



STONEGATE CHURCH

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN



In the Life of our STONEGATE Family

Our weekly activities and Sunday services
are suspended until further notice.

I hope, this A Feast of Agape can join us even stronger in unshaken spiritually Stonegate Church. Whatever part will be used, whatever form a single person or family will perform, it will be to God glory. Jesus met with the Disciples in the Upper Room, but today Jesus wants to meet with us at our homes. No matter that we are separated one from one another, but what does matter is unity in our faith. So do we, separated in our homes on this time, but united through faith as we celebrate Holy Communion at our homes.



A Feast Of Agape
for The Celebration of Holy Communion
And Prayer for the Global Pandemic

April 12, 2020

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Holy Communion Celebration and Prayer for the Global Pandemic

The Homebound/Virtual Holy Communion Celebration for appropriate liturgy to help instruct all believers in our Lord, Jesus Christ in preparation for this form of Holy Communion, which all elements previously were consecrated/blessed by the ordained Minister of the Words and Sacraments according to the biblical and theological tradition. All elements – Bread and Wine – used by believers were reverently delivered to them by Elders of the church, unless they used others elements limited by current circumstances.

I am aware that it is possible that believers do not have an order of this celebration or any handout. Therefore, their parts are prompted by the Pastor, as written, and should be diligently followed by all believers. The entire parts of the Pastor is intended to be recorded and posted on the church's website for the believer's convenience and demonstration of unity by the Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit and virtually present at the Lord's Table as they were usually practiced.

When we celebrate Holy Communion together as a church in our worship, we remember that JESUS invited us to His Table as part of His Ministry, not just at the Last Supper.

So I wanted to offer a way for all of us to celebrate Holy Communion together using **Prefilled Communion Cups with Juice and Wafer**, which are remained at the church on our Lord's Table **OR** were in mysterious way and reverently delivered by the Elders and what you now have at your homes.





Indeed, what I have asked you to do is to prepare yourself (to be) comfortable.

JESUS used the parable of a great banquet to which all people are invited in order to talk about the place where we are going to go..., to the Heavenly Kingdom and what the family of GOD – *“The family of believers,”* looks like.

Our LORD said, **“Go out to the country roads and boundary walls, and insistently persuade people to come in, so that my house will be full.”** (Luke 14:23; *CJB*) JESUS often invited the most unlikely guests to His meal, place and time, confusing and mystifying the Disciples.

In this way, HE was encouraging us for showing a deep love and compassion, what we call **AGAPE**, and a connection beyond social norms and tradition, exclusions and limitations. HE knew that we humans, even isolated by a cause of the coronavirus pandemic, would need a connection and inclusion.

JESUS comforts us, saying **“you have a place at the table and I AM with you always,”** and JESUS challenges us to make sure we are doing the same – that all people know they are welcome in our hearts, in prison cells, in our homes, in our churches – even if we can’t physically be with each other right now.

It is difficult in this moment not to be together and near some of the people we love and that we might be worried about very much, because they could be in another city, state, or even in another country.

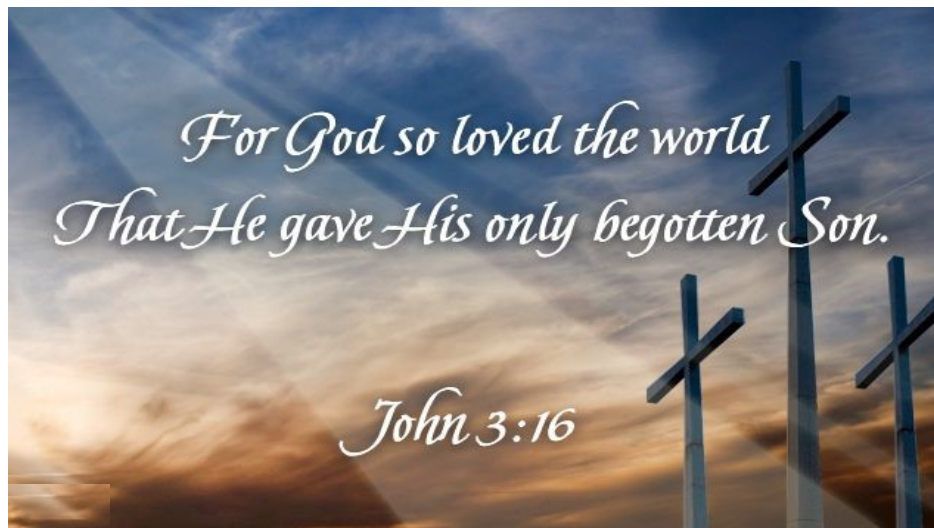


Take a moment and say out loud *(or in your hearts – take a moment for this; you may want to add specific names of people from your church, or in your community that at this moment who are sick,)* the names of people you wish were right there next to you at your table today.

In our weekly Bulletins we can read:

**For where two or three are gathered in my name,
I AM there among them.**

(Matthew 18:20; ^{NRSV})



**JESUS is no longer physically on earth, yet every time we gather around a table and we call HIM to mind, HE is present with us in SPIRIT. And so too, our loved ones are with us.
Let this be a comfort to us.**



May the SPIRIT use us to heal and reconcile in JESUS name,
And “The family of believers, says...” “We will heal and reconcile in JESUS name.”

We will heal and reconcile in JESUS’ name.

Prayer After Receiving Holy Communion

Day after day and always YOU give YOURSELF to us:
in two or three gathered in YOUR name,
in connection across many homes, and in bread and wine,
YOU are here.

And now may YOU shelter not only in place, but in peace. May the peace and comfort of CHRIST be present with you now and forevermore.

As we go from this gathering around Your Table,
Even being at our home’s tables,
may we feel restored to YOUR body,
companions by YOUR people,
and sustained by the power of YOUR SPIRIT
as we witness to YOUR healing and reconciling work.
Through the wounded hands and feet of CHRIST our LORD.

And now may the HOLY SPIRIT make us one in CHRIST,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world.

And “The family of believers, says...” “Amen!”

Amen!

When the celebration of A Feast of Agape concludes, all remaining Holy Communion elements should be consumed or returned to the earth.



PASTOR: Let all who are hungry and thirsty eat and drink from LORD'S TABLE.

So, you are at this table, everything is ready, be sure,
 You who have much faith
 And you who have and would like to have more; be assured
 You who have been at the LORD'S TABLE often
 And you who have not been there for a long time; now you are.
 You who have tried to follow JESUS,
 even you who have sometimes failed;
 But now, IT IS CHRIST WHO INVITES YOU TO MEET HIM HERE.
 These are the gifts of GOD,
 for the family of GOD, for the family of believers."

And "The family of believers, says...", "Thanks be to GOD."

Thanks be to GOD.

Eat and drink from the LORD'S TABLE

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Remain grateful to GOD)

Pastor: We belong to JESUS CHRIST'S' body.

And "The family of believers, says..." "We belong to JESUS CHRIST'S' body."

We belong to JESUS CHRIST'S' body.



We also want to call to mind, the people we cannot name, and whose names we do not know. But we know they need our prayers and GOD'S comfort.

For those who are afraid
For those who are sick and recovering
For those who are caring for loved ones who are sick at home
For those who are helping and are so very tired
For those who are caring for persons in medical care
For those who are separated from loved ones
For those who are feeling alone and isolated
For those who are struggling to find friends, food, and comfort
For those who have lost loved ones

I invite you to pause for a moment and take a deep breath on behalf of all those *we* do not know and cannot call by name. As we do so, we know that GOD knows who needs our prayers and the SPIRIT, BREATH OF GOD, is blowing from within us outward as a Spirit of Compassion and Presence.

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit comes to help our weakness. We don't know what we should pray, but the Spirit himself pleads our case with unexpressed groans. ²⁷ The one who searches hearts knows how the Spirit thinks, because he pleads for the saints, consistent with God's will."

(Romans 8:26-27; CEB)

(pause to take a couple of deep and audible sighs and breaths)



A Feast of Agape

Opening and Initial Words from Pastor

We are experiencing participating at the LORD'S TABLE virtually..., from a distance..., and we are united spiritually through this Holy Communion – Bread and Wine – in a new way today.

Though physically separated and isolated from one another..., nevertheless, we are still united as one body, ONE CHURCH in JESUS CHRIST, we are united together as through our baptism and confession of faith.

Blessings at the table are part of our daily tradition, too. JESUS asked us to remember HIM whenever we are having a common meal. In doing so, Jesus asked us to remember HIM whenever we break bread and raise a cup in thanksgiving.

(If you do not have Prefilled Communion Cups with Juice and Wafer, or if you are in a prison, use grape juice and a small piece of daily bread, or whatever your circumstances allows you to use) Your faith will guides you.



ALL: Our Father

**which art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name.**

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.





with YOUR comforting presence...

so that we might be YOUR comfort to others...

The cup reminds us that any life,

no matter how empty, or lonely,

or isolated it may become,

can be filled again...,

Pastor: *And “The family of believers, continues...”*

Bless this food..., and break open our hearts...

Bless this drink..., and pour out your LOVE - AGAPE...

Amen...

PASTOR: CHRIST is the bread of life, let us pray:

Pour out YOUR HOLY SPIRIT on us wherever we are gathered,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Let them be for us the body and blood of CHRIST,
so that we may be for the world the body of CHRIST,
made whole by HIS witness, passion and life.

In this season of social distancing and separation,
may YOU remind us that we are never spiritually distant from YOU.

Pastor, *And “The family of believers, says...”*

**When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim YOUR death, LORD JESUS,
until YOU come in glory.**

PASTOR: And now, with confidence of the children of GOD, let us pray:



In this **Feast of Agape**, we can call to mind things for which we are deeply grateful. I invite you to speak aloud a couple of things that you are grateful for in this moment.

(take a moment for a silence)

And also, I invite you to raise a plate or of “something” on your table, or a cup or glass of whatever you are drinking,

(if you are more than one, let everyone have a moment to do this)

As members of the household of
GOD we now join together in
SPIRIT, yet still present to one
another as we gather from across
our homes and places of
separations and isolations.



This presence is marked by our shared prayers and faith in which we stand, our shared hearing and affirmation of God’s Word, as JESUS commanded us when HE instituted Holy Communion at the Last Supper with His Disciples.



And now, let us hear in our hearts as we share this invitation,

Invocation

The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'
And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.'
And let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.



(Revelation 22:17; ^{NRSV})

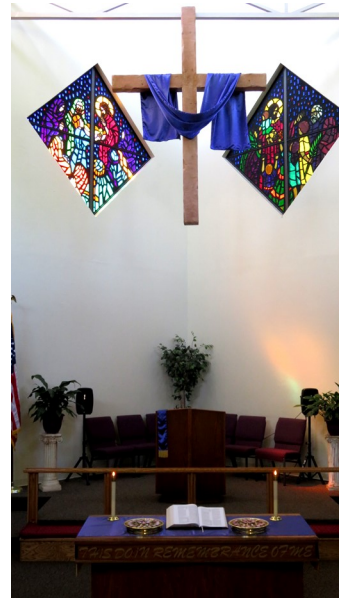
Greetings and Introduction, and Opening Prayer

PRAYER: Heavenly FATHER, grant YOUR mercy and grace to YOUR people in their many and various callings. Give them patience, and strengthen them in their Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to their neighbor in CHRIST's name; even we are separated, isolated through JESUS CHRIST, our LORD †Amen.

The bread is set up on the Table

The cups are set up on the Table

*(or whatever is available in your
circumstances—trust your faith)*



**When the supper was over, he took the cup, the cup of salvation,
gave thanks to you, gave it to His Disciples, and said:**

**"Drink from this, all of you,
this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out
for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me."**



And "The family of believers, responds..."

We gather in GOD's name...
invited by JESUS...
united together with YOUR SPIRIT...
in union with each other...
feed our bodies and our spirits...
with YOUR comforting presence...



Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God.
 Blessed is your Son who came to preach the GOOD NEWS to the poor,
 And all of social distancing and separation are blessed,
 But we are never spiritually distant from YOU, Oh LORD!

PASTOR: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give YOU thanks and praise, O LORD our GOD, CREATOR and RULER of the universe..., therefore we praise YOU joining our voices with choirs of angels, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs,

And “The family of believers, responds...”

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD, GOD of power and might, heaven and earth are full of YOUR glory. Hosanna in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
 Hosanna in the highest.**

PASTOR: YOU are HOLY, O GOD of MAJESTY,
 and blessed is JESUS CHRIST, YOUR SON, our LORD.
 In JESUS, YOUR Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
 full of grace and truth.
 It is CHRIST, our LORD, WHO seats with us at our table, united in SPIRIT,
 invites us to seek to live in peace with GOD and one another.

**This is a true test of your faith in this moment.
 (a short moment of silence)**

On the night in which he gave himself up for us; he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to His Disciples, and said:

**"Take, eat, this is my body
 which is given for you.
 Do this in remembrance of me."**



OR

**Prefilled Communion Cups with Juice and Wafer,
 (or whatever is available in your circumstances
 — trust your faith)**

Pastor: So, the Disciples did as JESUS had directed them and they prepared the Passover. When evening came, JESUS was reclining at the table with the Twelve Disciples.

(Matthew 26:17-20; NIV)



Each time the Pastor says, *“The family of believers responds,”*

Read it in silence and spiritually hear the pastor’s voice, then you will repeat back the loud response as you will see in your Ceremonial Bulletin or as I have given to you when you are listening to the audio instruction.

PASTOR: How graciously has HE taught us that the fullest meaning of servanthood is found in the attribute of humility. *And “The family of believers, responds...”*

The greatest among you will be your servant (...) and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

(Matthew 23:11-12; NIV)



PASTOR: By strength of hand, the LORD brought us out of evil and death. In gratitude, let us then worship our GOD and recount His mercy and grace, even though we are separated. *And “The family of believers, responds...”* **This moment is truly special, even we are separated physically but united spiritually and in the faith in our LORD, JESUS CHRIST.**

Pastor, HE healed the sick.
And “The family of believers, says...” “HE healed the sick.”
HE healed the sick.

HE is healing the sick now.
And “The family of believers, says...” “HE is healing the sick now.”
HE is healing the sick now.

HE will heal the sick tomorrow, too.
And “The family of believers, says...” “HE will heal the sick tomorrow, too.”
HE will heal the sick tomorrow, too.

PASTOR: looking at this cup and bread, we remembrance
GOD’s glory and might, forgiveness, grace and love.

Is Father here?
And “The family of believers,” says “HE is”
HE is!

Is Christ among us?
And “The family of believers,” says “HE is”
HE is!



Is the Spirit with us?
And “The family of believers,” says “HE is”
HE is!

Who is our God?
And “The family of believers,” says “Our GOD is GOD the FATHER, SON and the HOLY SPIRIT.”
Our GOD is GOD the FATHER, SON and THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Who are we?
And “The family of believers,” says “We are equal people.”
We are equal people.

The Lord be with you.
And “The family of believers,” says “And also with you.”
And also with you.

Affirmation of Faith – in Unison

We believe and trust in GOD the FATHER ALMIGHTY.

We believe and trust in JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON.

We believe and trust in the HOLY SPIRIT.

We believe and trust in the THREE in ONE.

Pastor: Heaven and Earth are full of YOUR glory.
And “The family of believers, says...” “Heaven and Earth are full of YOUR glory.”
Heaven and Earth are full of YOUR glory.

Pastor: Hosanna in the Highest!
And “The family of believers, says...” “Hosanna in the Highest!”
Hosanna in the Highest!