her to stop by for a visit sometime. She's always glad to have a chat with you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monday-10/4/21.....6:30 pm -8:00 pm: Troop Meeting
 Thursday-10/7/21.....10:30 am – 2:00 pm: Quilters
 Sunday-10/10/21.....9:30 am: Worship Service
 Suggested Food Pantry Donation..... Cereal

Deacon for October: Sandra Caron
 Reminders for next Sunday, 10/10/21
 Greeter/Usher: Kathleen
 Anderson
 or: Arlene
 Woodman

Lect

Flowers: Kathleen

Anderson

Collection Total for Sunday, September 26, 2021:

Pledges -	\$440.00
Loose -	\$ 47.00
Total -	\$487.00

The 2021 weekly budgeted operating cost for the Church and parsonage is \$1623.00 per week.

**Federated Church of Thomaston
 United Church of Christ
 &
 United Methodist Church
 Together Since 1929**

Sunday, October 3, 2021
World Communion Sunday

8 Hyler Street, Thomaston, Maine 04861 (207) 354-6105

FCT email is thomfedchurch@gmail.com

WiFi password is #1Church

^[1]Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking, A Seeker's ABC*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1973, 1993, p. 63-64.