

October 31, 2021

## 9. Covenant Renewal — **Deuteronomy 29:1, 10-20 NRSV**

I like the summary statement on page 55 of the leader guide: “The Christian walk is a life-long journey, shared with the people of God.” Our covenant with the church is a “walk,” but not without obstacles; it also can be described as a marathon, not a sprint. Being true to a covenant takes training, endurance, faithfulness, and determination.

In Indiana, I was privileged to be pastored by Mark Schloneger. I just learned that Mark finished the Boston Marathon a few weeks ago. The joyous finish line photos on Facebook made me wonder if his understanding of Hebrews 12 has changed forever. The “cloud of witnesses,” united through the ages by the “new covenant” in Christ’s blood (Hebrews 8), will surely take on richer meaning now for Mark.

Mark is also referred to in this session as the co-founder of Election Day Communion (*Salt & Light Leader*, p. 55). I remember him humbly commenting about the amazingly rapid proliferation of Election Day Communion services. You can find such a service online, during which the worship leader describes this practice as coming together on election night to proclaim a profound truth: “In defiance of our real differences, we who follow Jesus are one.”<sup>1</sup> In a few days, the United States will experience another election day, preceded by the usual divisive language, highlighting our many deep differences as a nation. More than ever, people seem cynical about elections, wondering if they’re “rigged” or if they really make a difference. If I were teaching, I might ask participants to express their feelings about election-day divisions. Would having an Election Day Communion service help?

Likewise, I’d ask them if they are skeptical about their covenant relationship with the church. Is cynicism tainting what should be a beautiful expression of our covenant unity? If your congregation has communion on election day, will you be celebrating an ideal or a reality?

Most important, ask participants to prayerfully contemplate:

- Are you willing to stick with this “new covenant in [Christ’s] blood” until you too become part of the great “cloud of witnesses”?
- How are you running the race?

—Helen Tellez

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<sup>1</sup> “Election Day Communion: Harrisonburg Area Churches,” YouTube, Park View Mennonite Church, November 3, 2020.



**Helen Tellez** has been a writer, editor, and copy editor for church and secular organizations for more than four decades. Formerly from northern Indiana, she now resides in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with her husband, José, where they run a clothing alterations business. Being married to José for 18 years has opened her eyes to the world beyond rural, white America, and she is grateful for the changes in her Christian perspective.

## Resources for this session

### *Salt & Light Videos*

These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each session. They are available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#). **Naomi Yoder** is the presenter for Unit 2, Church Means Assembly. She serves on the pastoral team of East Goshen Mennonite Church in Indiana.