

SERMON STARTER

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY



These worship resources are part of the World Communion Sunday pastor and leader kit. They can be adapted for your context and integrated into your worship service with the other material in the kit. **They are based on Psalm 137.**

By the rivers of Babylon, they sat down and wept. They hung up their harps and could not find the strength to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. Psalm 137 doesn't ease us in; it begins with grief and rage, a people displaced and aching. And yet, on this World Communion Sunday, we come to the table bringing our own songs and silences, our own longings for home, wholeness and healing. The question is not merely how to sing, but what it means to sing when your heart is heavy, your identity is questioned, and your community feels fractured.

Psalm 137 is not an abstract metaphor. It names the human experience of dislocation, emotional, spiritual, political. Many people today, immigrants, exiles, refugees, the displaced and the disillusioned, still sit by rivers with harps hung up. And yet this day, across time zones and nations, we lift up the cup and break bread. We proclaim that there is a table wide enough for every pain, every accent, every story. We do not forget the city of God because the table reminds us of where we belong, and with whom.

In Los Angeles, the Nayarit was a restaurant that became more than a business. It became a sanctuary for those far from home. A place where the meals tasted like memory,

and the strangers around the table soon became family. Historian Natalia Molina's telling of her grandmother's legacy is striking: the Nayarit didn't just feed people; it gave them dignity, a story and a place to be seen. And isn't that, in its own way, what Holy Communion is meant to be? A meal that isn't just about bread and wine, but about remembrance, connection and God's radical welcome.

And yet, the welcome we receive comes with a call. In Luke's Gospel, the disciples ask, "Increase our faith!" They are desperate, unsure, overwhelmed. Jesus responds not with a pep talk but with the image of a mustard seed, tiny, unimpressive, but capable of uprooting trees and changing landscapes. Faith, even when it seems minuscule, is more powerful than we imagine. And perhaps more than anything, what Jesus offers next is a reminder of posture: that of a servant. Not seeking glory, but showing up to do what's needed. The servant doesn't come in from the field to recline. The servant sets the table. The servant keeps showing up.

What if that's the truest call of the church in this moment? To be the ones who set the table. Who make space. Who refuse to let anyone be forgotten, neglected or cast aside. Not because we're trying to earn anything, but because it's simply what we do. We are not building a church that exists to be served, but one that exists to serve.

Rowan Williams writes of the Eucharist as a place where we come not because we're good at being faithful, but precisely because we are not. We come not because we've figured it out, but because we're still lost in many ways. And yet Jesus invites us in, week after week, to sit and eat and remember. To be known. To be transformed.

Communion is more than ritual. It is more than nostalgia. It is a prophetic declaration that in a world of walls, there remains

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a place where the table extends further than we ever dreamed. It is a declaration that in a culture of me-first, there is still a gathering centered around mutuality, grace and a Savior who feeds all without condition.

In his theological work on food and creation, Norman Wirzba reminds us that eating is never just eating. It is relational. It is spiritual. And when we eat this bread and drink this cup, we are practicing a different way of being in the world. One where grace is tasted, and the ordinary is transformed.

The hymn “For the Beauty of the Earth” is not just about nature, it is a song about gratitude. About seeing the sacred in the everyday. About lifting praise from the soil, the table, the people around us. On this World Communion Sunday, the beauty of the earth meets the beauty of a universal church, spread wide and singing one song, even in different keys.

So, what might this moment offer you as a preacher? You could explore the tension between lament and praise. The deep connection between eating and equity. The notion of welcome not as niceness, but as divine defiance. The mustard seed of faith that turns strangers into siblings. The table as a place where we do not come to be affirmed in our privilege, but to be undone and remade by grace.

This is not a Sunday for sentimentality. It is a Sunday to name the fractures and still declare the feast. To tell the truth about our exile and still pass the bread. To remember that wherever we find ourselves, Babylon or Jerusalem, field or sanctuary, Christ has made a way for us to come home.

Come to the table. Sit with the texts. Sit with the world. Sit with the tensions. And then get up and help set the table once again. Someone is waiting to be welcomed.

Giving in The United Methodist Church is more than a financial act — it’s a bold expression of faith. It fuels ministry across borders, languages, and cultures, and becomes a witness to God’s expansive love. **Together, we give not just to sustain what is, but to make room for what can be — extending Christ’s table so that all may find a place and a purpose.**

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