



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

Bread of Life

Jesus said “this is my body, this is my blood”. WOW! Have you ever really listened to those words? Have you ever really given a great deal of thought to those words as you prepare to take part in Holy Communion?

I think there are times when we take all the food that is available to us for granted. We can get just about any ethnic food we want in our stores and restaurants. We really don't think too much about it. We expect that what we want will be available (I still have to hit the stores in Minneapolis for Swedish Lingonberries). The problem is that our worship experience sometimes becomes just as routine.

We need to begin to listen to what we're saying and responding to. We sometimes get so involved with “the wall” that we just move along and go with the flow. I do admit that there are times when our experiences in life are weighing down on us and that is the best thing we can do for ourselves. But occasionally we need to renew our worship life by really listening, by thinking about the words of a hymn, by working at our prayers, by spending more than a second or two responding out of habit.

We hear, often, that we are blessed to be a blessing. We are so blessed by God that, out of thankfulness, we bless others with the great gifts God has given us. But we also know that, as a family of God we respond to food – Feed us and we will come! Oh yes. In a way, that is what our worship is all about. Jesus knows that we need sustenance to live and move and have our being in this world. But we also need spiritual sustenance to keep our lives filled with prayers and the desire to bless others as we move in this world.

He “combined” these needs as he celebrated the last meal he shared with his disciples. They ate for the sustenance of their bodies and Jesus added a

blessing for that day and all days forward, with the bread and the wine, common foods on their table.

But what was common became uncommon with the blessing. What was common became spiritual sustenance for the entity we call “the church”. No one else celebrates with an equivalent of this kind of feast. No one else finds sustenance with a gift given by the one they worship.

It may seem strange – a lot of my thoughts go in that direction! – but it seems to me that in some ways we do something similar. We take what is common and ordinary in our lives and pass it on with blessings, making it something good and special to the one who receives it. Certainly we are not doing what Jesus did with bread and wine, but we do it with the gifts of food and money we bring for the neighborhood center. The common grows extraordinarily as we place our small gift in the wagon or as we place a small amount of coin into the offering.

God works wonders. We trust his words about the bread and the wine and we trust his offer to increase our gifts for the good of others.

TMK

-- *Week of March 8, 2009*