May 31, 2020

Beloved in Christ,

It’s been a long while since we stood together before the Lord’s Table as a faith family to hear the words,

“This is the Body of Christ, given in love for you…” Receiving the bread and wine—the Body and Blood of our Lord—nourishes our spirits as we nourish our bodies. What we receive is what we become. The gift of this meal carries both promise and the physical reminder of who and whose we are: We are the Body of Christ; we belong to him and each other; we are always being made new.

The decision to abstain from communion during our time of virtual worship was a difficult one. Our hope at that time was that our inability to physically worship together would be short lived. With your health and safety our primary concern, the decision has been made to continue our virtual zoom worship, with council review on a month-by-month basis. Together with other congregations of our Synod, we have determined that it is now appropriate that we share our Lord’s Supper through virtual means. Our celebration of Holy Communion will begin on **Sunday, June 7th** using our zoom worship connection. **Just as in our sanctuary**

**at Shepherd, all are welcome in this virtual sanctuary.**

You have the option of preparing your own bread and wine (or juice) or having a member deliver a communion kit containing your choice of wine or juice and communion bread to your home. Please contact Dick Werpy if you wish to have a communion kit delivered. Attached below is the recipe for our Luther Seminary Communion Bread. You are invited to either try your hand at baking it at home or join our Zoom Communion Bread Baking on Friday, June 5th at 11 a.m. A zoom invitation to that gathering will be sent out next week. *This recipe and a video link of the baking will also be available on our website.*

We would ask that, prior to beginning worship on June 7th, you set your table of bread (or cracker) and wine (or juice). **Please try to prepare only as much of each as you will consume at this meal. Should you have any bread or wine remaining, either consume it or distribute the bread outside for the birds and pour the wine onto the ground.**

During the Great Thanksgiving, I will lift the bread during the Words of Institution, and ask that you do the same. Likewise, as I lift the wine, I ask that you join me in doing so at home. Following our praying the Lord’s Prayer together, I will again lift the Bread and say, “the Body of Christ, given in love for you.” At this time, each of us will take our bread and eat together. Following a brief pause to allow time for each of us to receive the bread, I will repeat the same with the Cup saying, “The blood of Christ, shed for you.” We will then simultaneously drink the cup together. After a brief pause, I will share the blessing and our service will continue.

If you have any questions regarding this please don’t hesitate to call, text, or e-mail me. You can reach me via either phone at 507-360-1625 or e-mail at jbckettering@gmail.com.

While we long for the day when we can physically gather again, we praise God for this opportunity to receive both the true presence in this meal and become the true presence through our virtual community.

With loving blessings & gratitude for our shared ministry,

Pastor Janet

**Luther Seminary Communion Bread**

**Yield: 4 – 2 oz. loaves**

**Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.**

**Sift together:**

**½ cup whole wheat flour**

**¼ cup white flour**

**¼ tsp. baking powder**

**¼ tsp. salt**

**Use fork or pastry blender to cut in 1 teaspoon of oil.**

**In a separate container, mix:**

**¼ cup hot water**

**¾ tablespoon honey**

**¾ tablespoon molasses**

**Add this to dry ingredients and mix well, adding small amounts of hot water, as necessary.**

**The dough should be a bit sticky. Lightly flour your hands to avoid sticking, as needed;**

**divide dough into 4 pieces and flatten each piece into a small circle, ¼ inch thick.**

**Place on baking sheet. Use a knife to mark with a deep cross, without cutting completely through.**

**Bake at 350 for 8 minutes. Remove from oven, brush with oil, and bake an additional 5 minutes.**

**Cool completely. Keep one loaf out for Sunday worship; wrap, label and freeze remaining loaves**

**for future use.**