

November 21, 2021

## 12. The Lord's Supper as Communion — 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 NRSV

This week's Scripture is well addressed in the study materials, so out of curiosity I went scurrying to the internet for more interesting facts about communion. Are any of these tidbits and questions new to your group? Would you like to explore them more?

- Early Christians were accused of cannibalism because of what Jesus said in John 6:53–58, coupled with the early belief in transubstantiation (the bread and wine miraculously becoming the actual body and blood of Christ).
  - If we were trying to explain the significance of communion to a person who knew absolutely nothing about Jesus, what would we say about John 6:53–58?
- The Orthodox church requires fasting before communion, so people are encouraged to center their thoughts on God.
  - Given Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 11:20–22a about eating at home, is fasting before partaking a good idea? Why or why not?
- Taking food and drink as a means of worship was not new. For example, the Greeks believed that the blood of Dionysus, the god of fertility and ecstasy, was to be shared.<sup>1</sup>
  - What could we say to the skeptic who says that Christianity, including communion, arose from borrowed practices of other ancient religions?
- "World Communion Sunday began at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1933. The Rev. Hugh Thompson Kerr and his congregation sought to demonstrate the interconnectedness of Christian churches, regardless of denomination."<sup>2</sup>
  - What does it mean to you that for almost 90 years Christians all over the world celebrate this ordinance of remembrance on the same day?

Going back to 1 Corinthians 11, would you agree that the modern church, perhaps unlike the early church, does a good job of "equitable inclusion" (see Purpose, *S&L/S&L Leader*, p. 68). In deacons' meetings, I recall lengthy discussions of how to be certain the pianist or those seated in the balcony are served. Our church makes sure communion is available to shut-ins. We offer gluten-free bread and individually packaged elements during COVID-19.

- How is your congregation doing at equitable inclusion?
- What can you do better?

—Helen Tellez

[helentellez@comcast.net](mailto:helentellez@comcast.net)

---

<sup>1</sup>. Ocean Malandra, "[The Pagan Origin of the Communion](#)," Classroom, September 29, 2017.

<sup>2</sup>. "[What is World Communion Sunday](#)?" United Methodist Communications, October 2, 2019.



**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](#). **Joanne Gallardo** is the presenter for Unit 3, Open Table Fellowship. Joanne is a conference minister in the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

### URLs recommended in *Salt & Light Leader*:

- [The Communion Hymn](#)
- [Article 12. "The Lord's Supper"](#)