

Summerland United Church
Oct 5, 2025
World Communion

Threshold and Christ Candle

World Communion Sunday was started by Presbyterian minister Hugh Thompson Kerr in 1933. He wanted people to know, experience and share the unity of Christians around the globe. Celebrating world communion Sunday reminds us that we are all connected, Christians yes, and all of humanity are connected in the web of life that stretches into all of creation. Having different kinds of bread on the table encourages us to have a greater appreciation for diverse worship practices and cultures around the world.

As the polarization of beliefs and people around the world increases, remembering the love and light that connects us all is more important than ever.

Scripture Reading: Lamentations 3:19-29 & Luke 22:17-19

Whether you take what is written in the bible as fact, myth, metaphor or story, listen for the meaning it has for you on this day.

19 I remember my woes and my wandering,
the wormwood and the gall.

20 I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.

21 Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:

22 YHWH's favor is not exhausted,
nor has God's compassion failed.

23 They rise up anew each morning;
great is your faithfulness.

24 "YHWH is all I have" I cry,
"So, I will wait with patience."

25 The Most High is good to those who hope in God,
To all who seek God's presence.

26 it is good to wait quietly
for YHWH will set us free.

Luke 22:17- 20

17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Reader: May God bless our understanding of these sacred words.

All: Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Today is World Communion Sunday. Christians all over the world will celebrate communion today. This matters because not all denominations of Christians celebrate communion every Sunday. Some, like Anglicans and Catholics do, other churches celebrate monthly, others every 2 or 3 months or only once or twice a year. This is for a variety of reasons. But today, the first Sunday in October Christians are encouraged to celebrate communion as a global act of unity.

Unity. I'm admit I'm not really feeling like we're all the unified these days. In fact, I think the differences between Christianity's left and right are getting stretched further and further apart. A little like one of the stretchy Gumby dolls with arms that stretch and stretch. But they only stretch so far before they snap back and the hands slap you in the face.

And I'm not so sure I have a whole lot more stretch in me. I've been thinking about compassion fatigue a lot these past few weeks. It's a term primarily used for health care providers, yet I think it applies to plenty of us in the world today. Compassion fatigue is when you've provided so much love, care, compassion to people around you that you just run out of the ability to keep on loving, caring and having compassion. It presents as increased anxiety, mood issues, sleep disorders, apathy and irritability.

Am I wrong in thinking I'm not the only one in this room who's running out of the ability to feel compassion for all the suffering in the world? It's so endless. Every time we turn around, more suffering, more cruelty, more violence – and caring about it all is exhausting. Especially, when those causing the suffering, cruelty and violence claim to love Jesus. Love God. Will celebrate Communion today in their churches – connecting us all – unity. And I'm not sure the message of "be the bigger person, continue to practice the Love of Jesus, even for people who are hard to love" works very well right now. It isn't just fatiguing to be the bigger person – its irritating.

I remember my woes and my wandering, the wormwood and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me, says the writer of Lamentations. Wormwood is bitter tasting, gall is poison. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope, continues the writer, YHWH's favor is not exhausted, nor has God's compassion failed.

God's favor is not exhausted, even when we are. God's compassion has not failed, even when ours lapse. And thank goodness for that. It means we can take a break, it means when the world becomes overbearing it is ok to shut it all out for awhile. (and not

feel guilty about it). I'm not saying we quit all together, I am saying that sometimes it's totally okay to say, God you're in the schedule now, I'm on a break.

God's faithfulness continues, so I will wait with patience, says Lamentations, which reminds us that waiting with patience is a restful waiting. A calm, serene and tranquil waiting. *God is good to those who put their hope in God*, and when we've rested and when the waiting is over – we join together, we connect in worship and we connect through the practice of remembering the life, death and new life of Jesus through the sharing of a simple meal. In that sharing we connect (or reconnect) with our faith, with Jesus, with God and it brings nourishment – physical and spiritual. And in that there is unity – unity with our past and our present, for better or worse.

We Gather Together at the Table: Worldwide Communion

Today, we join Christians around the world who gather at Christ's table in many languages, cultures, and traditions. On this World Communion Sunday, we remember that though we come from many places, we are one body, sharing one bread and one cup in Christ.

We've got some different breads from cultures around the world.

Bannock – unleavened bread made from oat or barley flour brought by Scottish settlers to North America, prior to the introduction of European grains, Indigenous people used maize, camas bulbs, or other starchy root flour. Now it's primarily made with wheat flours. It is a symbol of resilience, survival and identity for many indigenous people.

Focaccia – is a flat leavened bread from Italy. has a soft springy texture because it uses a lot of olive oil. Its called *panis focacius*, derived from the latin word *focus* – which means hearth or baking place.

Naan – is a flat leavened bread from central and south Asia. It is traditionally cooked in a clay oven. It's a staple in may countries in particular Indian and Pakistan

Lefsa – Norwegian and Swedish flat bread made with riced potatoes and other grains. It's traditionally served around Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Tortillas – unleavened bread from Central and south America. Traditionally made with maize/corn flour. The name comes from the Spanish meaning little cake.

Matzo – simple, unleavened flat bread made from flour and water.

Gluten Free Bread – Gluten is a complex protein found in many grains. It's what makes bread flour bind together in the baking process. Some people have difficulty digesting this protein, so regular bread makes them feel sick. Gluten free bread means they can enjoy bread and communion safely.

Blessing

May the blessings of God,
the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit
go with you into the world. Amen.