

# A Heritage Communion



## Communion Season at Twin Oaks Church

May 15-17, 2021



# An Invitation

Rev. Russell St. John, Lead Pastor

Dear Twin Oaks Family,

Our Scottish Presbyterian forebears esteemed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, thinking it no trifling thing to commune with the living God through bread and wine. We, their theological descendants, continue to regard the sacrament highly, but whereas many Presbyterians today are increasing the frequency of communion, our Scottish brothers and sisters strove instead to increase the depth and intensity of their communion through a practice known as a "communion season."

Simply put, a communion season represented an annual or bi-annual week of outdoor meetings, sermons, times of prayer, biblical instruction, and personal soul-searching, leading to the celebration of the Lord's Supper and a subsequent service of thanksgiving for Christ and all His benefits.

This spring, Twin Oaks Church will enjoy its own communion season. We'll begin on Easter Sunday by providing a six-week devotional that our very own Andy Iversen has written. These devotions are written to help each family unit think about, understand, and prepare for our upcoming communion season at Twin Oaks. Week 1 explains our Union that Leads to Communion. Week 2 explores our Communing with Christ, while Week 3 focuses the lens, describing our Communion through the Lord's Supper specifically. Week 4 shifts to consider how each of us ought to prepare for the Supper, addressing Preparation through Examination. Week 5 encourages you to consider Preparation through Evidences of Grace in your life, while Week 6 closes by walking you through Preparation by Fasting and Planning. These weeks of preparation will culminate in our Heritage Communion weekend, three services, to be held on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, May 15, 16, and 17.

During the Saturday meeting, which will convene in the Reception Hall, I will be teaching on the meaning of the







Lord's Supper, summarizing the devotional truths of the previous six weeks. Pastor David Barnes and Carol Scanio will be leading an age-appropriate version of this for our PreK-5th graders. Our Sunday worship service will take place on the lawn behind the church, where we will gather in folding chairs and on blankets, worshiping together before enjoying communion in family groups with bread and wine and an extended time of fellowship within the service. After the service, we will stay gathered to enjoy a picnic lunch that you supply for your family and friends. The Monday evening service will feature a time of prayer and thanksgiving to God for the gift of Christ and the communion we've enjoyed.

More information is included in this booklet, which walks you through the logistics of the weekend. Please mark the weekend of May 15-17 on your calendar, prioritizing this communion season with your Twin Oaks family, and in the case of bad weather, reserve the following weekend, May 22-24, as a backup.

Please also pray. Both our Scottish forebears and our Southern Presbyterian fathers saw revival regularly attend communion seasons. Ask God to capture your own heart again with the wondrous truth that Christ gave His body and shed His blood for you. And do not neglect committing yourself to walk through the weekly devotions. Even as we spend a season of time considering the birth of Christ, and a season of time considering His passion, death, and resurrection, so also spiritual profit awaits those who devote themselves to considering our communion with Christ's body and blood by faith through the Lord's Supper.

I look forward to communing with you and to seeing the spiritual fruit that results.

May the Lord richly bless His people in the Supper He Himself gave to us.

In Him,  
Pastor Russ





# A Heritage Communion

## Schedule & How to Prepare

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### Sat, May 15 Preparation

***5:30 – 6:30 pm, Reception Hall***

Historically, this has been a day of fasting for deep heart preparation. Pastor Russ will teach on the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and Pastor David and Carol Scanio will teach an age-appropriate version of this to our PreK-5th graders. In advance, think through ways members of your family can fast: a meal, sugar, TV, electronics, etc.

- Attend with the family
- Nursery available for children 4 years and younger
- Children ages PreK – 5th grade meet in Lecture Hall

### ► What to bring?

Flip to the last page of this booklet for a list of what to bring with you to each part of the weekend.

### ► What about rain?

Hold the following weekend, May 22-24, as a backup. Changes due to inclement weather will be communicated as needed.



**Sun, May 16**

**Commemoration**

**10:30 am – 1:30 pm, Soccer Field**

Our worship service, taking place on the lawn behind the church, will feature communion together in family groups and an extended time of fellowship. This will be followed by a picnic lunch (that you supply for your family). Please consider bringing enough food to share with 2-3 visitors!

- Attend with the family
- Everyone together on the soccer field
- No Children's or Adult Sunday school
- No Nursery
- Bring lots of things (See list on last page)



**Mon, May 17**

**Thanksgiving**

**6:30 – 7:30 pm, Reception Hall**

Join us for a special time of thanksgiving and praise for what God has done through Christ and in this communion weekend. Feel free to share a testimony of what God has done!

- Attend with the family
- Everyone together in the Reception Hall
- No Children's class or Nursery





## Invitation to the Table

Our practice regarding the Lord's Supper is governed by our understanding of Scripture and is summarized by our confessional statements and denominational documents (The Westminster Confession and Catechisms and the Book of Church Order). In line with these statements, the Elders of our church invite all those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ and are members in good standing in any evangelical church (whether that is Twin Oaks or a different church) to participate in the Lord's Supper. Additionally, all those who have been approved by the Elders may also partake. However, if that description doesn't fit you or your loved ones, please remain with us during that portion of the worship service and take that time to reflect on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our covenant children and other non-communing persons may certainly participate in the other aspects of our worship and fellowship. If you have any questions about our practice please ask Pastor Russ or Pastor David by contacting the church office at 636-861-1870.



A rustic wooden cross made of two weathered logs is positioned on a rocky, grassy mountain peak. The background features a dramatic sunset with a sky filled with orange, red, and pink clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

# Devotionals for Personal & Family Use

In this booklet there are six devotionals, one for each Sunday, beginning with Easter Sunday, leading up to the Heritage Communion. These devotionals will help you think about, understand, and prepare for our upcoming communion season at Twin Oaks. Each of these devotionals should take about 15 minutes and provides opportunities for going further if you so choose. May God richly bless each of you as you seek Him in these times.





# Devotional 1

April 4<sup>th</sup>

## Union that Leads to Communion

**Theme:** One way to understand the Christian life is through the words "union and communion." Through the work of Christ a believer is brought into union with Him and into a relationship of communion through the means of grace (God's Word, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and prayer). As we enter into this communion season we will begin by focusing explicitly on what it means to be in union and communion with Christ and His people, the Church.

### Read Ephesians 1:3-14

- Verse 3 mentions that "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" has been given to us in Christ. What blessings are mentioned in these verses?
- This passage also relays that all of these blessings and all of God's work in this passage redound "to the praise of his glory." Take a moment to praise Him for His mighty work of bringing you into union and communion with Christ.

### Taking it Further this week:

Read through the rest of the book of Ephesians and notice all of the times the phrase "in Christ" or "in Him" appears.

### Guidance from our Confessional Statements:

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 65. What special benefits do the members of the invisible Church enjoy by Christ?

A. The members of the invisible Church, by Christ, enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory.

Q. 66. What is that union which the elect have with Christ?

A. The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling.

Q. 82. What is the communion in glory which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ?

A. The communion in glory which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.



# Devotional 2

## April 11<sup>th</sup>

### Communing with Christ



**Theme:** In John 15, Jesus teaches that apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:4, 5) and that our life is to be lived in union with Christ by faith. The Sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are particular means by which Christ calls us to be in communion with Him by faith. These sensible signs have been a part of the Church's worship from the very beginning. This week we will focus intentionally on considering what it means to commune with God – Father, Son, and Spirit – through the Sacraments.

#### Read Acts 2:42-47

- What elements mentioned here defined the early church in Jerusalem's fellowship? Are any surprising to you? Challenging?

#### Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

- The Lord's Supper here ("the cup of blessing" and "the bread that we break" in v. 15) is called "a participation" in the blood and body of Christ. What effects does this participation produce in these verses?
- What does participating in Christ through the Sacraments mean for the way that we live the rest of our days and lives? i.e. Why is this passage talking about idolatry?

**Taking it Further this week:** Pastor Russ taught on 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 a couple of years ago. Watch this sermon in order to gain further insight into this passage for our study. Visit [twinoakschurch.org/1corinthians10](http://twinoakschurch.org/1corinthians10) to watch.

#### Guidance from our Confessional Statements:

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, Sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Q. 91. How do the Sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The Sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Q. 92. What is a Sacrament?

A. A Sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.



# Devotional 3

April 18<sup>th</sup>

## Communion in the Lord's Supper

**Theme:** Last week we looked more generally at communion with Christ by faith in the Sacraments; this week we will turn our attention directly to the Lord's Supper.

### Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

- According to this passage, what occurs while partaking of the Lord's Supper? How is this described throughout this passage?
- In addition to describing the partaking of the Lord's Supper, what does this passage teach about how we are to prepare for the Lord's Supper? Why is this important?

### Taking it Further this week:

The Lord's Supper has past, present, and future elements. This passage has especially focused on the past (remembering Christ's sacrifice once-for-all) and the present (we both "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" and "participate" in our union with Christ, 1 Corinthians 10). Read Revelation 19:1-10 to see one of the many depictions of the coming "marriage supper of the Lamb." This marriage supper is one of the ways that the Lord's Supper points to the future for all those united to Christ by faith.

### Guidance from our Confessional Statements:

Westminster Larger Catechism  
Q. 170. How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?  
A. The body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper; and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal or carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.



# Devotional 4

## April 25<sup>th</sup>

### Preparation Through Examination



**Theme:** Last week we read the words “let a man examine himself” in talking about coming to the Lord’s Supper. This week we will begin that process in preparation for the Heritage Communion weekend. First, it is important that we examine ourselves to see where there is need for repentance, change, and reconciliation in our lives and relationships.

#### Read Psalm 139

- Take a moment to reflect on the words of this Psalm. There is not a single aspect of your life that God does not know. From beginning to end, inside and out, He knows it all. Any attempt at hiding sin from Him is utterly unsuccessful. Spend a few moments in prayer acknowledging this truth before the Lord.
- Read Psalm 139:23, 24 again. The response of David, the Psalmist, here is to ask God to use this knowledge in order to lead David to repentance and “the way everlasting.” If you are serious about this (because He will answer) ask God to do the same in you.

**Taking it Further this week:** Are there individuals with whom you need to seek forgiveness and reconciliation? Or is there someone from whom you need to ask for accountability and encouragement in a particular area of your life?

#### Guidance from our Confessional Statements:

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 171. How are they that receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

A. They that receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ; of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.



# Devotional 5

May 2<sup>nd</sup>

## Preparation Through Evidences

**Theme:** Last week we focused together on examining ourselves and seeking areas of needed repentance and change. For many of us, this has been a sobering moment, as it should be. Our guidance from the confession this week points to the reality that the Lord's Supper isn't for the best and the perfect, but for those who have seen their need of Christ and long for Him to transform them. This week we will transition to thinking about areas that show evidences of God's growth and work in our lives. This week we get to rejoice in the ways that being in Christ has begun to have its effects.

### Read Psalm 103

- Reflect on the way that God's character and attributes are described here. Knowing that He is merciful, gracious, and forgiving draws us to come to Him again and again. Which of the many descriptions of God here is most impactful to you? How does seeing God in this way minister to you today?
- Verse 2 states "forget not all his benefits." How have you seen these benefits of the Lord manifest in your life?

**Taking it Further this week:** These Psalms are intended to be sung. There are many arrangements for Psalm 103, one contemporary rendition comes from Ellie Holcomb "Don't Forget His Love." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoZ4i3820h4>

### Guidance from our Confessional Statements:

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 172. May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?

A. One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this Sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.



# Devotional 6

## May 9<sup>th</sup>



## Preparation Through Fasting & Planning

**Theme:** Traditionally these communion seasons would have lasted a week, and involved travel, lodging, fasting, and times of extended prayer. We have adapted aspects of this into this coming weekend and into these devotionals. This last devotional is focused on thinking about the weekend ahead and the mindset of preparing for it practically. Notice the various aspects of preparation mentioned in the Larger Catechism. How can you incorporate this in preparation this week?

### Read Luke 14:25-33

- Jesus is speaking in stark words here. What does it mean to “hate” in this passage? (Consider v. 27 and 33 when thinking about this.)
- Jesus here is teaching about the priorities and actions of following Him. What would bearing your cross and following after Jesus look like this week? Pray and ask for God’s gracious help in pursuing Him.

**Taking it Further this week:** Every aspect of discipleship calls for our consideration. Thinking of our Heritage Communion weekend, what steps will you take in order to prepare for the weekend? Historically, these weekends involved a day of fasting leading up to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. They fasted from media (even avoiding newspapers) as well as food so that they could focus on prayer and preparing for the Supper. What could you fast from this Saturday (May 15<sup>th</sup>)?

### Guidance from our Confessional Statements:

Westminster Larger Catechism

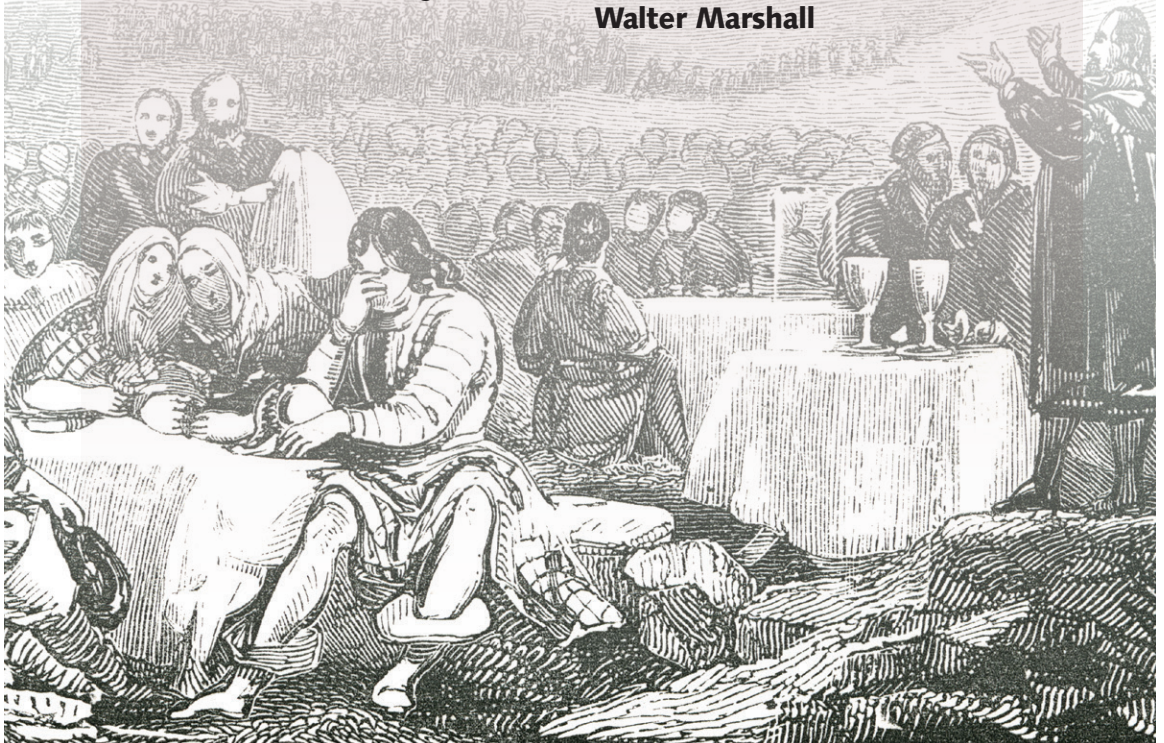
Q. 174. What is required of them that receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in the time of the administration of it?

A. It is required of them that receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord’s body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

# Encouragement For Coming to the Table

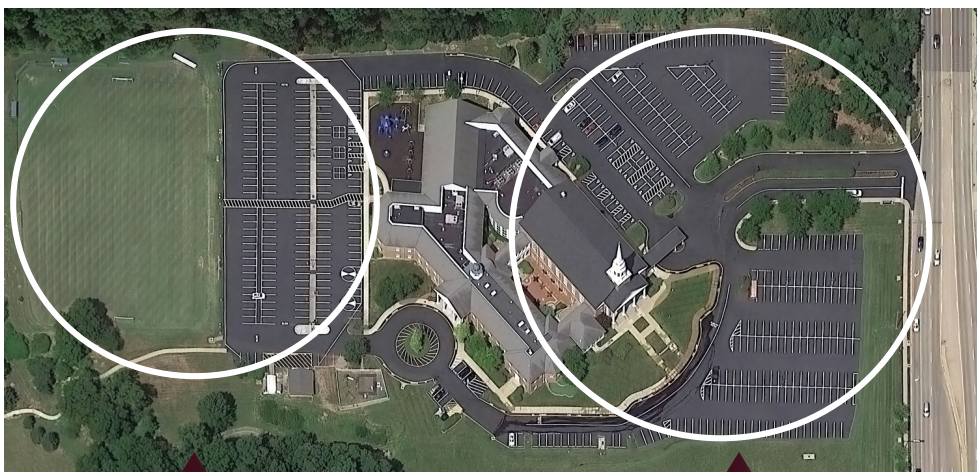
You should rather begin the work [of self-examination] with much assurance of faith, that though you may at present find your heart never so wicked and reprobate (as many of God's choicest servants have found), yet the door of mercy is open for you, and that God will certainly save you for ever, if you put your trust in his grace through Christ... If we begin the work with this confidence, it will make us impartial, and not afraid to find out the worst of ourselves, and willing to judge, that our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, beyond what we can find out (Jer. 17:9)... The sacrament of the Lord's supper is as a spiritual feast to nourish our faith, and to strengthen us to walk in all holiness by Christ living and working in us... Its end is, to [re]mind us, that Christ's body and blood are bread and drink, even all-sufficient food to nourish our souls to everlasting life...

**Walter Marshall**





# What to bring / Where to go



Set up blankets & chairs on soccer field (or lower lot if wet)

Park in upper lots

✓ **Sat, May 15 Preparation** *5:30 – 6:30 pm, Reception Hall*  
Bring: Your family & friends

✓ **Sun, May 16 Commemoration** *10:30 am – 1:30 pm, Soccer Field*

- Bring:
- Blankets & chairs – enough for everyone in your group
  - Picnic lunch & drinks
  - Jackets
  - Sunglasses
  - Bibles
  - Notebook & pen

Please be ready to welcome 1st time visitors into your “worship/fellowship/communing group” for the morning. Which means: Please bring food for 2-3 extra people!

And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. Acts 2:42-44

✓ **Mon, May 17 Thanksgiving** *6:30 – 7:30 pm, Reception Hall*  
Bring: Your family & friends



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