



# Beneath the Spires

## Communion: "The Food of Our Souls"

### By Pastor Joanne

My earliest memory of communion is of round metal trays being passed down the pew. The first held tiny little cubes of bread and the second, small glass cups with grape juice. I suspect that I must have been 12 or 13 at the time. I didn't spend much time wondering about the mechanics of the sacrament. That was just how we did it.

And decades later in a church on Long Island, the bread and juice were offered in the same way at the altar rail. Those individual cups came into vogue in the late 1890s when concerns about spreading disease were rampant. But for centuries before, a single loaf of bread and a single cup were the norm for communion.

And that single loaf and the single cup seem most authentic to Jesus's gathering with his disciples for a meal in the Upper Room. Loaves of bread and cups of wine would have been on the table. And, as he often did, Jesus used those



everyday items to teach, to speak of the sacrifice he would soon make on the cross as he established the practice of the Lord's Supper.

As United Methodists, we believe that the sacrament of Holy Communion is an outward and visible sign of God's abundant grace for us. We come to the table not as individuals, but to be fed as community to share in the grace and love of God. The message of unity in Christ is reinforced when the visuals match the words: one bread, one cup, one in the Body of Christ. Little tiny cubes of bread

and mini-glasses of juice just don't convey to me the magnitude of God's grace. I always think, give me a big chunk of bread, a big chunk of God's grace!

In a sermon encouraging early Methodists to partake of communion as often as possible, John Wesley wrote: "The grace of God given herein confirms to us the pardon of our sins, by enabling us to leave them. As

our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls: This gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection."

The words of institution in the UMC liturgy tell us that the elements become "for us the body and blood of Christ." While Wesley did not accept the doctrine of transubstantiation, he did affirm that Jesus was present when one consumed the elements with faith. The elements are made  
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### Save the date:

Hosting Emergency Shelter Partnership	1/27
UMCMK Volunteers at Food Pantry	1/29
Scout Sunday	2/9
Ash Wednesday	2/26
Palm Sunday	4/5
Easter Sunday	4/12

### Did you know?

*Consecrated elements left over after Holy Communion should never be thrown in the trash or poured down the drain. They are to be used to bring the sacrament to the homebound, or consumed by humans, or returned to creation by scattering the bread for the birds and using the juice to water trees and plants.*

sacred for our use as a means of God's grace - the sanctifying grace that we need to walk as children of God.

The four ritual actions of the pastor in the Lord's Supper are modeled on the actions of Jesus on the night of his last meal with the disciples and at the table in Emmaus. The actions are: *take* (preparing the bread and cup); *bless* (giving thanks over the bread and cup); *break* (breaking the single and give (the bread and cup are given to the people).

The UMC table is open for all who love the Lord and choose to repent of their sin; we offer an open table with bread and unfermented juice, so that all (children, non-members, the unbaptized, those in 12-step programs) may partake. Offering gluten-free bread for those who need that consideration allows us to extend the table even farther.

The importance of the "Great Thanksgiving" - a prayer addressed to God - was revealed to me during communion in a UM Mission church in Honduras.

The children in that impoverished neighborhood came forward to receive the elements with incredible joy. God's love was fully visible on their faces. I can't remember when I've seen that kind of overflowing joy during Holy Communion. I wanted to capture it and pour it out on every communion ritual for the rest of my life.

I found myself pondering what it means to give the bread of life to a child who lives in a home where there is no bread to eat. What does it mean to give grape soda (in place of wine or juice) to a child that lives in a community with no running water? The children don't know when they would eat next, but came to this place of loving community to be fed by the body and blood of Christ.

Communion gives us a foretaste of God's coming kingdom, but also prompts us to recognize the presence of Christ, the Risen One, in our midst here and now.

Christ has died, Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again.

The grateful joy of the children in Honduras symbolizes the love that we can expect to embrace as beloved children of God when we are called to the final feast with Christ.

So may we all come to the table with complete joy in response to the incredible gift of salvation we have been given through Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!

## "A New Year" prayer

Faithful Companion,  
In this new year I pray:

To live deeply, with purpose,  
to live freely, with detachment,  
to live wisely, with humility,  
to live justly, with compassion,  
to live lovingly, with fidelity,  
to live mindfully with awareness,  
to live gratefully, with generosity,  
to live fully, with enthusiasm.

Help me to hold this vision and to daily renew it in my heart, becoming ever more one with you, my truest Self.

- Joyce Rupp



## January Birthdays

3	Joanne Visaggio
4	William Morales
10	Shirley Porter
13	Jane Alcalá
	Jeff Kent
15	Leanne Summers
17	Ellen Exum
18	Nick Kent
22	Eric Smith

## Providing Meals, Shelter for Our Neighbors

The church will host guests of the Emergency Shelter Partnership (ESP) starting the night of Monday, Jan. 27 and ending the morning of Monday, Feb. 3.

ESP is a coalition of interfaith congregations in Mt. Kisco, Armonk, Bedford, Bedford Hills, Chappaqua, Katonah, Briarcliff Manor, Croton on Hudson, and Ossining that offer overnight shelter and warm nutritious meals to homeless adults during the coldest months of the year. Several community organizations also provide a variety of support services to shelter participants from November through March.

During our week, we will need volunteers for the following:

*Supplying a hot meal served each evening in the chapel. Volunteers to eat with guests.*

*Provide a breakfast/lunch bag as our guests leave the church each morning.*

*A church member to sleep overnight in case there is a building emergency. An ESP staffer is present to chaperone our guests.*

*Warm gloves, hats, and socks; or donations to purchase these items.*

Donations for the purchase of milk, water, and coffee are also needed.

A sign-up sheet is available in Halstead Hall after each Sunday service. Or you can call the church office to volunteer. We expect 15-25 guests. For questions please contact Dave Visaggio at 914-262-9973.



# *Living Nativity*

Friday, Dec. 20 Bilingual presentation  
with Iglesia Cristiana Fe y Esperanza



*Thanks to everyone who made the night possible.*



# Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 22 Worship



Thanks to all the wonderful performers and our director, Heather Kent.

## Pastor's Break-Week Bowling Challenge

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### *Donate to the Church While You Shop Online*

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**[ We pray. We love.  
We serve. ]**

## Let's #TackleHunger

Our Sunday school kids will be helping to #TackleHunger by collecting food and donations on Sunday, Feb. 2 for the "Souper Bowl of Caring."

Capitalizing on the energy around the big game - the NFL Super Bowl - the goal is to empower our youth and unite the community to help fight hunger locally. The "Souper Bowl of Car- ing" has been going on nation-

wide since 1990 with all donations and food going to local feeding pro- grams. Our donations will go to the Interfaith Food Pantry.

The kids are making plans to receive donations at one of the local gro- cery stores.

So please remember to bring a can or a package of soup, or a monetary donation with you to church for the big day. Or why not take up a collec- tion at your Super Bowl party? Or add up the final score of the game and donate that amount of money to the cause?

So no matter who you'll be cheering on at the game in Miami, Fla., you can help #TackleHunger right here in Mount Kisco.

Questions? Contact Lisa Porter at 914-666-5128.



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