

SUNDAY MORNING SOUL FEAST

Viewing our Sunday morning gathering as a *soul feast* prepared for and offered to a large family is one way of evaluating the various *dishes and ingredients* that go into it. We can't get everything we want at every banquet, but over time all of us should get tasty and nutritional dishes that please and edify. This is a different way of understanding worship than the *entertainment criterion* that some people bring to worship. ("I liked it." "I didn't like it.")

Just think how hard it is to please children in a family with daily meals year after year. Moms or dads can't cater to all their children's food demands all the time; but good parents take their children's tastes into account with the intent of teaching good eating habits and nurturing sound and healthy bodies.

Now think of blending several dozen families from different eating traditions under one roof and around one *table!* That's a good picture of a Sunday morning congregation gathered to partake of a soul feast.

We then can ask: What in the Sunday banquet feeds and nurtures our souls individually and collectively and helps us grow to be "like Jesus," i.e., more loving toward others and God? With such a large family, our individual answers will differ.

Nevertheless, some ingredients are so basic they are never left out. How we mix and present the basics and the *spices* vary from tradition to tradition and from congregation to congregation within the same tradition. Each of us will have to say occasionally: "I don't like that very much, but I can live with it as long as that's not the only dish every time."

We have some people in our congregation who are disappointed that the Lord's Meal (communion) is treated as dessert and offered infrequently when they consider it an essential (vegetables!) for a balanced Christian life. For them, without the Meal, the Word is left unsealed, which is how John Calvin put it in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Most of us in SPC grew up with the dessert view of communion. I certainly did. Our recent

experiment with more frequent communion has forced me to consider why Calvin and others insisted that the Meal be consistently linked with the Word. Historically, Presbyterians (like me and many others) became enamored with the rational/cerebral (Word) experience of faith and mistrustful of non-intellectual experiences of faith like the Lord's Meal. Historically, we have not been comfortable with *mystery*.

That's one reason (besides tossing out anything that smacked of Catholicism in the 17th century!) Presbyterians abolished liturgical colors, lectionaries, the church year, Advent, Christmas, Easter, religious art, music, etc. only to rediscover in the late 20th century the power of liturgy, music and art for the formation of faith. That's the larger context (a cultural and pedagogical shift) in which the national office of Worship and Theology is encouraging Sessions and congregations to rediscover and re-emphasize the sacramental part of our tradition (Word AND Sacrament).

Rev. Pat Donohoe and I began re-introducing art and sacramentality at SPC long before this official recommendation came out. We drew attention to the Font and Table via our liturgical movement at every Sunday service. In the American religious context, linking Word with Meal more frequently is a way for SPC to distinguish itself from mega-church evangelicals. Some young people of late have grown disenchanted with evangelical preacher-centered services and are returning to mainline churches in which the deeper traditions, including the sacraments, are honored and practiced.

I'm looking forward to learning how various members experienced our recent periods of more frequent communion. It will be interesting to see if any of us changed our minds and hearts over the course of this exploration.

We will soon make a few reflection questions available to the congregation. After that, there will be several opportunities to share your reflections with others in small groups.

The session is not contemplating any permanent changes anytime soon. We will remain in this exploration mode for at least another year.

—Pastor Tremba

Yootz Corner...

ALL YOOTZ CANOEING at beautiful pristine Smoke Hole Canyon, one of the most purest and wild canyons left on the East Coast. Led by the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition. No paddling experience necessary. Cost is \$35.00. Leaving SPC at 4:30 p.m. **Friday, May 2**, returning **Sunday, May 4** at 2:30 p.m. Questions? Contact Brandon Dennison, 304-617-2735, or <Bmdherdfan@aol.com>.

Mark Your Calendars...

ROUNDTABLE WITH PASTOR TREMBA Saturday, May 3, 9:30–10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall. Any and all questions pertaining to faith, Bible, church.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST New Street United Methodist Church at corner of Church and New Streets. All-you-can-eat, \$6 adult, \$3 child (3-12). **Saturday, May 3**, 8 a.m.–1 p.m.

ARE YOU A FRIEND OF SPC? Would you like to learn about becoming a registered member of the congregation including “the rights and responsibilities pertaining thereunto?” If so, attend one of these three inquiry sessions to find out. **Sundays, May 4, 11, 18**. 9:45-10:30 a.m. in Classroom 3. (Top floor, next to choir room).

BIBLE WORKBENCH How relevant is the Bible to you in your every day, busy life? Can this archaic piece of literature written in such ancient and culturally different times be a guide for us today? Does personal reading of the Bible challenge us to discern the multitude of meanings that scholars have devoted their lives to studying? Please join the “Between the Services” discussion group using this unique approach to Bible Study. It is called the “Bible Workbench”—look it up on the Internet for more information—and grow with the group as we share insights and thoughts. The course runs **Sunday, May 4** through **Sunday, June 8**, Classroom 1 at 9:35 a.m.

—Pete and Chris Madeo

DEAR CHILDREN OF THE EARTH RETREAT May 9–10, a 24-hour retreat at Rolling Ridge for children ages 6–12, and their parents, grandparents or mentors. This is a special treat for Friday night and all day Saturday of Mother’s Day weekend. The retreat is led by six adults, two of whom are early childhood teachers, and it will provide rich experiences in nature. Retreat flyers are available in the SPC Fellowship Hall. To register and for more information, call Vivian Headings at 304-725-4172.

OPEN HOUSE at Friends Wilderness Center at Rolling Ridge, **Saturday, May 17**, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free. Optional yummy lunch \$7 or bring your own

picnic. See www.friendswilderness.org.

BLESSING OF GRADUATES Sunday, May 18. Let the office (304-876-6466) know if you or your child are graduating this year.

ROCK (Ride On For CASA Kids) Fourth annual tri-county bike ride is **Saturday, May 31**, starting and ending on West King Street in Shepherdstown. Rides are 10, 25, 50 and 100 miles plus *Tykes on Trikes* for kids ages 2–7. Can’t ride? Can you pay a \$30 registration fee so someone else can? Make check to SPC; Memo: CASA. To register for the ride or find out more about CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), call 304-263-5100 or go to www.casaride.com. If you can help the day of event (registration table, rest stop support, etc.) please contact Kathy Reid in the SPC office, 304-876-6466 or email her at kathy@spcworks.org.

CHURCH PICNIC Sunday, June 22.

SPC Monthly Activities...

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN’S CIRCLE First Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are invited for Bible study and refreshments. **Next: May 1**.

SUPPER GROUPS Moveable Feast, **Saturday, May 3**, 6:30 p.m. at Lucy and Gordon Gay’s, 304-876-0825; TGIF, **Friday, May 16**, 6:30 p.m. at Jim & Joni Edwards’, 304-728-9795.

FIRST THINGS FIRST SUNDAY Coins for relief of hunger and non-perishables for JCCM (see list under **Notices: JCCM**). **Next: May 4**.

TAIZE SERVICE First Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. A Service of Prayer in song, silence and candlelight. **Next: May 7**.

ROUNDTABLE WITH ETHEL HORNBECK Conversation and reflection with and around scripture, poetry and other selected texts. Third Thursdays, 10:00–11:00 a.m. in the balcony. **Next: May 15**.

MEN’S BREAKFAST Third Saturdays. Breakfast at 7:30 a.m.; discussion 8:00–9:00 a.m. **Next: May 17**.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER Third Sundays, balcony, 7:00–7:30 p.m. **Next: May 18**.

Notices...

JCCM (Jefferson County Community Ministries) The Food Pantry reported the client number in March was the largest so far this year. There was more food distributed than was received. Most needed items: canned meats and fish, pancake mix, pancake syrup, cereal, peanut butter, jelly (grape),

potatoes (fresh, dry, casserole), mac and cheese, spaghetti sauce, spaghetti noodles, canned soups, regular tea bags, coffee (instant and perked), saltine crackers, toilet paper, toothpaste and toothbrushes, shampoo, baby food jars w/lids, and mid-sized, jars w/lids. Thank you for your continued support.

SHENANDOAH WOMEN'S CENTER Most urgent needs: pre-paid long distance phone cards, Martins/Wal-Mart/Food Lion/Sheetz gift cards, used cell phones (with or without charger), laundry detergent (powder), shower gel, ACT Fluoride rinse, waxed dental floss, pain relievers for adults and children, cold/flu medicine, cough syrup & drops, lice treatment kits, baby wipes, and diapers. Place items in the red basket next to JCCM items.

Please do ***NOT*** donate clothing!

HOSTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: Share Your Christmas Be part of a wonderful experience by offering a home-stay or helping hand to a foreign student for Christmas International House (CIH). It is an opportunity to learn about other countries and its people, and a way to show these students the *real America*. Many foreign students never get much insight into family, church, and community life. Host one or two students, for one or two weeks, **December 18, 2008 to January 3, 2009**. If you can't host, you could also help by offering meals, take students on trips, or transport to and from airports. Please let Bill Wagner know your interest by **May 15**, 304-876-7099 or wagners@citlink.net.

WEST VIRGINIA WILDERNESS The most recent *West Virginia Wilderness Coalition Newsletter* (April 23, 2008) featured an article about SPC Youth leader Brandon Dennison, who will assume a new advocacy position for that organization. Through the coalition's Spiritual Campaign for Wilderness, which was launched in 2006, Brandon will be promoting wilderness preservation by delivering materials and making presentations to church congregations and other faith-based organizations throughout the state. Brandon will make a special effort to encourage people of faith to experience West Virginia's exquisite natural places for themselves, since he witnessed how a trip through the Monongahela National Forest deeply affected our youth and congregation. He hopes that when people from other churches encounter God's presence in the wilderness, they will also develop a spiritual and environmental appreciation for the state's special holy places, and the desire to work to protect them.

MISSION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE The first ever West Virginia Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic is **June 27-28** at Hedgesville High School. This two-day event, beginning each day at 6 a.m., will provide FREE dental services to approximately

1000 adults. If you would like to be a client the United Way suggests coming early and be prepared to wait. Also bring a list of any medicines you take. If you would like to be a volunteer or have any questions please call United Way of Jefferson County at 304-596-5529.

PAPER RECYCLING BY 4-H GROUP at Christ Reformed Church, 8-9:15 a.m. Paper, cardboard, magazines, books. Place in paper bags, boxes, or tie securely. NO PLASTIC BAGS. **Next: May 3.**

Spiritual Formation...

LIVING GRATEFULLY

As we continue to assess our recent experiences with more frequent communion (undertaken, with churches across the country, in response to the invitation of the Office of Theology and Worship of the PCUSA), it may be helpful to examine those experiences in light of our individual beliefs and prior experiences, as well as place them within an even larger context of what might be called "eucharistic life."

Miriam Therese Winter, Professor of Liturgy, Worship, and Spirituality at Hartford Seminary, in her book *eucharist with a small 'e'* offers this challenge: "Imagine a spirituality rooted in doing what Jesus did, one that adds a sacramental dimension to our everyday lives... Eucharist with a small 'e' is not about rites or rituals. It is about intensifying our relationship with God by immersing ourselves in the witness and wisdom of Jesus.... The focus, therefore, is not on resources for prayer or coming up with an orderly design for a sacramental meal, but on developing those qualities that are relational, such as being genuinely hospitable, being a good listener, cultivating the gift of telling a story, beginning with one's own, encouraging others to tell their story, learning to share the concerns of the heart, sensing when the Spirit is stirring, believing that the connections between eating and drinking and the spirit of Jesus are absolutely real."

As we reflect on our shared experience of communion these last months, let us begin to ask, together: How have I experienced the Spirit stirring in my life? What practices seem to deepen my capacity for hospitality, welcome and compassion? How does this relate to my experience of Sunday worship and all its many elements?

—Ethel Hornbeck
Parish Assistant for Spiritual Formation

NEXT NEWSLETTER: June 2008. Announcements, articles or news on our members? Contact the office, 304-876-6466 or <office@spcworks.org>. Copy deadline May 28. Let us know if you would like to get the newsletter on line. It will save us paper and postage.

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SHEPHERDSTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Post Office Box 268
Shepherdstown WV 25443
office@spcworks.org

HELLO FROM SCOTLAND Hope all is well with everyone in Shepherdstown. Spring has finally arrived here, and our daffodils are still going strong in our garden. I am much better now, still on medication to control balance problems, as a result of my inner ear balance mechanism having gone kaput! Enjoying walking again and exploring this area when we have our day off.

Everything is fine here with our two Parishes. Rick and I are part of a small prayer group that meets regularly, as well as being involved in an ecumenical group called Healing Rooms Scotland. We both send our love and best wishes. Enjoy your springtime, and all those lovely potluck suppers; they were such fun and a nice way to socialize and get to know folk. Hope Randall and Paula and family are fine too, and Paula's lovely Mum. All for now. —Angela

(Angela and her husband Richard West did a parish exchange with Randy and Paula last summer. This is an excerpt from an email. Angela also asked for the pattern for the prayer shawl given her by the Women's Circle.)

HUMMINGBIRDS I think hummingbirds are cool because they can flap their wings up to 80 times per second and fly upside down.

Hummingbirds eat mostly nectar so they defend their nectar source aggressively. If hummingbirds do not have enough nectar, they can get ill. There are over 320 species of hummingbirds in the Western Hemisphere. Hummingbirds migrate at least 600 miles across the Gulf of Mexico. In this migration, they fly non-stop! They can fly up to 60 miles per hour in a tail wind. This is remarkable because they range from the size of a large bee to only about three inches. Hummingbirds are so fast that the human eye cannot comprehend their exact movements. The hummingbird is awesome!! —Robbie Barrett

Rhapsody on Nature, Sunday, April 20

Keeping up with Members...

Nick Bayer graduates on May 12 from the College of Wooster with a B.A. in Business Economics. At present, he has a job as Bass Choral Scholar in an Episcopalian church choir in Cleveland, which involves a light amount of solo/cantoring work. After graduation, he hopes to pursue work doing financial analysis. In high school Nick was into soccer, trombone in jazz band, and European history. His fondest memories at SPC? He distinctly remembers Keith Lyndaker singing "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" from the balcony—beautiful. Also, the times at TGIF supper group were extremely fun. Last and most important: every single Christmas Eve service he ever attended

Congratulations to Bob Clark who won the silver medal in the long jump at the Masters Track & Field World Championship in Paris recently, with a leap of 5 meters, 97 centimeters (about 19' 7-1/2"). Only 5 cm (2" +/-) separated the gold and bronze medalists.

Thank You...

Once again I want our blessed church family to know how very grateful we are for all the thoughts, prayers, calls, visits and meals we have received on my latest episode. I know that is what pulled me through so quickly. Thank you, thank you thank you. Love and God Bless all of you. —Nancy Wilson

Thank you for the cards and phone calls after my recent knee procedure. —Betty Egan

Financial Corner...

General Fund through April 27. Expected: \$89,904. Actual giving: \$83,667. Building Fund pledged for 2008: \$27,000. Submitted to date: \$7,116.

Visit www.spcworks.org on a regular basis for all the latest news, podcasts, calendar events and much more.