



Brookline Community Church
Communion Service
Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister
May 3, 2020

Invitation to the Table:

For Holy Communion this morning,
we sanctify our time and many tables
for a sacrament never confined
to sanctuaries or precious surfaces —
carved with “Do this in Remembrance of Me,”
but always following
wherever one of God precious children,
like a sheep astray,
is lost or needs a guiding hand.

Christ is our shepherd.
In the loneliest lockdown,
we do not want for companionship.

In crowded families —
distance-learning and never catching breath,
we find an inner source of still waters.

In the soul-stretching days
of health care and emergency professionals,
decision-makers for others,
and essential workers with daily risk,
we meet a restorer of souls.

In the paths of tight-ousness —
assisted living, correctional facility, shelter,
immigration detention, nursing home,
housing for those who are simply poor —
we find a leader, a staff to lean on,
a rod that points a new way.

Christ leads us not around it,
but through the valley of the shadow —

and turns to us, as Jesus did when he came through
the walls of a locked room
in the afternoon of resurrection,
said, "Peace be with you,"
and then asked if they had anything
to give him to eat.

Give the gentle Shepherd who is the Risen Christ
your bread, your cup and your heart.

Prayer of Consecration:

Leader: We have bread and cup and heart. Our church community is dispersed in distance but we are one in Christ. In your many kitchens, and living rooms, rest your hands lightly upon these elements which we set aside today to be a sacrament. Let us ask God's blessing upon them and upon us and upon those who are in our prayers this morning.

Unison: Gentle Host, you prepare a table before us in the threatening presence of virus. You anoint our hearts, bless our bread and our cups overflow. Surely as we shelter in place we find both the goodness of community and mercy to those most vulnerable. Now and all the days of our lives we claim that this house — these many houses where we dwell and also our precious church building, are, indeed, the house of God.

Send your Spirit of life and love, power and blessing upon your children who are staying at home so that this Bread may be broken and gathered in love and this Cup poured out to give hope to all. Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you. Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you. Amen.

Words of Remembering

Leader: We remember the sharing of bread in many places — wilderness manna, tents and caves of shepherds, Abigail’s saddle bags, the lunch of a small boy, the fish of the disciples and the loaf of Emmaus. And we remember that Paul the apostle wrote letters to congregations throughout places we now call Greece, Turkey and Macedonia, and they were the first “remote” worship resources, including these Communion words sent to the church at Corinth:

For 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.

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

Unison: We are one in Christ in the bread we share.

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

Unison: We are one in Christ in the cup we share.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Let us pray in thanksgiving for this meal of grace, rejoicing that, in the holy dispersion of virtual worship, we claim the risen Christ’s love is not limited by buildings made with human hands, nor contained in human ceremonies, and celebrating the God’s shepherding that carries us into the unknown, to listen and follow, to lead and be led, to feed and be fed.

Unison: (using the words of the old hymn)

**Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need your tender care.
In your pleasant pastures feed us for our use your folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.**