

Reflections on Holy Communion

From Sara Miles' book, Take This Bread

Sara Miles walked into St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in San Francisco having no earthly reason to be there. She had never heard a Gospel reading, had never said the Lord's Prayer, and was certainly not interested in becoming a Christian. Sara writes, "We sat down and stood up, sang and sat down, waited and listened and stood up and sang, and it was all pretty peaceful and sort of interesting. 'Jesus invites everyone to his table,' a woman announced, and we started moving up in a stately dance to the table in the rotunda. It had some dishes on it, and a pottery goblet. And then we gathered around that table. And there was more singing and standing, and someone was putting a piece of fresh, crumbly bread in my hands, saying 'the body of Christ,' and handing me the goblet of sweet wine, saying 'the blood of Christ,' and then something outrageous and terrifying happened. Jesus happened to me."

From the Prolog of Take This Bread, Sara Miles writes: It may seem crazy, at this point in history, to assert that any religion—much less Christianity, the religion of our contemporary empire, of the powerful and intolerant—can be a force for connection, for healing, for love. It may seem deluded to assert that people can still be fed with the ordinary yet mystical bread (of communion), so besmirched and exhausted and poisoned by centuries of religious practice, in ways that will change our own lives, not to mention the world, for the better. But this is my belief: that at the heart of Christianity is a power that continues to speak to and transform us... What I...hear is a voice that can crack religious and political convictions open, that advocates for the least qualified, least official, least likely; that upsets the established order and makes a joke of certainty. It proclaims against reason that the hungry will be fed, that those cast down will be raised up, and that all things, including my own failures, are being made new. It offers food without exception to the worthy and unworthy, the screwed-up and pious, and then commands everyone to do the same. It doesn't promise to solve or erase suffering but to transform it, pledging that by loving one another, even through pain, we will find more life. And it insists that by opening ourselves to strangers, the despised or frightening or unintelligible other, we will see more and more of the holy, since, without exception, all people are one body: God's.

Sara Miles writes, "If I kept participating in communion, I'd have to swallow the fact of my connection with all other people, without exception... The bread on that Table had to be shared with everyone in order for me to really taste it. And sharing it meant I was going to be touching Christ's body at St. Gregory's, through (the pastors) Donald and Rick and the angry older deacon with the clenched jaw. Looking into Christ's eyes outside of church, through the cheery atheist yuppie with the sports car and the veiled Muslim clerk at Walgreens. Listening to Christ's voice in other churches, through the middle-aged woman with the annoying nasal whine, and the self-righteous homophobic radio evangelist, and the conservative African bishop. I was not going to get to sit by myself and think loftily about how much Jesus loved me in particular. I was not going to get to have dinner, eternally, with people I didn't necessarily like. People I didn't choose... the people God chose for me."

At the one-year anniversary of St. Gregory Episcopal Church's food pantry, Sara Miles invited visitors to share in Holy Communion before receiving their groceries. Sara writes, "Homer, who'd been in the hospital the week before limped over and hugged me. Starlight Wonderer came in from the baptismal font, where she'd been bagging rice. Martha appeared, radiant, and she was carrying flowers for us. Then came the Russian ladies with their carts, some Salvadoran families crossing themselves, two punked-out street kids, a confused-looking Chinese grandmother, and then somehow everyone was standing in a circle around the Communion Table... There was a smell of incense and wet cardboard and slightly rotten bell peppers; and fifty voices, out of tune, filled the rotunda; and some little kid was lifted up on a volunteer's shoulders to see (Pastor) Donald break the English muffin. I understood why Christians imagined the kingdom of heaven as a feast: a banquet where nobody was excluded, where the weakest and most broken, the worst sinners and outcasts, were honored guests who welcomed one another in peace and shared their food."



MARCH, 2015 ISSUE 1

Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ

COMMUNION

"Spiritually Alive, Joyfully Inclusive, Committed to Justice."

Sunday Morning

March 8

9 am Sunday School
10 am Winton Boyd
Preaching
Handbell Choir

March 15

9 am Sunday School
10 am Winton Boyd
Preaching
Orchard Ridge Choir

March 22

9 am Sunday School
10 am Kids leading
worship
TRU Function

March 29

9 am Sunday School
10 am Winton Boyd
preaching
Orchard Ridge Choir

Newsletters:

March 18 and April 1

Articles due:

Information to be included in the newsletter is due the Monday before the above dates by 9:00 a.m. Email items to office@orucc.org, or drop them off at the office.

Church Emails

Debbie Bauerkemper
office@orucc.org
Tammy Martens
tmartens@orucc.org
Ken Pennings
ken@orucc.org
Winton Boyd
winton@orucc.org

www.orucc.org

Bread: Blessed, Broken, and Shared – Lent at ORUCC

Blessed, Broken and Shared Bread Recipe and Devotional Book-\$5.00

This is spiral bound book of bread and other recipes from church members. As you try a new recipe, you can also read the story of where the recipe comes from in one another's family. Also included are spiritually reflective quotes and thoughts about the role of bread in our lives and as a metaphor for our faith.

Sunday worship themes

Inspired by the book *Take This Bread* (see below)

"Meeting Jesus – Addressing our Hunger" (March 8)

"Bread For All In A Gluten Free World" (March 15)

Youth and Children lead service on theme (March 22)

Roundtable Discussion

Readings from Sara Miles book, Take This bread

Sunday, March 15th, 9 am, Friendship Hall



L to R: Laura Kolden (Salem), Kim Kaspar, Marv Beatty, Joyce Pohl, Paul Hedges, Deborah Holbrook, Ruthanne Landsness and Winton Boyd

8 folks from ORUCC and Salem UCC spent a week in Arizona on a "border immersion" experience—learning about immigration issues from multiple perspectives in both Arizona and Mexico. They'll plan to share their experience in April.

SUNDAYS**Compassion Offering**

Each month our Sunday cash offerings (change and bills) are designated to a worthy mission cause. Each month a different ministry is highlighted. This is a voluntary contribution. For credit on your church statement, on your check write the ministry in the memo line. While this will not count toward your annual pledge, we will acknowledge the contribution on your statement.

March Compassion Offering is One Great Hour of

Sharing: One Great Hour of Sharing, works in more than 138 countries, providing support to health, education, refugee, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives by working with local, national, and international partners. It is administered by Wider Church Ministries Global Sharing of Resources.

Prayers of Concern:

For Robert Prugh who began treatment this week for throat Cancer.

For Palmer Bell who is recovering at home from prostate Surgery.

For Meg Steven's sister who is transitioning her father into assisted living.

For Mike Walsh's brother—in-law undergoing treatment for cancer.

For Barb Olsen's mother Esther Woods who has been transferred to Attic Angel to the Symptom Management Unit of Agrace Hospice after she fell and broke her hip.

For Tom & Marilyn Arnold's son Doug, who has been diagnosed with COPD and will be on supplemental oxygen for the rest of his life.

For Chris Glad whose father passed away recently.

Prayers of Joy:

For our PartyGras event which was attended by 85 people.

For the lovely Ash Wednesday service shared with our sister Mennonite congregation.

For our Lenten series: *Bread—Blessed, Broken and Shared*, and all the wonderful programming & tasty treats tied to that theme.

Wider Church Family: It is important to pray for one another in times of special need or joy, and also in the "regular" times. We invite you to pray for these families. We invite you to make praying for one another a regular feature of your own prayer life.

- Dan & Jane Pettit
- Doug & Mary Piper
- Megan Piper & Kyle Gasser

New Events and Opportunities

Prayer Shawl Dedication on March 8th: If you've been working on a prayer shawl, you may want to drop it off at the church office by Sunday, March 8th, when we'll be dedicating new prayer shawls during worship. For more information about our prayer shawl ministry, contact Karen Falkner at kfalkner@tds.net, or Ree Hale at reehale@hotmail.com. **Reminder to include your name when dropping off prayer shawl to the office.**

Spring Writing Memories Begins! Were you ever chased by an animal? Did you ever tell ghost stories? What is a favorite memory of your mother? It's fun to remember and share earlier times as we write a 2 to 3-page memory for each "class" and read it aloud to our group. You will receive support and encouragement from your fellow writers. We will also explore ways to scan, edit, and use photos in your writing. The group will meet at church 1-3 p.m. Tuesdays (except for Over 55 days) March 17, 24, 31 and April 21, and 28. Just come, or call or email Ellen Maurer to sign up: 845-7164 or eamaurer@wisc.edu

Parents' Night Out! Saturday, March 14, 4:00-8:00

P.M.: We will have our youth and adult volunteers on hand to take care of your children on our next Parents' Night Out—March 14. We will have lots of activities, games, supper and finish with a dance party and movie. We will be celebrating Pi Day as well! The night will seem like it goes on forever. ☺ Cost--\$25 for one child, \$35 for two or more kids. All proceeds will go to support the Youth Mission Trip to Roanoke, Virginia this summer. You can email Tammy at tmartens@orucc.org to sign up.

Children leading Worship—Sunday, March 22,

10:00 a.m.: Children and youth (Preschool through 12th grade) will be sharing in song, prayers, story, drama, and movement focusing on the theme "Bread: Blessed, Broken, and Shared." Tru Function will also be playing.

Confirmation Sunday, April 26: Youth will be offered the rite of Confirmation on Sunday, April 26 during 10:00 worship.

Pilates Group Mat Class: a Fundraiser for the Summer 2015 Mission Trip:

We'll meet for six consecutive Tuesday evenings @ 6:45 - 7:45pm (April 7 - May 12, 2015) in the Bonhoeffer Room, lower level of the church building. Wear comfortable (stretchy) clothes and bring **two** yoga mats (one to stack on top of the other—you need the extra cushioning). All other material and equipment will be provided. Suggested donation: \$75.00. Make your check payable to Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ and mention "Pilates Fundraiser" on the memo line OR pay online with a credit card on the church website at www.orucc.org and find "Pilates Fundraiser." The instructor is Susan Watson. Call Susan: 608/698-5061 (cell) or email: susanjanepilates@gmail.com with any questions you have and to let her know you're signing up. Deadline for signing up is March 31st. Pilates is a series of non-impact exercises focused on core strength, overall flexibility, proper alignment, and breath. Pilates works to educate and balance the different muscles of the body so that they work efficiently as a unit, thereby easing joint and muscular pain, improving posture, and increasing strength and awareness in your body.

**Confirmation—What Does this Rite Mean to Us?**

I grew up attending Salem United Church of Christ in Plymouth, Wisconsin. It was always expected of me and my brothers that we would go through the confirmation process. This process began in 7th grade and lasted for four years. We met at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. One of the books we studied was *The Heidelberg Catechism*.

When it came time to be confirmed there was a gathering of all the confirmation youth and their parents at the church. At this time, the pastor would ask us questions from *The Heidelberg Catechism* and we were to answer them correctly. It seemed quite serious although I don't think anyone was refused the rite of confirmation if they didn't answer the questions correctly.

On the day of confirmation we all put on our white robes and marched into an overcrowded sanctuary. At some point in the service we all went up two by two, knelt in front of the two pastors and they placed their hands on our heads and pronounced a blessing. Of my entire confirmation experience, this was the moment when I felt something alive and different. It felt so special and comforting that a pastor would offer such a personal prayer and a personal blessing.

But after the four years of confirmation classes were over, nothing really changed. My church didn't expect anything different from me. It seemed that all that was required of me was to come to worship and be a good person. For most of my peers, when they were confirmed they were done with church! To be confirmed was their ticket to freedom. How odd, right? I mean I completely understand why they didn't want to be part of the church community anymore. But how odd that the church didn't understand this.

Today a lot of churches have continued with offering the rite of confirmation. And yet, a lot of churches struggle with the importance of this rite. In the book *Introduction to Christian Theology* by Bradley Hanson we hear him echo the same sentiment. He says that "Confirmation is a Christian ritual that is looking for a meaning; indeed, its meaning today is far from clear."

We here at Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ are also on a journey of finding meaning for this ritual. Winton, Ken, and I have had wonderful discussions around confirmation and what it is we are exactly doing/offering when we extend the rite of confirmation to our youth. One thing I realized as we talked through the meaning of confirmation was that maybe we don't expect anything different from the youth who are confirmed; maybe we as a church don't see them any differently and because of that this rite may feel like an empty ritual for some of the youth. This is something for us to continue to evaluate and discuss.

Over the past two Sundays, we have had three of our High School youth share with the middle school youth about their experience of being confirmed. One thing they all agreed upon was their sense that being confirmed helped them to claim ORUCC as their own community—it wasn't just a community that belonged to their parents. One of the reasons that these youth feel this way is because they have built relationships with other adults (besides parents) and feel connected to ORUCC because of these connections. That's a wonderful outcome and something we can really build upon.

What we (pastors) have been considering is the hope that once youth are confirmed they feel and know that they are now part of a community that blesses others; that they internalize this calling and are supported by ORUCC to live out this calling. The last question the youth are invited to answer as they are confirmed is "As the congregation reaffirms its baptismal promises, are you willing to become part of the 'blessing community'—offering your compassion, prayers and support to others, as best you can?" This question, to me, is the pivotal question. It connects the other questions of belief to service and witness. This final question and the answer "I am willing with God's help" is the launching moment.

As we prepare to offer the rite of confirmation to a number of our youth on April 26, I welcome your thoughts and ideas about the meaning of confirmation. I also ask for your prayers as we move toward this day and the days after; that we as a church seek ways to deepen our youth's sense of belonging to the church and support their calling to offer blessings of compassion and support to others.

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Ongoing Groups

Tuesday Evening Adult Bible Study: All are welcome to join us during this spring as we study Paul's letter to the Romans. The group meets at the church on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m., but will not meet on the evening of Parti Gras. If you have questions, please call Sandra Dyar at 271-2409.

OVER 55: The next Over 55 meeting will be held on March 10th. We will have a most unique program-- THE HISTORY OF OUTHOUSES presented by Carol Larsen. It should be a fun and interesting program. As usual, we will gather around 11:30 and begin eating at 11:45. The catered meals have been very popular and the cost is \$6.00 per person. If you have any questions, contact Helen Horn and Ralph Petersen at 231-1807. We welcome one and all to attend and learn everything you ever wanted to know about outhouses but were afraid to ask.

ORUCC Men's Group: The Orchard Ridge UCC men's group meets in the Oscar Romero Gathering Room on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 7:15 pm. If you are interested in joining the group or have questions, please contact Dave Myers at 274-0381 or 547_5698@msn.com.

Knitting & Crafts Group: The group will meet on the first Monday of the month at 1:30 pm at the church. All are welcome to bring some handwork and join us! If you have questions, please call Sandra Dyar at 271-2409.

Women's Bible Study at Church September through April: Please join us at the church at 1:00 p.m. the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month. If you would like to join us or have questions call Mary Lou Peterson at 238-2380.

Weekly Meditation Group: We meet at the church on Thursday mornings, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., for a shared time of silent meditation and reflections on our spiritual journeys. Contact Helene Nelson (259-2546 or helenemargaret@gmail.com) or Sara Roberts (273-1114 or sarie914@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

Women's Breakfast Group: We meet the first Friday of every month at 8:30 a.m. at Copper Top Restaurant off Whitney Way. The informal group is open to all women who enjoy conversation.

Women's Book Group: On March 12 from 7 - 9 p.m., we'll discuss THE FORGOTTEN GARDEN by Kate Morton. This fiction concerns a young English girl who, early in the 20th century, is stowed away on a ship to Australia. Without anybody to claim her, she is taken in and raised as their own by a dock worker and his wife. When she learns on her 21st birthday that they are not her birth parents, she sets out to discover her history and find her family of origin.

There are many available copies in the library system, and the book is available in other formats as well. Ann Avery will host us at her home, 5305 Whitcomb Drive. Please let her know if you plan to attend at rareavery@msn.com or 298-7587. Any woman who enjoys discussing books she has read is welcome to join us.

Movie Group: The group will meet in the Friendship Hall on Friday, March 20, at 7:30. We will be chatting about two current movies on the lighter side: "McFarland, USA" and "The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel." Please join us for a lively discussion and dessert. RSVP to Bruce and Cherie Olsen: olsens.madison@gmail.com

Misc. Things that are Important to Know

Please make following changes in the church directory: Change email for Jen Walker to: gilwalker@gmail.com

RETURNED MAIL/NEWSLETTER: **Temporarily out of town, OR gone for the winter, OR have moved,** please notify the church office if you have temporarily stopped mail service or want mail sent to a different address. Mailed newsletters and other correspondence have been returned with postage due. Thank you.

Coffee Fund for Sunday Mornings and all Other Church Events: Many of us enjoy a good cup of Fair Trade coffee after worship on Sunday mornings. If you can help out by donating to the coffee fund, that would be appreciated.

Easter Flower Order Form

We will be decorating our sanctuary with many different kinds of flowers again this year. We invite you to donate to this in honor or memory of a loved one.

Name _____ # of plants _____ at \$15 each
Total enclosed \$ _____

In Honor _____

In Memory _____

Check one: I will collect my plant after worship on Easter Sunday. My plant may be given away.

Please return form to the church office no later than Sunday, March 22, 2015

Are you still interested in receiving our newsletter? If not, please mail the back (which includes your name and address), call the church office at (608) 271-7212, or contact office@orucc.org requesting us to remove you from our mailing list.

OUR CHURCH IS OPEN AND AFFIRMING OF ALL PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF AGE, RACE,
CULTURE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER EXPRESSION OR IDENTITY, AND ECONOMIC STATUS.
OUR CHURCH IS A SAFE SANCTUARY FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS		
March		
Sunday 8	9:00 a.m.	Adult and Youth Programming
	9:00 a.m.	Labyrinth Walk
	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service
	11:00 a.m.	TRU Function Rehearsal
Monday 9	7:15 p.m.	ORUCC Men's Group
Tuesday 10	11:45 a.m.	OVER 55
	7:00 p.m.	Care of Creation Meeting
Wednesday 11	7:00 p.m.	ORUCC Choir Rehearsal
Thursday 12	8:30 a.m.	Meditation/Spirituality Discussion
	6:30 p.m.	TRU Gumption Rehearsal
Saturday 14	4:00 p.m.	Parent's Night Out
Sunday 15	9:00 a.m.	Adult and Youth Programming
	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service
	11:00 a.m.	TRU Function Rehearsal
Monday 16	6:30 p.m.	Handbell Rehearsal
Tuesday 17	1:00 p.m.	Writing Memories
	7:30 p.m.	Tuesday Night Adult Bible Study
Wednesday 18	1:00 p.m.	Women's Bible Study
	5:45 p.m.	Adult Faith Formation Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	ORUCC Choir Rehearsal
Thursday 19	8:30 a.m.	Meditation/Spirituality Discussion
	6:30 p.m.	TRU Gumption Rehearsal
Friday 20	7:30 p.m.	Movie Group at church
Sunday 22	9:00 a.m.	Adult and Youth Programming
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Confirmation—What Does this Rite Mean to Us?

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Ushers—Need 3 each Sunday unless specified

Mar 8 Dick & Lois Rossmiller
Mar 15 Matt & Julie Logan, Phil Winkel
Mar 22 Jim & Bernie Treichel, Jerry Nelson
Mar 29 Jarrett Gersten, Peter Fabian
Apr 3-Good Friday Jon Blanchard, Peter Fabian
Apr 5-Easter Jerry Nelson, Lary Goss, Peter Fabian
Apr 12 Phil & Judy Winkel, Carolyn Carlson

Welcomers

Mar 8 Doug & Mary Loving, Barb Hummel
Mar 15 Leah Narans, John & Donna Lillethun
Mar 22 Jack Schairer, Ruthanne Landsness, Heather Stevens
Mar 29 Jan Christian, Matt & Julie Logan
Apr 5-Easter Dick & Lois Rossmiller, Scott Ringen
Apr 12 Jack Schairer, Doug & Mary Loving
Apr 19 Glenn Schaeffer, Marilyn Arnold, Leah Narans

Sound	Coffee
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Mar 8 Matt Logan	Brian & Rachael Lancor
Mar 15 Jarrett Gersten	Jerry Hagen & Jane Glaze
Mar 22 Chuck Kaspar	Dolores & Paul Gohdes
Mar 20 Ken Psyck	Matt & Julie Logan
Apr 3-Good Fri John Gilbert	—
Apr 5-Easter Paul Hedges	Steve Yeazel & Chuck Kaspar
Apr 12 Matt Logan	Greg & Barb Loudon

Financial Secretary

Mar 8 Meg **Mar 15** Gene **Mar 22** Linda
Mar 29 Peter **Apr 5-Easter** Meg **Apr 12** Gene
Apr 19 Linda **Apr 26** Peter **May 3** Meg