

The Union Press

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

One of the most important gifts God has given his church is The Lord's Supper. This meal communicates the gospel not only visually, but physically through bread and wine. Over the next two month, I want to do a mini dive into the sacraments, so that UPC might have greater appreciation and thanksgiving for God's grace symbolized and communicated in The Lord's Supper and Baptism. February will focus on The Lord's Supper, and we'll start by looking at the sacraments in general.

WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

The word "sacrament" comes from the Latin word "*sacramentum*" historically used to speak of something sacred. This word covered a broad spectrum of religious rites and ceremonies. As Reformed Protestants, we have a more specific definition. "*A sacrament is a sign and seal of God's covenant of grace, representing Christ and all the benefits he achieved at the cross.*"

God's covenant of grace was his gracious plan to redeem humanity from our sins. We see the seed of this promise in the Old Testament as early as Genesis 3:15. That seed grows and blossoms throughout the Scriptures until it is ultimately fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, he paid the penalty for our sins, purchasing salvation through his blood, for all who would believe in him. Jesus refers to his sacrificial death as *The New Covenant*." This New Covenant

As a *sign*, the sacraments are visual representation of the New Covenant, and all the benefits Jesus provides through his death and resurrection. They are a sign pointing us to God's grace in Christ.

In the ancient world kings used to do a similar thing when they sent out a decree, they would seal the decree with wax and stamp the wax with their signet ring, a signet unique to them so that whoever opened the degree knew it was authentic. God does the same thing with the sacraments. As a *seal*, the sacraments function as a guarantee of God's promises assuring us that His promise of redemption is ours in Jesus Christ.

HOW MANY SACRAMENTS ARE THERE?

Some traditions recognize many sacraments, but as Reformed Protestants we recognize two, Baptism and The Lord's Supper; here's why.

First, Jesus commanded his followers, to observe only two sacraments. In Matthew 28:19, before Jesus ascends to heaven, he tells his disciples "*Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.* Earlier in the gospel accounts, during Jesus' final Passover meal with his disciples he tells them to "**Do this in remembrance of me.**" Later in 1 Corinthians 11:26, the Apostle Paul reminds the church that "*As often as they eat this bread and drink the cup, they proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*"



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The Due Date for the
March Newsletter is
February 18th.

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Second, only these two sacraments are visual signs that point to Jesus' work in the New Covenant. In the case of the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine symbolize Christ body given and blood shed for our sins upon the cross.

Third, sacraments are gifts for the entire body of Christ, they are not practices done only once, nor are they practices limited to certain individuals. The Lord intends to strengthen his body, the Church, in their faith, and does so through the Spirit work in and through these ordinary elements of bread, and wine.

WHERE DID THE LORD'S SUPPER COME FROM?

As we alluded to in the section above, The Lord's Supper finds its biblical roots in the Old Testament sacrament of Passover. Passover celebrates God's grace to Israel by releasing them slavery in Egypt. Specifically, Passover remembers how God graciously provided a sacrifice for his people, a lamb, whose blood would be spread across the door frames of their homes so that the Angel of the Lord would Passover them when he came to bring death to the Egyptians.

When Jesus eagerly sought to share one final Passover meal with his disciples before he dies; he does something incredible. He takes this long-standing Jewish tradition and reframes it around himself and what he was going to accomplish at the cross. Jesus reveals at that Passover meal that he is the true Passover Lamb, graciously given by God, whose body would be given, and blood shed so that the wrath of God would Passover sinners like you and me. If not for Jesus, you and I would be slaves just like Israel, not to Egypt, but to sin and death. And, just like Israel, we are saved only through the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ who takes away the sins of the world.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SHARE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

First, we are reminded how significant this meal is? Each time we share The Lord's Supper together we hear "*The Words of Institution*" from 1 Corinthians 11:23-29:

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

These words remind us that we are sharing in this meal to remember Jesus' sacrifice and the grace he freely gives to us. This grace, though free, was costly.

These words remind us of the covenantal nature of this meal. Jesus said "this is the new covenant in my blood" pointing us to the fact that by faith, we receive all the promises and blessings of God that Jesus has secured for us through his death and resurrection.

These words also tell us that this meal is to be regularly observed in the life of the Church. Paul says "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*" There is good reason to believe that the early church in Acts shared in The Lord's Supper every time they met together, we heard how they were "devoted to the breaking of bread." The early Reformers who line our heritage thought the same. John Calvin passionately advocated for believers to receive weekly communion seeing the benefits in this meal to nourish the faith of the Church. It makes us think about the merit of these older worship practice and their benefit for us today.

Second, we believe Jesus Christ is spiritually present with us when we share this meal. Physically, we know Jesus is reigning in heaven, but spiritually he is the host that invites us to share in this feast around his table. However, there is nothing special about this bread and cup, they are very ordinary, but the Holy Spirit does extraordinary things as we receive them by faith. What does the Holy Spirit do? The Spirit communicates the grace of God to us for the strengthening of our faith.

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Our faith is strengthened...

- as we are reminded of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.
- as we receive assurance of the promises of the gospel.
- as we experience communion with the Lord Jesus.
- as we experience communion with other believers.
- as the Spirit equips us to live lives worthy of the gospel as ambassadors for Christ.

Third, in this meal we not only proclaim our allegiance and union with the resurrected Christ, but also our allegiance and union with his people. This is a family meal that communicates both the vertical and horizontal aspects of our faith, as we feast with Christ, and our brothers and sister in the Lord.

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE ADMINISTER THE LORD'S SUPPER?

The short answer to this question is yes, because how we administer The Lord's Supper tells us something about the nature of the gospel. Churches in various traditions throughout history have done this different ways for example:

Administering The Lord's Supper by intinction, which often involves the congregation coming forward in a line, taking a piece of bread, dipping the bread in juice, and partaking of the bread and juice together. Sometimes members share in a common cup, where every participant sips the wine or juice out of the same chalice as they come forward. During the pandemic we saw the increased use of individually sealed communion elements, like the ones we currently use.

Some of these methods for administering the elements are more valid than others, but as I wrap up, I want to suggest why having the congregation receive communion in the pews is the preferred way to administer The Lord's Supper as it further emphasizes God's grace to us in the gospel.

In many of the other methods mentioned, the congregation is asked to come forward and receive the bread and cup. We could see this as the congregation symbolically coming forward to receive the grace of God in this meal. However, when the congregation remains seated and the bread and wine are brought to them, where they are, it symbolizes God's grace coming to us in Jesus Christ.

Scripture tells us *"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God."* (Rom. 3:10-11) If we do not seek God, how do we receive the grace of God? God's grace would have to come to us.

John in the opening chapter of his gospel tells us how *"The Word (Jesus Christ) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."* (John 1:14, 16-17)

One of the most beautiful and profound aspects of the gospel is that while we were at our worst, while we were enemies of God, and helpless to do anything about it, God's grace came to us in Jesus Christ. This grace is not earned, it is underserved, yet it is freely given, to all who, in faith, would call upon the name of the Lord.

By receiving the communion elements in the pew, the congregation is reminded of this important gospel truth, that Jesus has come as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world through his broken body and shed blood.

On March 3, the next time Union shares in The Lord's Supper together, we will be serving the elements to the congregation in the pews as another way in which we are reminded of the grace of God in the gospel. The Session understands that personally packed communion elements are convenient and have their place as they are particularly helpful for those who are worried about the spread of germs as was the case during the pandemic. Therefore, we will have those cups available for those who wish to use them.

Our hope is that our congregation would look forward to sharing this meal together with excitement and anticipation, seeing how it immerses us in the gospel being reminded not only of what Christ has done, but how he has done, by coming to be the Savior we so desperately needed. This gracious meal is truly good news that we can taste and touch.

OFFICERS IN TRAINING



OTHER NEWS

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Colleen Sheaffer is continuing Cheryl Wallace's work of compiling a new picture directory. This directory is important so we can put names with faces. If anyone needs their picture taken or would like a new photo taken, you have a couple of choices:

- You can send Colleen a family picture, with the names of everyone in the picture, to colleensheaffer@aol.com or text her cell phone at 717-917-1076.
- Colleen and Marty Greenleaf can take pictures after church on Sundays. Please remember **they are not professional photographers** but have kindly volunteered to do this. Julie Walton can take your picture at church on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 am until 2 pm.
- We want to get the directory out quickly, so please don't delay this task. As you talk with friends and family who may not be in church every Sunday, please encourage them to submit a picture if they want to be in the directory.

SOUPER BOWL CHALLENGE

Score a touchdown to stop hunger in our community! Cheer on your favorite team while helping Food Bank restock their shelves in support of local families. All soups are appreciated and donations are due by February 11th.

KNOTTING QUILTS WILL BEGIN

Tuesdays starting February 6th at 9am until we are done. We would love to see you!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Giving for December: \$17,518	December Expenses: \$26,972
Year to Date Giving: \$159,063	Year to Date Expenses: \$178,829
Avg. Attendance: 59	Christmas Eve: 75
Sunday School collection for the Glovers: \$89 (\$1,981/year)	



2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 1:00 Deacons	2 Groundhog Day	3
4 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 4:30 Prayer Service	5 7:00 Trustee Mtg	6 9:00 Quilting	7 6:30 Mid-Week Growth Group	8	9	10
11 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	12 1:00 Bible Study 7:00 Bible Study	13 9:00 Quilting	14 6:30 Mid-Week Growth Group Valentine's Day Ash Wednesday	15	16	17
18 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	19 Presidents Day	20 9:00 Quilting	21 6:30 Mid-Week Growth Group	22	23	24
25 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	26	27 9:00 Quilting	28 6:30 Mid-Week Growth Group	29		

FOOD BANK NOT AVAILABLE

FEBRUARY GREETERS

- 4 – Dan & Pat McCardell
- 11 – Karen Roselle
- 18 – Larry & Colleen Sheaffer
- 25 – Sandy Stewart & Judy Greenleaf

There are new Greeter & Fellowship sign-up sheets downstairs in the entryway. Thank you in advance to everyone who serves in these roles.

LECTIONARY PASSAGES

February 4th

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 40:21-31;
 Psalm 147:1-11, 20c;
 1 Corinthians 9:16-23;
 Mark 1:29-39

February 11th

Transfiguration of the Lord

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6;
 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

February 18th

First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10;
 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

February 25th

Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16;
 Psalm 22:23-31;
 Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38



I would like to thank everyone for the cards, prayers, visits and food during my unfortunate accident. It was greatly appreciated. ~ Eileen Scotten



FEB. BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Blanche Church
Lori Kelley
- 4 Ruth Barker
- 5 Bradley Fuller
Faye Chase Whyte
- 7 Nathan Supplee
- 10 Dorothy Walton
- 12 Verna Herr
- 14 Jerry Whiteside
- 18 Richard Stewart
- 23 Dorothy Herr
- 26 Thomas Hastings
- 28 Nancy Ambler



Thank you for thinking of me this holiday season with your generous gift. I appreciate your continued support of me and our military members. May the Lord bless you all this upcoming year. Thanks again!
 ~ Trey McCardell

Thank you for your generous gift! I appreciate your continued support for me and all of our armed forces. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! God bless!
 ~ Bailey McCardell

Dear Union Church Family, I want to thank you for your thoughts, prayers, cards, and phone calls regarding my lumbar fusion surgery, my blood vessel eye disease and my diabetes. I try to stay upbeat but the pain and slow healing do get me down at times so I really appreciate your continued prayers. I am a work in progress and God's time table is different than mine. I need to have the Shoemaker determination that I will eventually get better no matter how long it takes. Thank you for your prayers and thank you to God for His healing touch. ~Judy Phillips.

To our Union Family,

We were hoping to get back to church to say a proper good bye, however, it wasn't possible.

Ray and I would like to thank each and every one for your continued support over the years. We are sad to be leaving the home that Ray spent so much time on renovating. This decision was one that we have been pondering since my auto accident in October of 2018.

We had thought about selling and buying smaller in southern end but the real estate in the southern end is very high.

Ray had not been happy with his job over the past year. We had always wanted to move north closer to his daughter Aley and her husband Clint and retire there. So, instead of moving twice in 5 to 7 years we decided to make the move now.

The sale of the house was quick, so we have been in a fast-paced mode since.

We received some awesome news over the holidays, we are going to be blessed with a grandchild in early July. So, God must have had a plan for us and he is putting all the puzzle pieces together.

We will miss each and every one of you!

Our new address is: 1176 PA state rt 54, Montgomery PA 17752.

My mother is now living at the Presbyterian Home of Williamsport, her address is:

Gloria Almer Rm 103

C/O Presbyterian Home of Williamsport

810 Louisa St, Williamsport, PA 17701

We will be 2 miles from the Little League Hall of Fame, 3 miles from Clyde Peelings Reptile Zoo. If you are ever in the area, we would love to see you. We are hoping to get back down and spend a church service with you in the near future, once everything has slowed down.

Thank you and God Bless,

Cheryl & Dwight Ray Wallace

Union Presbyterian Church Per Member Asking

The EPC has changed the "Per Member Asking" (formerly Per Capita), from a flat dollar figure to 1% of our incoming revenue. One percent of our current undesignated revenue would result in an average "per member" contribution of \$23 to the national work of the EPC for this year. As our revenue and membership increase, we might expect slight variations in this number from year to year.

As you may remember, we are also asked to support the local work of our presbytery (The Presbytery of the East). Members are encouraged to give \$13. With these two offerings, the total "Per Member Asking" for this year is \$36.00.

We ask everyone to prayerfully consider contributing this amount, over and above your regular contribution to our church operating needs. This offering will be sent to the presbytery and the GA office. Checks can be made to Union Presbyterian Church with "PMA" in the memo line.

~Your Session

Union Presbyterian Church
5637 Street Road,
Kirkwood, PA 17536



UNION PRESS

FEBRUARY 2024

SOLANCO MEALS ON WHEELS

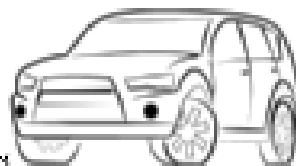
WE OFFER READY TO EAT MEALS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO

- IDENTIFY WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY
- IDENTIFY WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY
- ARE LIVING ALONE & UNABLE TO PREPARE MEALS INDEPENDENTLY

MEALS ARE FRESHLY PREPARED, NUTRITIOUS, AND ARE PROVIDED AT A LOW COST



FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AT



717.786.3426