

Stuff

As I write this newsletter article, 14 youth from the congregation are ready to take their first communion. Last year, many couldn't partake because of the lockdown, but we are at a different place this year. I am excited to get back to some familiarity of our communion practice around the table, and I am excited for them. I think the main reason that I am excited is because they are really excited. They come with their curiosity and wonder and we delight in trying to explain the mystery of Holy Communion, as best as we can. For after all, it is a mysterious gift, but a gift nonetheless. A gift that keeps on giving as we become what we eat. How that all works is a mystery, but a reality in which we live.

In the curriculum that we use (*Fed & Forgiven*) there is this great video that has been used to help explain communion to children in 3rd and 4th grade. In this short video people present on what a sacrament is. They go on to say that a sacrament is holy, it is a gift of mercy and forgiveness, it is grace, it points us to God, and it is a mystery.

There is one in particular presentation that I really like, and it is from Nadia Bolz Weber, who says that 'sacraments are made from stuff'. This 'stuff' that we use in worship (*water, wine, and bread*) form us into who God wants us to be. The water cleanses us from sin, once and for all, and also every single day. The wine and bread strengthen us from the inside out to be ministers of the gospel and feed us with presence day after day. And both sacraments (*Holy Baptism and Holy Communion*) are gifts of tangible stuff from God. We do not earn them, but are given them anyway as a gift that we can't repay. This is a gift we can hold on to when things are tough.

In the sacraments, we take on Jesus, and Jesus works in us, sometimes whether we want him to or not. Sacraments have a way of doing that. Even though the sacraments are made from 'stuff', they in part, contain God, even though God is not fully contained in them. This stuff is holy, set apart by God to remind us of God's promises, contained within stuff, and to remember that the stuff God has made is holy.

Jesus, in his life, death, and resurrection has taken on the 'stuff' we are. He has taken on the bad parts, the broken parts, the working parts, the idle parts, and the good parts and he has made this 'stuff' God's very own again. Jesus has redeemed us, and has brought us back to God where we have come from and where we all will return. Through the 'stuff' of sacraments (*Holy Baptism & Holy Communion*) God is reconciling the world and it is a gift, given for you.

God values you. God values the stuff we are made of. God values the stuff everyone is made of. God values the stuff of the world in which we live. For God loves the stuff we are, and God loves us so much that He gifted us with His Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not die, but live life fully here and in the world to come. This Easter let us remember and give thanks for all of this stuff, all of the sacraments, all of the love, all of the mercy, all of the grace, all of the mystery, that has been given for you is a gift for you, Amen.

*In Christ,
Pastor Matt*