

Dear Cheryl,

Your presentation about why youth are not coming to the table with spirits/hearts turned towards embracing the experience of Communion really impacted me and I spent time in prayer following your presentation asking Jesus to guide me in helping our youth (and adults) at St. Luke's have a deeper, more meaning-filled, Communion experience.

So here is what came out of my prayer time:

* I talked to my elders about what I wanted to do (have the youth make/bake Communion bread) and also have a Christian Seder on Maundy Thursday, as well as having people turn to each other as they pass the trays for Communion and saying to each other the words that go with each element. My elders were completely on board.

* One of my elders provided all of the ingredients for a quick version of Amish Friendship Bread that we found online together. She printed off the recipe, too. As part of our youth group meeting on Sunday, February 25th, we had six girls attend and they formed two teams of three. Each team made the recipe, which made two loaves of bread (so they created four loaves of bread). As part of the process while the bread was rising and baking, we also wrote cards to the school kids at Parkland (was an email I got through the presbytery) and we also read the prayer requests of congregants and created the Prayer Chain that hangs on the Sanctuary cross during Lent. I also talked to the kids about the Communion bread they were making and what its meaning is for us when we take Communion. They asked questions, we talked together to answer them, and it was an amazing discussion.

* Then, last Sunday, March 4th, we used the Communion bread made by the girls as part of worship. I had the girls all come up in front of the congregation at the beginning of my sermon and asked them questions about our bread baking experience, working it all together to help make the point of the sermon (without Jesus directing our steps we can get really off track ... used having the recipe to make the bread as the thing that directed our efforts and how lost we would have been without it).

* I cut the Communion bread (before worship) into larger squares than the team usually does (this bread was denser and held up to being cut into bigger pieces) and talked about the abundance of our Lord's blessings and we hoped they would savor the taste of the bread made by the girls as everyone shared in Communion.

* As I gave instructions on how to share each element, I had the congregation repeat the words to say to each other and encouraged them to look at each other as they said the words.

I had three adults tell me after the service that it was one of the most meaningful services they have been in in a long time. I asked the kids how they felt taking Communion and they said their bread tasted good and it meant a lot to them to eat it for Communion. They also liked talking to the people beside them as they shared the elements.

So, all of this to say ... Thank You! I am so grateful for you, Cheryl, and that you are so turned towards youth and people in helping us all grow in our faith. :-)

In God's Love,
Jody