

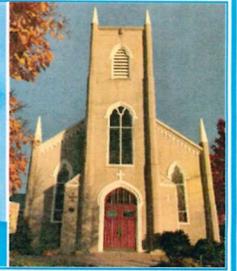


Mount Clemens, Michigan

# Amazing Grace

WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

Monthly newsletter of the people and ministries of Grace Episcopal Church



April 2021



## THE HOLY EUCHARIST & EPISCOPALIANS

It has been a year now since we have all been able to gather for a Sunday Eucharist service and I know many of us are missing communion every week while others are doing fine without it. We have tried to address this by distributing individually wrapped consecrated communion packets for Christmas, Palm Sunday and Easter but it doesn't address the weekly receiving of communion, therefore, I decided to explore in this article a short summary of how communion came about and what it is that we believe about this ritual. It is my hope that as we reflect and pray about the importance of communion in our lives that we will come to a deeper understanding of this sacrament even while we are not participating in it during this pandemic.

On Maundy Thursday we commemorate two things: Jesus washing his disciple's feet along with his giving a new commandment to love one another and the institution of the Eucharist commonly referred to as The Last Supper. It is this second element that I would like to explore with you now.

We hear on this night Paul's first letter to the Corinthians about the Eucharist ...

*I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Cor 11:23-26)*

The Eucharist is central to our faith and integral to our regular worship. The question that comes up for us is this: **What do we believe about the Eucharist and how does it impact our lives?** The Episcopal Church addresses these two questions in our Book of Common Prayer on pages 859-860. This section of the book is called An Outline of the Faith or by its more popular name of Catechism. I would encourage you to take a look at this portion of our prayer book, which is only 17 pages in length but contains all the essential elements of our Christian faith!

The celebration of the Lord's Supper goes back to the beginnings of the church and is a central part of the New Testament tradition. The ritual is explained in Paul's letter mentioned above and in almost identical language in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke while John does not discuss this tradition at all. It is clear from all of these passages that this meal was an important one, but did you ever wonder if this was the first time Jesus did something like this and more importantly, did the disciples understand what he was talking about?

To begin with, Jesus shared many sacred meals with his followers as was customary in the Jewish tradition. We know from scholars that there was a regular Hebrew blessing over bread and wine that any good Jew would have used in presiding over a meal and that is what Jesus was following. Jesus, however, added another dimension to this old Jewish blessing rite by using the words that we now associate with the bread and wine at the Eucharist – "This is my Body," and "This is my Blood". By saying this, Jesus was inserting himself into an already existing practice that connected people to each other, the community and God. The disciples would have understood this to mean that by eating and drinking the bread and wine that Jesus was asking them to share in his life and work. These elements were the staple of their meals and eaten every day, Jesus was saying that he was now their sustenance that would power them in daily living.

## Worship Opportunities

**Sundays at 8:30 and 10:30 am**  
**TO JOIN SERVICES LIVE ONLINE VIA ZOOM VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND FOLLOW THE LINKS**

[www.gracechurchmtclemens.org](http://www.gracechurchmtclemens.org)

**TO JOIN SERVICES LIVE BY PHONE VIA ZOOM**

**8:30 Service:** Call 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 881 8016 9300

Password: 246040

**10:30 Service:** Call 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 899 8049 9374

Password: 382635

**TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

7:00 pm on Zoom

Visit our website and follow the link.

Or call: 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 897 3241 7015

Password: 683930

Worship resources are available on our website anytime.

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## The Holy Eucharist & Episcopalians *Continued from page 1*

So how did we move from the Lord's Supper with a Jewish meal blessing and wind up at the Holy Eucharist, which we continue to celebrate? The word "Eucharist" is derived from the Greek *eucharistia*, which means thanksgiving and it was used in New Testament times to translate the Hebrew word "berakah" – blessing. This is the same blessing that Jesus utilizes in his meals with his followers. After his death and resurrection, those first followers continued to engage in a full meal and then bless the bread and wine at the end to be shared in memory of Christ's redemptive suffering and death, believing in his resurrected presence among them especially in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. By the middle of the second century, however, the full commemorative meal had become a symbolic sharing of just bread and wine as we continue it today.

Over the centuries there have been different understandings of what the Eucharist means for us as Christians. It is not possible to do a comprehensive review of all of these perspectives, but a brief look at some of the major positions may be helpful.

One of the most debated issues seems to be – How is Christ present in the Eucharist?

This controversy broke out in the ninth century and increased in the medieval and Reformation periods and still lingers with us today. This debate began with two monks, Paschasius and Ratramnus, who lived at the same time in the mid 800's at the monastery of Corbie in modern day France. These two men each wrote a book with the same title – "Concerning the Body and Blood of Christ", but they came to very different conclusions regarding the real presence of Christ. Paschasius developed the idea that the **bread and the wine become the actual body and blood of Christ at the Eucharist**, but he didn't offer any explanation of precisely how this happened. Ratramnus was not convinced, he defended the view that the bread and wine were merely symbols of the body and blood, so the difference between ordinary and consecrated elements lie in the way the believer perceived them.

The doctrine of **transubstantiation** which was articulated by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, represents a consolidation of Paschasius' thoughts. A few decades later, Thomas Aquinas picked up on this theme of transubstantiation and wrote about it in his *Summa Theologica*. His philosophical arguments included Aristotelian concepts and distinctions, both of which are no longer familiar to most people.

Another theory of how Christ is present in the Eucharist is known as **consubstantiation** and this view came to be associated with Martin Luther even though he never used the word – the crucial point for him was that Christ was really present at the Eucharist but the bread and wine did not actually change into the body and blood of Jesus.

One final perspective to acknowledge is that of **memorialism**. Another sixteenth century reformer, Huldreich Zwingli, proposed that the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the suffering of Christ and not a sacrifice. He insists that the words 'this is my body' cannot be taken literally, thus eliminating any idea of the 'real presence of Christ' at the Eucharist. For Zwingli, the bread and wine remain just that, but when they are placed at the center of a worshipping community and when the story of the Last Supper is told, they become powerful reminders of the foundational events of the Christian faith.

These three theories (transubstantiation, consubstantiation, memorialism) have probably claimed the allegiance of the largest number of Christians in the Western world down through the centuries. Many Episcopalians even today adopt one or another or some combination of them in order to increase their understanding of this central act of Christian worship. Our church has consistently refused to require its members to believe any particular theory. Individual Episcopalians may entertain any one of these to help them understand this central Christian mystery. Which perspective do you hold?

Our Eucharist celebration anticipates the heavenly banquet in the reign of God. It is not only a perpetual memory of the sacrifice, death and resurrection of Jesus; the Eucharist is also an open, ongoing invitation for all of us to enter into the Body of Christ and carry on his work in fulfilling the mission of God in the world.

It is clear that by engaging in the communal celebration of the Eucharist we are not just participating in some static event. Rather, we are involved in a dynamic, life-changing process that calls us into ongoing transformation. It is not something we do just once, but something we commit our lives to. For when we "eat this bread and drink this cup" we accept Christ into our entire being – receiving all the benefits and assuming all the responsibilities that life in Christ entails.

Until we are able to gather at Grace again to celebrate the Eucharist, we will continue to practice "Spiritual Communion" in our weekly Sunday Zoom worship services. May God hold us in full communion with Christ, each other and all people of faith during this time of separation and beyond!

Blessings,  
Pastor Steve



**FROM THE 150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE**  
 "Through the Grace of God", our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations have continued....

On March 21, 2021 we honored those that give of their time and talent to help us with our worship service. They help us to celebrate the Sabbath by bringing forth the Holy Spirit to this place. Some of them we never see them doing their work, but we feel it by how beautiful the flowers on the altar bring a smile to our faces. The candles burning brightly. The lovely smiles that greeted us when we were gathering in person handing us a bulletin that many hands put together to bring us a wonderful service to carry us through the week. The readings are outlined for us through the Lectionary, but the prayers and music must be picked to enhance those readings. And those that serve at the altar to assist the priest and help distribute communion to us each Sunday. Which many of them took communion to those in our community who could not be with us. Hopefully, they will be able to resume this act when the virus is under control. And for those that pray for the sick and the needs of our parish. Or knit or crochet to bring a little hug in form of a shawl. All these things help each one of us in some way to bring us closer to God. Try to imagine that this has been going on in some form or another in this space for over 150 years! And *Through the Grace of God*, we will be able to continue to gather to worship God and continue to serve his people in this community.

On April 18<sup>th</sup> we will be remembering those that had their Confirmation here at Grace.

*The sacramental rite in which the candidates "express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop" (BCP, p. 860). Those who were baptized at an early age and those baptized as adults without laying on of hands by a bishop are expected to make a mature public affirmation of their faith, recommit themselves to the responsibilities of their baptism, and receive laying on of hands by a bishop (BCP, p. 412). Adults baptized with the laying on of hands by a bishop are considered to be confirmed.*

*The Episcopal Church's theology of Confirmation has continued to evolve along with its understanding of baptism. Confirmation is no longer seen as the completion of Christian initiation, nor is Confirmation a prerequisite for receiving communion. Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's body the church (BCP, p. 298). Accordingly, Confirmation has been increasingly understood in terms of a mature, public reaffirmation of the Christian faith and the baptismal promises.*

We will celebrate this by reaffirming our baptismal promises. Along with a momentum for us to remember that Christ died for us to bring us everlasting eternal life. If you or a member of your family was confirmed at Grace could you, please email the names to [gracemtclemens@yahoo.com](mailto:gracemtclemens@yahoo.com) or you can call Ann Strevel.

The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee  
 Tish Germain                      Ann Strevel

### **From the Women's Prison Ministry Outreach**

I would like to talk about Health this month. I am happy to share that I always use a portion of any funding received for Prison Ministry Outreach on the infected as well as the affected people with AIDS/HIV. I remember observing a lot of negative attitudes during the beginning of the AIDS pandemic, and I have felt and seen similar attitudes and behavior today with this new global Pandemic. But the good news is there is already a vaccine for COVID -19, but still not for AIDS/HIV. Here in Macomb County there is not much support for people living with HIV/AIDS during this new pandemic. The Women's Prison Ministry Outreach has been working for over a year to change this.

Inmates have not been able to have in person visitors since the beginning of the pandemic, and courthouses in Macomb County have been closed to the public. This has made it very difficult for their loved ones or my prison ministry to provide them with the support inmates and their families so urgently need during this time. I'm happy to report that inmates are now receiving vaccines, and I will soon be vaccinated as well, which will allow me to once again enter the courtrooms and continue to show support for these people and their families.

But with all of this going on with these pandemics remember "JESUS IS STILL ON HIS THRONE" -- he hasn't left because of AIDS or COVIV-19 or any other disease!!!!!! May God's peace be with us all.

Mary Williams

### **A Message from Amy Saari, Music Minister**

#### **Thoughts on Cross-Bearing, by David Lose**

We've been trained somewhere to think that when Jesus talks about "taking up the cross" he's referring to some major spiritual travail. Or at least significant suffering or sacrifice, preferably on behalf of the faith. But what if it's simpler than that? What if it's more ordinary?

Here's what Alan Culpepper says: "The language of cross bearing has been corrupted by overuse. Bearing a cross has nothing to do with chronic illness, painful physical conditions, or trying family relationships. It is instead what we do voluntarily as a consequence of our commitment to Jesus Christ."

If this is true, then we are invited to take up our cross, that is, have our life shaped by our commitment to the crucified messiah - anywhere, anytime, and doing just about anything. Voters and volunteers, websites managers and temp workers, bus drivers and barbers, students and secretaries, parents and payroll officers - all of these people, when they offer their time, talent and labor to God, are bearing their cross by allowing the whole of their lives to be shaped by their commitment to Christ.

### April Birthdays

Toni Hindman 4/9	Chris Heath 4/18
Ann Farrell 4/10	Liz Moorehouse 4/22
Helen Stein 4/11	Jerry Gardner 4/26
Pam Sherry 4/12	Harvey Kahl 4/28
Robert DiStefano 4/14	Gary Keranen 4/28
Gay Gillespie 4/16	



Tuesdays at 7:00 pm on Zoom

Visit our website and follow the link.  
Or call: 312-626-6799  
Meeting ID: 897 3241 7015  
Password: 683930

### “B” BUCKS for Blessings in a Backpack

If your wallet has any dollar bills with B on them, please pass them along to help us fill backpacks with weekend food for hungry Mt. Clemens students.



VIEW OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE!

FREE App for iPhone, iPad, Android & Kindle



Our church directory is a great resource tool that allows you to get to know our church family better!

Simply go to the App Store, search for *Instant Church Directory*  and download the FREE app to begin.

You will use your email address listed in the directory to CREATE A LOGIN the first time you use the directory app.

If you're not listed in the directory, OR if you have trouble logging into the app, please contact the church office.



### Grace Episcopal Church

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Website: [www.gracechurchmtclemens.org](http://www.gracechurchmtclemens.org)  
Office Hours: Monday–Thursday 10:00 am–4:00 pm



### Recommended Donations

Canned Soups, Canned Vegetables and Fruits, Macaroni and Cheese, Peanut Butter/Jelly, Tuna Fish/Canned Chicken, Spaghettios, Hamburger Helper, Instant Mashed Potatoes, Spaghetti Sauce, Pasta, Cereal, Applesauce in Cans



OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Currently

### COMMUNITY SUPPERS

Wednesdays and Sundays at 4:30 pm, take-out only

### GRACE FOOD PANTRY

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:00 am–12:00 pm  
Curbside distribution.

### Grace Episcopal Church Staff

**Rev. Steven Steinberger-Domienik**

Cell: 203-641-2068

Email: [pastor@gracechurchmtclemens.org](mailto:pastor@gracechurchmtclemens.org)

Clergy Emerita: The Rev. Deacon Betty Brogan

Minister of Music: Ms. Amy Saari

Parish Administrator: Donna Hodgson

### 2021 Vestry

Pam Sherry, Senior Warden

Jim Smith, Junior Warden,

Karen Davenport, Kris Eckert,

Ann Farrell, Brooke Lau, Martha Houser,

Marilee Racine, Tom Stotz

Treasurer: Tish Germain • Clerk: Tom Stotz