

Homework for Lesson 14: Remembrance

Today we are learning about a sacrament of the United Methodist Church. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of the inward working of grace. In the United Methodist Church, we practice two that were modeled in the life of Jesus. The two sacraments are baptism and communion—baptism is in the next session.

Read each of these Lord's Supper texts:

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:12-26

Luke 22:7-20

Write down the details of how the supper Jesus shared with his disciples takes place. Pay special attention to the way the cup and bread are described and given. Listen for specific words that are said by Jesus and the disciples.

What was the same from each version?

What was unique from each version?

Why do you think communion continues to be such an important part of our faith?

Communion offers us an opportunity to step together into the mystery of God. We remember Jesus' willingness to suffer and give his life. We remember his love for his disciples. We remember that we have the opportunity to offer ourselves in sacrifice to God, so that others might know God's love. But we also know that Christ is, "present through the community gathered in Jesus' name, through the Word proclaimed and enacted, and through the elements of bread and wine shared.

The divine presence is a living reality and can be experienced by participants; it is not a remembrance of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion only." This is why we take communion. It's a mystery we can't fully understand, which is why our elements (the bread and wine) and our liturgy for communion remain constant so that no matter which United Methodist elder is presiding over communion, our experience of Holy Communion remains consistent.

Communion happens many different ways across Christian churches. Some take it every day. Some once a week. Most United Methodists take it once a month, while other denominations participate only once a quarter—four times a year.

As United Methodists, we practice something called open table when we offer communion. If a church or denomination considers its table closed, it means that they only offer communion to people that are committed members in that faith tradition. Our open table welcomes anyone who feels drawn to it by God. We're not completely unique in this practice, but it is certainly a United Methodist distinction.

We come together in community around this meal to be renewed for our ministry in the world around us. The meal itself reminds us of how God's grace makes us whole—the justifying grace we have explored in previous lessons.