

“The Fruit of the Vine”

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Mason First Presbyterian Church

Mason, Michigan

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“I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” So said Jesus, one night, long ago, to his closest friends. He was talking, of course, about the cup that they were about to share together, the wine that accompanied the Passover meal. But it was more than just wine, of course; it was also a symbolic representation of his blood, which was about to be shed for them and for us, less than 24 hours later.

I wonder how many times since then Christians have gathered around a table to remember and celebrate that meal. We’re coming up on two thousand years since that event. How many celebrations of communion have there been since then? How many Eucharists? How many Masses? To properly answer that question, we would need to know how many churches there are around the world, not just this year, but in every individual year since that first Last Supper. And we would need to know how many times each of those churches serve communion each year. We do it fourteen times a year – once a month, plus Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. Catholics, Episcopalians, and some other groups do it every week. Right at the minute there are somewhere between three and four million churches around the world. So what would that be, maybe somewhere around a hundred million communion celebrations in this year alone? I’m doing some very rough math, and coming up with, maybe, somewhere around a hundred billion instances in which people have gathered around a table like this to celebrate a meal like this. A hundred billion communions – to commemorate one Last Supper. Is there any other dinner that has *ever* been held that has had such an *incredible* impact on the whole *world*?

We do more than commemorate, of course. For us, we see communion not only as a symbolic representation of what Jesus did with his disciples long ago, but also a means by which we experience the grace of God even now. God is *here*. God is *now*. God’s love is for you and for me, *now*. Wherever you have been in life, whatever you have done, however far you ever may have strayed, in communion you get told, once again: *you are loved*. You are so incredibly, deeply *loved*. And there’s nothing you can do that will ever change that. The grace of God is poured out for you *here*. *Now*. The fruit of the vine is for you ... because you are a most beloved fruit of the vine.

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