

A strange but wonderful thing happened to me this morning. My wife's church celebrated Holy Communion by Zoom, much like we will be doing on **Sunday, August 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am**. There we were, each of us gathered together from the safety of our homes, as Pastor Joanne began the liturgy from Immanuel's altar table. Nineteen of us were gathered together listening to scripture, offering prayers, singing hymns, and sharing in the body and blood of Jesus; all from the safe and sacred spaces of our homes. No, we weren't gathered in a church building, but we were together – oh and someone else was there too.

*"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them"* (Matthew 18:20).

Today is the first time I have received Communion since early March. I suspected that I was hungry for the Sacrament, but it wasn't until I gathered with others, the fresh aroma of bread rising like incense before me, that I realized just how starved I was for it. Like those crowds on the Galilean hillside who long ago gathered in hunger around Jesus' feet, I found myself this morning overwhelmed and amazed at God's abundant presence – and it all happened in the ordinary space of my kitchen. The place where guests have gathered in casual conversation; hundreds of family meals have been cooked and where hungry kids have ravaged the refrigerator in search of after school snacks. In this ordinary place, God acted in extraordinary love this morning.

This time of pandemic has forced the world to re-think all of its assumptions about who we are and how we are connected. Gone for good is the erroneous belief that any one of us is a single, solitary island. We have come to see too clearly that what we do, and what we don't do has powerful consequences for everyone. Not only has the world had to re-imagine life, but so too has the church. In just 5 months, decades of change have come to the church. No longer do we assume that God's presence is limited to one hour on a Sunday morning inside a building. From Zoom meetings and online worship services, the sacredness of God's presence has gone out from 597 East Avenue, to hallow our ordinary homes in extraordinary ways. Those places in which we live out our everyday lives, have become cathedrals of God's extraordinary presence.

But we are still hungry, and I couldn't fully appreciate that reality until this morning's Zoom Communion service. Until this morning, I had almost forgotten what it was like to taste God's presence in a piece of bread and a sip of wine. There in a symphony of bread, wine, scripture, prayer and song, my heart took flight and I found myself being fed at Jesus' feet.

We are hungry and God's amazing food truck is on the way. Join me on Sunday, August 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am either by computer or by phone, for a Brief Order for Holy Communion. On that day, we will gather from the sanctity of our homes to pray, sing, and eat together. On that day, Jesus of the Galilean hillside will not only be with us, but will spread forth for us a feast of rich foods; a heavenly banquet of extraordinary love. If we are going to be God's voice and heart in the world, we need the nourishment of this meal of God's abundant love more than ever. We have waited far too long for this meal. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, our wait is over.

Peace and Love,  
Pastor Doug