

Proper 12 B, RCL  
Trinity, Bend  
Ephesians 3: 14-21  
Psalm 145: 10--19  
John 6: 1--21

One afternoon a Mom was making her 5-year old son, Isaac, an American cheese sandwich. He asked her what was the difference was between yellow American cheese and white American cheese. His mother admitted she did not know. To which Isaac replied, "You should go to church more often." Perplexed his mother asked, "Why?" He responded, "Well my friend Ryan goes to learn about cheeses."

We've come to church to learn about Jesus and what he says about food, especially the bread of life, the food for our souls. Scholars think that the feeding of the 5000 was a precursor to the sharing of bread and wine at the Last Supper.

Since the blessing and sharing bread with the disciples is considered the first Eucharist. Let's look at the meaning of the Eucharist we share in every week.

There once was a little German boy who resolutely refused to eat his soup. He was a stubborn little lad, and because of his refusal he slowly wasted away. When Suppenkasper died, he was buried with a soup bowl on his cemetery headstone.

It seems to me that our relationship with God is built through our prayer life. And a part of that spiritual life is our regular attendance at the Holy Eucharist. That holy meal that was given to us by Jesus Christ himself.

Now I know that has been difficult during the pandemic, watching the service online is not the same as being here in person. But in a few weeks both services will be open for in-person worship, while the 10 am service will also be streamed for those who don't feel comfortable being indoors with a large group

But for some reason some of us leave not feeling very full. Perhaps our failure to really be nourished by Holy Communion is, that like Suppenkasper, is that we do not eat our soup.

Let me suggest an appetizer course. Whenever you go to a banquet, or a just a party meal you usually start with appetizers.

Often the first course is a really nice meal is soup, so today I would like to suggest that we begin our meal with “Won-ton soup.” If you enjoy Chinese food, then you are probably familiar with won tons. They are light, fluffy pastry creations filled with pork, chicken, shrimp or crab and often placed in a wonderful soup.

In Chinese *won* means “cloud” and *ton* means to swallow. Won tons do resemble high fluffy clouds that drift across the sky. Eating won tons can be like swallowing a cloud. As they slip down the throat, we find that while they do not have a silver lining they are filled with mouth-watering delights.

There is a sense of mystery in both clouds and won tons. In the case of clouds, the mystery within is water, batches of sky fog. Clouds like communion are complicated in their utter simplicity.

The mystery of Holy Communion is that the gift of Our Lord Jesus Christ which is not simply bread and wine or flesh and blood but the Spirit of whole person of Christ, God as human.

When we go back to the story of the Exodus we are reminded that the Jews in the wilderness were led by a cloud by day and all through the night with a glow of fire. All through out the old testament God is frequently referred to as being in the clouds. Even in some of those old Sunday School pictures God was behind the clouds.

When we look at the marvelous creation of God and really watch it. Be it watching clouds or a sunrise or a sunset. We have to be present with God for some time. The sun doesn't set quickly you know. Often the clouds don't move very rapidly.

I remember when we had the full solar eclipse a few years ago Dick and I took chairs and our special glasses to a place where we could see without distraction. We waited for quite a long time until the moon covered the sun and then just sat there in awe. This was a gift of God's creation that I wasn't going to miss.

That is not our usual way. We are often in a hurry to get somewhere and we don't take time to build our relationship with God. We don't take time to watch the clouds.

God the creator is the one who brings us here, but we need to know something of God if we want to fully participate in his banquet. That comes when we spend time together. Some of that time may be in watching His creation..... clouds, children, elderly, pets, sunsets or flowers. Once we've had the hors-d'oeuvres then we can continue with the meal.

Maybe you've had a very busy week, and really didn't remember to watch a sunset or sunrise. Then come, (or turn on your computer) a few minutes early and sit here in this piece of God's creation and just listen or watch what is happening. Watch the community gather, the communion of people

who come for various reasons. The point is to come ready to participate in the whole meal.

We start with the breaking open of scriptures. Some would call the sermon the breaking open of the word of God. Then we move on to the main part of meal.

In the early church, the people gathered in homes and shared a meal. Along with teaching, and sharing of bread and wine. Just like Jesus did at the last supper.

Later this evolved into an Agape feast. A love meal. There was a ritual for blessing the cheese, the olives as well as the bread and the wine. It was very similar to what we have today. We just leave out the cheese and the olives.

You see their gathering taught them what it means to become the Body of Christ. When you think about it there is a saying you are what you eat. If you are spiritually fed with the body and blood of Jesus Christ, you can only go out and act as the Body of Christ in the world.

If you are watching at home be sure to say the post communion prayer. It replaces the actual eating of the bread and drinking of the wine. It reminds us that we are receiving spiritual communion. It brings the same benefits as being present and receiving the bread and wine.

So I invite you to live into the mystery of Jesus Christ who said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Stay in touch with that mystery by maintaining contact with the community of God, the body of Christ gathered here. (or the community gathered online)

Participate in the holy banquet. You know how a feast can make the rest of your week just a little better every time you think back to the good things you had to eat.... The good conversation that went along with it.

Remembering the joy that was present for you just some of the time. With that joy or grace the body of Christ will continue to live on.