

Cornerstone's First Communion Liturgy

Explanation

Today marks our first corporate observance of the Lord's Supper, or Communion, at Cornerstone. I've been looking forward to this day ever since the first idea of starting a church in Westford. Since it is our first time, it is right that we should explain a few things.

What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper **is a meal** involving bread and wine that Jesus Christ shared with his disciples, his closest friends, on the last night before his death. If you look at the back of your bulletins, you'll see a description of this meal from 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Jesus was not surprised at the events that lead up to and included His crucifixion on the cross. He understood and submitted to God's plan. He talked about it with his disciples many times, preparing them for what was to come. This was His last night. And He wanted to share it, in a meal, with His friends. He made special arrangements to make sure this meal was prepared for them.

But the Lord's Supper is more than just that particular meal that Jesus shared with His disciples nearly 2 centuries ago. **It is a command** to his followers. Jesus says "Do this...". When we take the Lord's Supper, we are obeying Jesus, following the same words he gave to his disciples on His last night.

On that night the disciples were celebrating with unleavened Passover bread. In our case, we'll be using baked leavened bread as well as gluten free bread for people with food sensitivities. On that night, the disciples were celebrating with Passover wine. In our case, we'll be using grape juice.

The Lord's Supper **is also remembrance**. Jesus says to do it in remembrance of Him. Christians have been re-enacting this meal for almost 2000 years. Remembering Jesus, the perfect spotless Lamb of God, who lived a perfect obedient life, yet gave His body and blood over to God's judgment for our sin.

More than just remembering, the Lord's Supper **is a proclamation of Christ's work**. It is physical, tangible, observable. You can see it. You can taste it. Paul says: "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." When we take the Lord's Supper with real bread and a real cup, we are proclaiming to each other that the real Jesus died a real death on our behalf.

Beyond a remembrance and proclamation, the Lord's Supper **is Christ's special presence**. This is something probably impossible to fully explain or grasp. It is a mystery. But Jesus told his disciples that this bread was His body, and this cup was his blood. While we don't see or believe that the bread and juice physically change, and we are not cannibals, when we take the Lord's Supper together, Christ is with us in some way. We are spiritually feeding on Christ. He is ministering to us.

Finally, the Lord's Supper **is a promise of a future greater feast**. In Revelation chapter 19, we see the description of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where all of Jesus' followers are gathered for the uniting of Christ with his Bride. The Church. Past, present, and future. You and I who have put our faith in Christ. Those you love in Christ but miss because they are far away or who have died. The whole Church is going to be at the marriage feast, dressed in perfect white, fully righteous because of Jesus, celebrating because He prepared us to enter His Father's house. It is going to be the best party we could ever imagine.

Who can take?

At Cornerstone, like Immanuel Church that planted us, we practice open communion. Anyone who has put their faith in Christ is welcome to take the bread and the cup. Please, join us as we share in this together.

Who should not take?

But the Bible does warn the Church to be especially conscious of what the Lord's Supper means. It says that we should examine ourselves before eating the bread and drinking the cup. Those who take it unworthily bring judgment upon themselves. So if you are not a believer in Christ, we'd ask that you let the bread and cup pass you by. Jesus is the only one that can make us worthy for anything. But if you have put your faith in Christ, He makes you clean. Come to the table, and dine.

How will we share this meal?

I'll recite the words of institution over the bread, and Andy and Jonathan will pass it out. While you are waiting for it to come to you, or while you have it, wait so we can take together. Use this time to examine yourself. Remember Jesus. Pray to Him. Thank Him. Once everyone has a piece of bread, I'll invite us to take together. Afterwards, we'll do the same with the cup.

Breaking The Bread

- "For I received from the Lord
- what I also passed on to you:
 - The Lord Jesus,
 - on the night he was betrayed,
 - took bread,
 - 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."

Passing the Cup

- "In the same way,
- after supper
- He took the cup, saying,
 - "This cup is the new covenant
 - in my blood;
 - do this, whenever you drink it,
 - in remembrance of me."