



Devotionals – 1-7 October 2023
**World Communion Sunday: A
 reminder that we are always
 welcome back home.**

Read: Philippians 2:1-13

“God of brilliant sunsets and shining rainbows, God of golden daffodils and glowing autumn leaves, God of all the blues of sunlit seas, God of all the shades of green in bush and field, in rivers and oceans and lakes, in rough stones on a beach and polished jewels in a showcase, God of people, brown and amber, pink and ebony, artistic and athletic, practical and visionary, compassionate and laughter-bringing, God who colors us a world of variety, we thank you that you have made each of us unique, that you

call us to contribute our special colors to the life around us. We come to you in thanksgiving and worship. Amen.” (Aotearoa / New Zealand)

When I attended seminary, I learned a lot of new words: Eschatological. Pneumatology. Exegesis. Hermeneutics. It doesn't really matter if you know what any of those words mean.

The premise of Christian work is accompaniment — the idea of walking together, to work alongside, to accompany, to bear the good news of Jesus Christ, the message of liberation for the oppressed, in our bodies.

Oftentimes, the church is called the body of Christ. It's an idea that medieval Christian mystic and saint Teresa of Ávila captured in her short poem:

*Christ has no body but yours,
 No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
 Yours are the eyes with which he looks
 Compassion on this world,
 Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
 Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world...*

We, the church, are the body of Christ for each other and for the sake of the world.

Teresa understood that we carry in our bodies the same work and compassion and blessing that Jesus embodied. Indeed, we the church are, quite literally, the very body of Christ for each other and for the sake of the world.

In Jesus's words: The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

What began as the feeding of the five thousand, a miracle of abundance, has become something more.

Jesus's society was a society living under the occupation and oppression of the Roman Empire, a society that privileged the few at the expense of the many, a society plagued by food shortages and insecurity, malnutrition, and disease. Scarcity, not abundance, was the order of the day. In the midst of this scarcity and oppression, Jesus recognizes a deep hunger for bread and more than bread. Jesus offers loaves of bread in abundance, and then he makes the stunning declaration: ***I am the bread of life.***

The bread that Jesus offers is more than bread. It is indeed life itself, abundant life amid scarcity. The bread that he offers is indeed his very self — the eternal **Word of God** who became flesh and entered our reality, the grit of human existence, the great **I AM** who crosses thresholds and subverts boundaries and draws all people to himself and calls them friends.

The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

Here, in this place, we hear this Word of Life and are fed by the Bread of Life. If there's any truth in the phrase "you are what you eat," it's here: Around this table, we become what we receive — the body of Christ, raised up for the world. We are the body of Christ for the sake of each other, bread for a world so desperate for the promise of life abundant.

Gunilla Norris writes these words in her poem *"Plenty"*:

*Having shared our bread,
we know that we are
no longer hungry. It is enough
that you see me for myself.
That I see you for yourself.
That we bless what we see
and do not borrow, do not use
one another. This is how we know
we are no longer hungry... that
the world is full of terror, full of beauty
and yet we are not afraid to find solace here.
To be bread for each other. To love.*

To be bread for each other... To be the body of Christ for each other... The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

We are that bread, people of God. In this thing called church, we are continually feeding and being fed by each other, having been fed first by the one who calls us and draws us to himself.

The World Communion Sunday is always a time of rest and sabbath and being fed by the global community. We gathered together from many places. Daily we heard the Word of Life and tasted the Bread of Life. In our time together, we are fed, by Christ, by each other, refreshed and revitalized, in order to feed others, sent forth to bear witness to the promise of abundant life in a world so desperately in need of that good news.

There is joy and community at this Holy table. At the Holy Table we will literally dance as the altar furnishings and communion bread and wine are brought forward. At this Holy Table, God forms us into a Beloved Community, sent to accompany God's people in this broken, beautiful world.

Wisdom has built her house; she has slashed her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table. ... "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight" (Proverbs 9:1-2, 5-6 NRSV).

Homecoming usually occurs in October for high schools and colleges. Often there is a football game, and sometimes a parade and a dance, associated with the celebration. However, it is also time to a welcome back alumnus, those coming back to a place where they once studied and lived, those who have had a much longer connection to the school than the years they attended.

In this spirit, World Communion Sunday is a homecoming celebration, a reminder that all of us, no matter our denomination, are part of the body of Christ. It is a welcome back home to remember that once we were a small house church, gathered together to remember our Lord's life, death, and resurrection. Christians all celebrate differently, in different forms and customs, but there is always a similarity in the words used to remember that Jesus took bread and said,

"Take, eat, this is my body," and then he took a cup, and gave it to them.

Jesus declares in Matthew 26:29, "I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (NRSV). Jesus is preparing us for homecoming, and every time we celebrate communion together, we are celebrating homecoming.

On World Communion Sunday, we celebrate with our siblings in Christ around the world, in all our diverse cultures and customs surrounding this meal of remembrance.

No matter where we've wandered, no matter how lonely we think we are, God is calling us to come home. For those who have tried to find their own way, Wisdom calls out to us, and has set the table, ready for us to come home. Every time we share this meal together, we are reminded that we are home. That journey to becoming a person of faith, to believing in Christ, may have begun long ago, but our alumni status still stands: **We are always being called home, and we are always welcome.**

Jesus says: The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

We are that bread, and we are that flesh. We are the body of Christ raised up for the life of the world. Indeed, we are bread for each other. **Amen.**

PRAYING TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER –
YOU'RE NOT ALONE, LET US PRAY WITH YOU & FOR YOU
PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED

- **Bro. Bob Krell** is rooted in our hearts and prayers as we shower him and the Family with our love, care, and support. Bro. Bob is at home. He will be receiving in-home care to build up his strength. The Family is grateful for all your prayers and support. We continue to pray for Bro. Bob's healing, restoration, and strength. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering our prayer. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Michael Cahoon**, son of Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. As Believers, we know prayer is the most powerful action you can take for loved ones facing cancer. Don't hold back; "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth (Psalm 145:18)." Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon your blessed Name and we pray for your merciful heart to surround Mr. Michael with love, strength, and courage and we ask Your hands to touch him with the power of healing. May he be directed to the right treatment in Your blessed Name as we ask You Lord to represent the physicians, nurses, and medical care aids and administer them in Your spirits. May every cancerous cell be cast out and replaced with good ones. May every spot of this deadly cell be wiped out by Your powerful hands. Amen. Cards and notes filled with prayers and hopes for miraculous healing can be sent to: **Mr. Michael Cahoon, C/O: Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, 1615 Beverly Lane, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Robert (Bob) Kuhaupt** is still in the healing hands of our Great Physician. Healing God, be near Mr. Bob in his time of weakness and pain; sustain him by your grace, that Mr. Bob's strength and courage may not fail; heal him according to your will; and help him always to believe that what happens to him here is of little account if You hold him in eternal life, loving Lord and caring God. Amen. Please send your prayers of healing and support to: **Mr. Robert (Bob) and Ms. Joy Kuhaupt, Sussex Mills Apartments, W240 N6345 Maple Ave. #116, Sussex, WI 53089.**
- **Ms. Nancy Whitson's** husband, **Robert**, passed away on 30 July 2023. We extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences to Ms. Nancy and her family. She is still admitted at The Pavilion at Glacier Valley. She requests your prayers and support as she continues to journey with health concerns. Please send cards and notes of encouragement to: **Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Tom Damp** has been comfortable and safe in his home for years. This has been possible primarily due to home healthcare services. However, with significant changes in coverage from health insurance, availability of in-home health care personnel, and other life circumstances, Mr. Tom is having to make unexpected decisions; stay in his home or transition to assisted living. He asks for your prayers and care as God reveals, God's plan for his new season. Caring Father, we thank you for the opportunity we have as a church family to pray and care for Mr. Tom Damp. We ask that you bless him with the resources to keep safe from harm. Please surround this whole process with your wisdom and mercy, Lord. We pray for Mr. Tom's health and care in this whole process. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen. Card and noted can be mailed to: **Mr. Tom Damp, 1707 Sunset Ridge Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**
- No one enters this life a follower of Christ. If we are God's children, it is because we were born spiritually sometime after we were born physically. God uses our prayers as one of the means of drawing people, including our grandchildren, to God. We lift up prayers of healing and strength for **Mr. Ben Barth**, fiancé of Ms. Heather Wolf, granddaughter of Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge. Mr. Ben has been given a new heart and new lungs but is experiencing kidney concerns. Cards of prayers for healing and restoration can be mailed to: **Mr. Ben Barth, 969**

Tuscola Lane, West Bend, WI 53095.

- We remain in prayer and support for **Mrs. Ann Cording**. Great Physician, you can heal us in a heartbeat. We pray for God's miraculous healing today. Take our pain away, according to Your will, in Your time. We're not promised a painless life on this earth, but You do want us to live a happy one. Send Your Spirit to help us see past our circumstances and onto Your calling on our lives. Sickness and injury can't stop God-placed dreams. Fill our hearts with hope as we wait on You to move in our lives and flow out from our hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen. Cards and notes of love and care can be mailed to: **Mrs. Ann Cording, 1416 S. Silverbrook Drive, West Bend WI 53095**.
- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** having been diagnosed with Epilepsy, is still working with her medical team to find the correct medications and doses to control the seizures. She is very grateful for your love, prayers, and support. Special prayers for Mr. Pat as he cares for Ms. Sandy. Cards and notes can be sent to: **Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095**.
- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We're keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: **Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095**.
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: **Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095**.
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to **Mr. Allan and Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830**.

*We continue to celebrate our 175th year of service,
commitment and Methodism in West Bend, Wisconsin.*

"Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present, Anticipating Our Future"

Prayer: Almighty God, you have called us to one table, but we have pursued our own course. You have promised us the abundance of all creation, but in our greed and envy, the world goes without. Have mercy on us. Forgive us, again. Transform us, at this table, and for this table, and send us from this table as servants of your righteousness, by the power of your Son, our Lord. Amen.

And we will become bread for a hungry world. And we will become drink for those who thirst.,

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin