



25 Main Street, P.O. Box 61, Grand Bend, Ontario N0M 1T0 \* (519) 238-2402  
[huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com](mailto:huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com) \* [www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com](http://www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com)

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*"When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him" – Luke 24: 30 – 31a*

## **Emmaus Communion**

Dear friend:

In the United Church we have only two sacraments, baptism and communion. Some churches have seven; so, you can tell that for us, these are huge.

The words that introduce our communion dwell on the period leading up to Good Friday: "On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took bread ... this is my body broken for you ... afterwards he took the cup ... this is my blood shed for you". This is heavy stuff – "betrayed, broken, shed". Nothing good seems to have happened on Good Friday.

Some churches do focus on that Friday. They have Jesus' body, writhing in agony, on the cross. They call it a Crucifix. Their focus is on Christ's death so that we are forgiven. To all Christians, Friday is important.

But in our United Church, we focus on Easter Sunday. Good things did happen on Easter Sunday. Christ is risen. That's the reason our cross is empty. We're resurrection Christians. Easter Sunday is the beginning of a new part of our lives. So, our communion words focus on Friday, but our thinking focuses on Sunday. Those don't go together.

Here's a communion story where our words and our thinking coincide. It begins later in the afternoon of Easter Sunday. Two followers of Jesus, not disciples, but followers, were headed towards a town called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. Along the way they met a stranger, who seemed oblivious to the activities in the city. They talked about the death of Jesus, and how his body seemed to have disappeared from the tomb where he was laid. Later that night, over supper, the stranger took bread, blessed it, and shared it with the two followers of Jesus. Then their eyes were opened, and they realized they had seen the risen Christ.

During our communion sacrament, focusing on the road to Emmaus seems more in tune with who we are as resurrection Christians. The bread and the juice are the new covenant of resurrection which the risen Jesus shared with these two followers and which he shares with us. We celebrate that newness, and receive this new covenant, every time we celebrate communion. At least, that's my perspective.

Much love to you and your whole family.  
Until next time.

Peter

Reference: For inspiring this Letter of Hope, thanks to Rev Wesley Snedeker, Denver, Colorado.

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.  
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

