

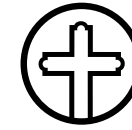
CLASS 101 – Membership
Why is Membership Important?
Next offering: May 7 & 14, 7-9 p.m.

CLASS 201 – Maturity
“How do I deepen my faith?”

CLASS 301 – Ministry
Spiritual Gifts & “How do I fit in?”

CLASS 401 – Mission
“How do I share my faith?”

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TRIETSCH

May 4, 2008
Study Guide & Daily Readings

The Meaning of Holy Communion

I Corinthians 11: 23-26

The purpose of the Corinthian letter is to address actions that were considered contrary to the body of Christ. In particular, Paul addresses social behaviors that divided church members against each other. It is difficult to identify the catalyst for Paul's admonition. But we can surmise that the divisions were around social, economic and theological issues. Further Paul took issue with the way certain pagan excesses were being embraced by the church members.

The Lord's Supper was corrupted by the manner in which it was served. Different groups were allowed to disassociate themselves from others on the basis of class and position. Evidently, there were those who became drunk while participating in the cup of Christ. The passage in Corinthians 11:23-26 is a reminder of the Lord Supper's institution and meaning.

In four verses, Paul reminds his readers how it all started and what its original purpose was. This represents the first written account of the origin of the Lord's Supper, preceding in time the writing of the gospels by several years. Paul had received the account as part of the church's tradition and had passed it along faithfully, and now he was reminding them again.

The Lord's Supper is rooted in history. It was a certain man, the Lord Jesus; it was a certain night, “the same night in which He was betrayed;” and it was a certain event in which He took real bread and wine and instituted the sacred rite.

The Lord's Supper is about God's gift. We catch the word of sacrifice in Christ's words: “*This is my body, which is broken for you.*” In this statement, He is identifying Himself with the Paschal Lamb, the lamb that was sacrificed in connection with the Passover. But we make a mistake if we interpret the admonition to “*do this in remembrance of me*” as a call to remember only His death. We are to remember Jesus' life, teachings, purpose and resurrection. The death of Jesus brings life and hope.

The Lord's Supper celebrates a new covenant and a new relationship with God. With the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, we come to know our relationship with God is based on love, hope and forgiveness, instead of judgment and unworthiness.

United Methodist Beliefs

Part II of the discipline of the United Methodist Church includes the "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task." In this section, we find both the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church (the two denominations that joined together to form the United Methodist Church.)

The following is written about our beliefs concerning Holy Communion:

"We believe the Sacraments, ordained by Christ, are symbols and pledges of the Christian's profession and of God's love toward us. They are means of grace by which God works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening and confirming our faith in him. Two sacraments are ordained by Christ our Lord, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper.

"We believe the Lord's Supper is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another. Those rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until He comes."

Next Week's Worship:

"Yoked with Christ"

Celebrate Our Confirmands & Mother's Day

Daily Readings

Please note: As communion recounts the saving work of Jesus, let's look at four biblical images of God's act of salvation in Christ. Monday through Thursday you will explore each image. Friday, we celebrate what God has done for us in Jesus the Christ. The Study Guide readings allow you to dig deeper.

Monday, May 5 – Read Mark 10:45

The scene is a slave market or a prison camp. There are those who have lost their freedom. They are being sold into slavery. Someone steps up to pay the price or gives the ransom money to purchase their freedom or to redeem them. How have you been held captive in your life? Can you accept the ransom Jesus has paid with his life?

Tuesday, May 6 – Read Mark 3:23-27

The scene is a battlefield. God and Satan are at war for our possession. Christ is the warrior of God who invades the realm of Satan. On Good Friday, Jesus gave His life for us in the battle for our soul. On Easter morning, God triumphed over the enemy and delivered us from death to life, from darkness to light. Where is the war for your soul being waged in your life?

Wednesday, May 7 – Read Matthew 26:26-29

The scene is a religious place with a bloody altar where sacrifices are offered. The priest comes to make a sacrifice to atone for the people's sin. Blood is shed, and a life is offered up. But in this image, the priest sacrifices himself. Jesus lets his own blood be shed in order to make peace again between the people and God. In what ways can you show gratitude to God for the sacrifice of Jesus?

Thursday, May 8 – Read Romans 5:6-11

The scene is a courtroom. We have been found guilty. The sentence is death. But a righteous man who has obeyed the law perfectly comes and stands beside us, takes the death sentence upon himself, and suffers the consequences of our guilt. Order is restored. We no longer have to fear the Judge, but are free to go out to begin a new life. What is separating you from accepting the new life that God has offered in Jesus Christ?

Friday, May 9 – Read Isaiah 53

As you begin this day, read this scripture as a prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done in Jesus Christ.