

Communion for when the community cannot Gather
(A Remembrance of Eucharist)

I know that the Lord is still with you.
I long to hear you once again affirm that the Lord is also with me.
We still lift up our hearts.
Even apart we can lift them up before our Lord.
Even in the middle of this devastating pandemic we give thanks unto the Lord.
Even apart it is meet and right so to do.

How our hearts yearn to come before You together in Your sanctuary.
Our choir desires to sing Your praises
and to lead the congregation in hymns of praise.
We long for the day when we might once again pass Your peace,
greet one another with a holy kiss, and extend the right hand of fellowship with our neighbors.

Our time away from Your sanctuary feels like a great sacrifice,
sometimes it feels too great to bear, yet we offer it up to You as an act of holy worship.
Sanctify our separation, as we seek to end this plague upon our community.
Use this act of love and grace that we extend to each other for safety
may it be to You as a song of praise and gratitude for the community of souls we hold so dear.

In this silence, let us hear more clearly Your intimate voice.
In this solitude, let us feel the assurance that we are always held in Your strong embrace.
May we remember with gratitude our baptisms each time we wash our hands.
May we remember with thanksgiving Your breath of life, when we wear our masks.
May we celebrate our community with each telephone call we share and
may we rejoice to hear each other's voice.

During this pandemic Your praises have not been silenced. They are still heard on earth and in heaven as those around Your throne continually sing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed are they that come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Even while we are apart, we still remember that in the fullness of time You sent Jesus.
The fullness of time was not a peaceful sweet idyllic time.
The fullness of time was a time of danger, of exile, of grief and sorrow.
The fullness of time was filled with the unknown and a heart felt longing for a better day.
The fullness of time was filled with hope and a trust in Your great promises to be fulfilled in the life of a baby.
These promises took time to develop, but would mature, grow and become the savior of the world in due time.

We do not always understand what You are doing.

You try to wash our feet, but we feel unworthy.
You try to explain that the servant of all is the person we are to emulate.
You try to help us understand that all we need to do is love.
But we still struggle to understand.

Even now during this time of social isolation, we remember
how during his last Passover celebration,
that Jesus took the matzah used to remind us all of those who are still struggling under
oppression.
We remember Christ's joyful prayer of thanksgiving.
We remember how Jesus broke the bread, and shared it to include everyone.
We remember it being said: "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you."
We remember how we have recalled Christ's acts and words every time we ate the bread of his
table.

And we are grateful.
Even now during this time of social isolation, we remember
how after his last Passover meal,
Jesus took the cup of wine, used to remember the hope we hold in our hearts for deliverance.
We remember Christ's joyful prayer of thanksgiving.
We remember how Jesus passed the cup and shared it to include everyone.
We remember it being said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of God's covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins."
We have remembered how we have recalled Christ's acts and words every time we drank from
his cup.
And we are grateful.

It is important to remember, as important as this sacrament is, that what Christ has done is what
we remember. It is what Christ has done through his sacrifice that has not only changed our
lives but has redeemed the world. It is this holy mystery that makes all the difference even
during this separation: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Indelible Memory, Present Reality

Bless the congregation of Valley Forge United Methodist Church during this season of
separation.

Use our prayers to bring healing in the world.

Use our social distancing to bring healing to our community.

Use our cleanliness to bring healing to our lives and homes.

Be present with those who are battling this virus.

Forgive our impatience and show us how to be a blessing, just as You have continued to blessed
us,

in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now wherever you may be, let us join together as one congregation to pray as our Lord has
taught us saying:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.

**Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**