



October 4, 2020

## World Communion Sunday

It was always exciting sitting in the pew as the shiny trays of neatly cubed Wonder Bread would be passed person to person. The next trays to follow would be tiny glasses filled with grape juice. Hearing that these represented the body and blood of Jesus Christ made it clear that this was a special moment. What was called Communion was celebrated Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and then World Communion Sunday. The frequency of the meal changed over the years. Regardless of when it was celebrated, I knew it was special, life giving and full of mystery.

The year I left for seminary I experienced Communion every Wednesday in Santee Chapel at Lancaster Theological Seminary. There I was introduced to actually getting up and processing forward to receive the torn bread from a loaf placed in my hand and then a chalice held for me to dip the bread and eat. I thought only Armenian Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Episcopalians did that. My world opened up and I have never looked back.

The first time I took communion was the Holy Week after Confirmation. The tradition in my home church was to be Confirmed on Palm Sunday and then your first Communion would follow. I couldn't wait. I was so excited. It was the moment I had been waiting for. I took the Wonder Bread cube and I drank that tiny cup of juice and I felt.....nothing. I was so disappointed. I felt absolutely nothing. What happened? This was the sacred meal I couldn't receive until I was Confirmed and I had waited with such anticipation. But I felt absolutely nothing except disappointment.

One World Communion Sunday I was at a service where there were breads from many parts of the world on the table. Instead of shiny trays on a high altar, there were breads from all over the world presenting a harvest of riches on a table placed in the middle of the chancel. We moved forward and we tore off our own piece of bread of choice and then dipped it into a

chalice and returned to our seats for prayer. Seeing that abundance on the table was a prophetic visual moment that transformed White Wonder Bread Communion into a banquet I envision of God's creation. The powerful diversity of God's people reflected in those breads was breathtaking.



What I realized later is that instead of seeing the diversity of God's people in the breads, I started to see the many ways God has created us and the never-ending ways God reveals God's self to us. God is limitless... I am the one who has limits. However, this sacred meal was beginning to stretch my limited imagination to consider all that God is beyond my wildest dreams.

World Communion Sunday is when Christians all over the world partake of this common meal. Think about how people all over the world throughout a 24hour period are receiving this sacrament. We are all participating in a most holy moment when God has taken what is ordinary and transformed it into substance of many forms to meet us in love, holiness and resilience for the world in which we live.

On this day we are ONE with the ONE who made us, named us, blessed us. The beauty is that God isn't just in the past tense but in the present tense. God is still making us, naming us and blessings us. The moment I experienced the beauty of this abundant blessing is the moment I began to feel the overwhelming power of this simple meal. The mystery in the bread of life and the cup of blessing is a mystery that fills us with the sustenance of God that we take into ourselves and an abundance of life we share with others. This year, may we the people of God receive the gifts of God and truly become the channels of God's global peace, love and justice for all creation. May it be so.

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