

10/3: “[Sacraments] reminded me that Christianity isn’t meant to simply be believed; it’s meant to be lived, shared, eaten, spoken, and enacted in the presence of other people. They reminded me that, try as I may, I can’t be a Christian on my own. I need a community. I need the church.” -Rachel Held Evans

In Rachel Held Evans’ book, *Searching For Sunday*, she explains how her return to church was aided by the sacraments (Communion and Baptism in the UMC). She says:

“It seemed fitting to arrange the book around the sacraments because it was the sacraments that drew me back to church after I’d given up on it. When my faith had become little more than an abstraction, a set of propositions to be affirmed or denied, the tangible, tactile nature of the sacraments invited me to touch, smell, taste, hear, and see God in the stuff of everyday life again. They got God out of my head and into my hands.

In the Wesleyan theological world, we believe that the sacraments are “means of grace,” that is they are places in which we experience and learn more about the love of Jesus through elements that are essential to our everyday lives; water and food. Sacraments are “outward signs of an inward and invisible grace,” or as Held Evans puts it, “They get God out of our head and into our hands.” Sacraments are also intentionally a part of our community worship, and not private events. In baptism, the church congregation makes a covenant to walk alongside the baptized (and/or their parents/guardians) to be a support in whatever ways they need along the journey of faith. In communion, we encounter God’s sacrificial (Agape) love in ways that we all can (and must) reenact multiple times a day, literally tasting and seeing that God is good.

The sacraments are also a reminder that we are not able to learn how to love by ourselves. Love requires community. In these Holy rites, and in the holiness of the ordinary moments that they inform, we have the opportunity to participate in sharing love and support in ways that take the principles of our faith out of the books and out of the catechisms and into the lived experience of community.

This Sunday, we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion as we typically do, but this Sunday is also designated as “World Communion Sunday.” It is a day when many protestant churches celebrate Christian Unity, and the good that we can do as a part of the Global community of followers of Jesus. So let us come together, come to the table and take this Holy mystery into our hands with children of God from all over creation who are divinely invited to embody the community of God’s love.