

## World Communion Sunday, October 5, 2014

July/August 2014, *Equipping* #148

HWB - *Hymnal Worship Book*, SJ - *Sing the Journey*, SS - *Sing the Story*\*

\* Song book abbreviations match those used for corresponding worship resources in *Leader Magazine*

### Introduction

World Communion Sunday was started in 1933 in Shadyside Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA. Since 1940, this celebrated Sunday has spread around the world, across denominations and across cultures. On this Sunday, we celebrate that even though we are diverse in our beliefs, worship, and traditions, we are also united by the love of Christ. Precisely because we live in a fractured society with information coming at us from all directions, it is important that we stop and take the time to celebrate communion together as a world-wide church, just as Jesus commanded his disciples to do at the Last Supper. The Lectionary readings for World Communion Sunday 2014 talk about the laws and commandments as found in both the New and the Old Testaments. These laws and commandments are meant to ground us and to free us. This year's worship resources use these scriptures in many ways. Feel free to use these ideas as presented, selectively, or with adaptations to fit your congregation's needs. Thanks to Adela Wedler and Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, from First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, AB, who have prepared these 2014 worship resources.

### Lectionary Readings

Exodus 20:1-20, Psalm 19, Matthew 21:33-46,  
Philippians 3:4-14

### Visual

Display a sampler quilt – either a real one, or a picture of one. A sampler quilt is one in which every block pattern is different, usually made from scraps of material, or recycled materials. Traditionally, quilt blocks are the same size. As each quilt block is beautiful and unique, it can visually represent the diversity found across the Christian church. The threads sewing these precious pieces together represent the unifying presence of Christ, holding us together, making us one, even in our diversity. You may wish to get creative and plan your own quilt! Many patterns can be found online. A simple way to make one is to have pieces of material that Sunday school students can paint with fabric paint. Then someone can sew them together with a nice bright thread or yarn.

### Communion

Since the theme of World Communion Sunday is inclusive and the day's scripture texts connect to God's providence of manna, given for all, we encourage a clear and open invitation to the communion table on this particular Sunday. A litany for use before the serving of communion is attached as Appendix B. It is based on the lectionary scriptures as well as familiar covenant and communion texts. We suggest that the music played during communion represent a variety of cultures—your own as well as many others. We also suggest that a variety of breads be offered for people to choose from, e.g. pita, naan, sourdough, pretzel, gluten free. Please follow the form of serving communion that suits your congregation. Song suggestions are included in case you wish to sing during part of the communion service.

### Children's Feature:

The children's time should communicate the same message the adults hear, but in a simple and engaging way that speaks to them. Here are three possibilities to help children understand the importance of God's laws/ the meaning of world communion Sunday.

1. Tell the story, "No Rules Recess", showing the pictures on PowerPoint or overhead so the whole congregation can be involved. (See Appendix A) The pictures could also be printed out for children to colour.
2. Show the children all the different kinds of bread that make up the communion display. This shows the wide variety of different kinds of Christians in the world. While we may be very different in the way we look, speak, and do things, we are all remembering Jesus together. Jesus ties us all together, the way the thread ties together the various blocks of the quilt. (You may wish to explore the internet for pictures of different denominations and cultures at communion.)
3. Give each child (or a group of actors) a different percussion instrument. While a designated musician plays a hymn at whatever speed they choose (maybe choose the song you will sing after the children's feature) encourage loud banging of whatever rhythm

the children choose. After a moment or two of chaos, stop the group. Teach a simple rhythm and have the musician play the song again, using the rhythm they have just learned. Talk about how good rules turn chaos into beauty. God's good rules, like the 10 commandments, help us live in peace and beautiful harmony with each other.

## Sermon Ideas

These four scriptures shed light on aspects of God's good law for our lives, but they each focus that light somewhat differently. No matter which passage is chosen as the main one, it is clear that God's law is freeing, not limiting or constrictive.

- **Exodus 20:1-20:** We assume the 10 commandments are a well-known summary of God's laws. They are, however, just a sampling. In his commentary on Exodus, Waldemar Janzen suggests they provide important guidelines for faithful living, but are not a complete list. For example, it is notable that directions to care for the poor and foreigners, prevalent throughout the Bible, are missing here. The 10 commandments are a beautiful sampling of what is possible, an organizational start for God's wandering people, but they do not describe the whole of what it means to be faithful.
- **Psalm 19:** The psalm expresses great joy in the ability of God's law to "revive the soul." Respect for good laws, ironically, sets society free instead of binding it. This is a timely message for a culture obsessed with personal freedom and individual rights. True freedom begins with a love for God that provides boundaries for interpersonal relationships.
- **Matthew 21:33-46:** The parable of the wicked tenants is particularly helpful for understanding God's way of applying law as freeing and unusual. The landowner gives the tenants a number of chances to do what is right, to follow the rules of their agreement. He even sends his own son who is killed. The priests and Pharisees rightly assert that the owner is justified in putting the tenants to death. However, readers today know that when the owner (God) came back, the tenants weren't killed. God raised Jesus from the dead to offer new life and hope. God does not apply law in a punitive way, but with an amazing love that invites, rather than demands, obedience.
- **Philippians 3:4-14:** This passage focuses on individual worthiness. Paul, although he can claim an impeccable heritage and unmatched zeal in following the letter of the law, knows that intent and meaning are more

important than legalistic obedience. Paul asserts that the most important thing in life is knowing Christ. This is a good opportunity to encourage congregants to ask what is most important in their faith lives.

## Music

Congregational singing is a very important part of corporate worship that invites all participants in the congregation to actively praise, pray, challenge, thank. Below are suggestions from the three books *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, *Sing the Story*, and *Sing the Journey*. If your congregation sings from other books and from the contemporary music tradition, please find songs that fit the occasion.

### Hymns of Praise

- HWB 50 - Praise the Lord, sing hallelujah
- HWB 68 - O come, loud anthems let us sing
- SJ 3 - Jesus calls us here to meet him
- SS 34 - You are holy
- SS 113 - I will stand in the congregation

### Hymns to follow children's story

- HWB 55 - Cantemos al Señor (Let's sing unto the Lord)
- HWB 64 - Asithi: Amen (Sing amen)
- HWB 76 - Je louerai l'Éternel (Praise, I will praise you, Lord)
- SJ 32 - If you believe and I believe

### Hymns of Response

- HWB 43 - Christ is our cornerstone
- SJ 62 - Christ's is the world
- SS 49 - I will come to you in the silence
- SS 79 - Holy Spirit, come to us

### Communion

- SS 63 - Herr, füll mich neu (God, fill me now)
- SJ 84 - Jesus, offered up as bread
- SJ 88 - Haleluya! Pelo tsa rona (Hallelujah! We sing your praises!)
- SS 76 - Prepare a room for me

## Sending Hymn

- HWB 421 - Bless'd be the tie that binds
- HWB 483 - O God, who gives us life

## Order of Worship

### *Gathering and Praise*

#### Call to Worship based on Psalm 19

We worship.

The heavens tell the glory of God.

We praise.

The firmament proclaims the handiwork of God.

We desire to follow God's commands in truth and grace.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

The decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes.

We join together in communion, sewn together by the laws of God.

We praise.

The firmament proclaims the handiwork of God.

We worship.

The heavens tell the glory of God.

#### Hymn of Praise

#### Prayer of Invocation

Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us here this morning as we praise you, pray to you, and proclaim your word. You have promised where two or more are gathered, there you will be. We claim that promise now in gratitude for your presence. Amen.

#### *Hearing the Word*

#### Scripture Reading

Exodus 20:1-20 or Matthew 21:33-46  
(dependent on sermon)

#### Children's Time

#### Hymn

#### Scripture Reading

Philippians 3:4-14

## Confession

Dear God, we confess that we have failed in following the laws and decrees you have set out, that our lives do not live up to the model you gave to us in Jesus Christ. We have sinned against fellow Christians; we have sinned against people of other faiths; and we have sinned against people of no faith. We cannot be faithful on our own. Help us to rely on your power at work within us. Help us to forget what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead. Help us press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## Assurance

This is our assurance that our prayers are heard: In communion, we remember Jesus' blood, poured out for the forgiveness of all our sins. And in our scripture reading we are reminded that the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. Jesus offers to be our cornerstone, the building block, on which we can build our lives. For this forgiveness and a better way forward, we give thanks and praise.

## Sermon

### Hymn of Response

#### Communion

Readers' Litany for Communion (see Appendix B)

Communion

### *Sending*

#### Hymn

#### Benediction

We have worshiped.

We will continue to tell the glory of God.

We have praised

We will continue to proclaim the handiwork of God.

We have joined together in communion, sewn together by the laws of God.

We will strive to follow God's commands in truth and grace.

We will remember that the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

Appendix A for World Communion Sunday, October 5, 2014.

July/August 2014, *Equipping* #148

## No Rules Recess!

Written by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Illustrated by Darian Wiebe-Neufeld

**Before presenting:** Read the story out loud several times, using lots of expression, so you can read smoothly. Have the projector set up ahead of time so the whole congregation can see the pictures. It helps to engage the congregation and keep the children focused if the story teller faces the congregation while telling the story.

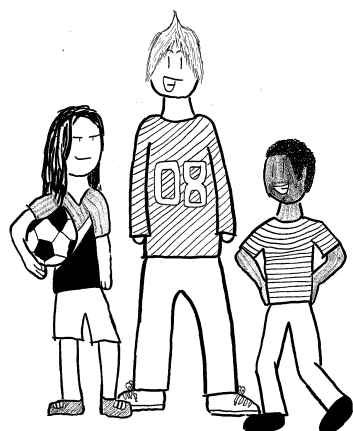
The following illustrations are also available in a larger format at the end of this document, should you wish to project them on a screen or hold them up so your child audience can better see them.

### Introduction:

Sometimes we don't like all the rules. Rules like: You have to clean your room before you can play. You have to clean up the dishes after supper. You cannot call your little brother a bad name, even when he deserves it because he did it to you first. Do you ever wish there would be no rules at all so you could do whatever you wanted?

In Moses' time, while God's people lived in the desert and before they settled down in the Promised Land, God gave the people a list of rules to help them be organized and fair to everyone. Sometimes it might be hard for us to understand how rules are good things, so I'm going to tell you a story about some kids who thought that no rules would be best.

### No Rules Recess!



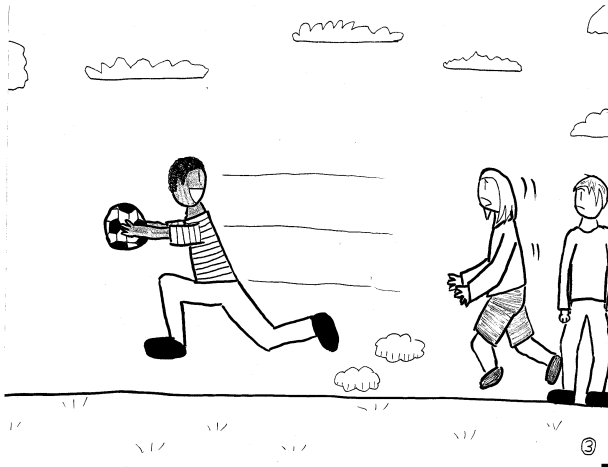
Fareed, Scott, and Aisha loved to play soccer. As soon as the bell rang for recess, they grabbed a few friends and ran out to the field to play. Aisha was the best goalie in all of grade 3, and she was good at explaining how to play the game. Fareed was smart and very fast, he could always figure out where the ball was going to be, so he scored lots of goals. Scott was really, really big, as big as some of the grade 5's, and no one got in his way. It was good to be on Scott's team!

Pretty soon lots of other kids saw the fun and joined in. Then the three friends got frustrated. There were so many kids and not all of them were good players. Scott wanted to tell them to go away, but the school's rules said everyone could play. Aisha was annoyed that every time a new person joined, she had to explain all the rules of soccer all over again. Fareed was frustrated when the new players kept forgetting that the rules say you can't use your hands to touch the ball. He got so annoyed that he wanted to do it, too.



One day, Aisha and Fareed and Scott had a great idea to solve all their problems. Aisha stood up on her desk and announced in class. "Next recess is no rules recess!" Everyone cheered! Everyone cheered, except their teacher, Mr. Moses. He had kind of a quiet, knowing look, but none of the kids noticed him. When the bell rang, Aisha sprinted to her goal posts, because she had a really great no rules idea that would make her the most famous, best goalie ever. When some new girls came to ask how to play, Aisha was so busy building her great idea she had no time to talk. "Just do

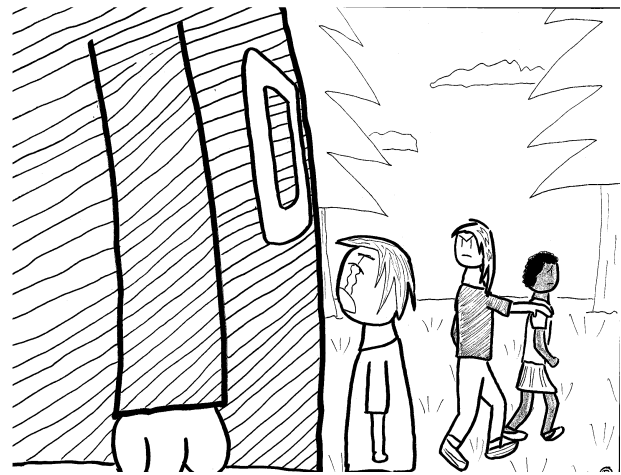
whatever you want, it's no rules recess." She said. The new girls looked confused and they walked away.



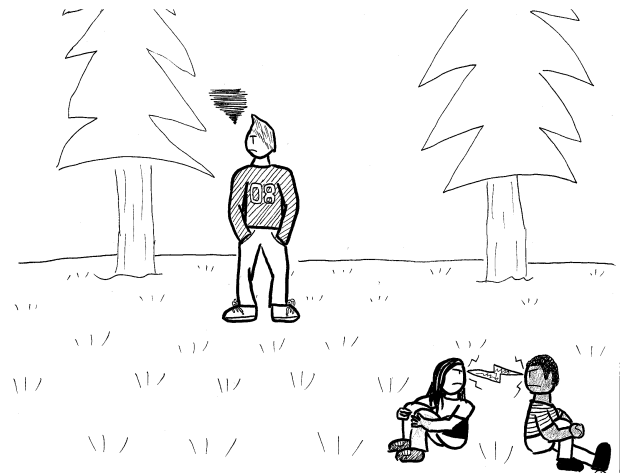
When the ball got kicked into the air, Fareed was standing in exactly the right spot. He grabbed it with his hands. The kids around him yelled; "not fair, not fair", but he just laughed and yelled; "no rules recess" and he ran toward Aisha's goal. He got very angry when he saw what Aisha had done.



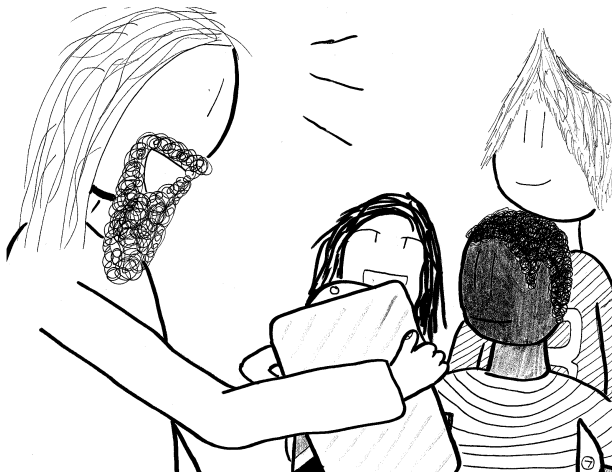
Using garbage cans and backpacks and the pylons that were supposed to mark the field boundaries, she had built a wall across her goal. "No scoring today," she yelled. Fareed clutched the ball tight to his chest, so no one else could get it, and started to argue with Aisha. The other kids had never seen Fareed and Aisha yelling like that. It scared them and they couldn't get the ball, so they left.



Meanwhile, Scott ran up and down the field. Anytime he saw a person he didn't want playing the game, he told them to leave. Since he was so big, no one argued. One skinny boy started to cry, and said, "There's not supposed to be rules, you can't kick me out!" Scott said, "Who's gonna stop me?" So the boy left, and he took 10 of his friends with him.



It didn't take long, and Scott was all by himself at center field. He stared around, then noticed Aisha and Fareed still glaring at each other. Then he noticed Mr. Moses walking toward them with a clipboard. "Scott, Aisha, and Fareed," Mr. Moses called, "how was no rules recess?" The three friends looked at each other. "Chaos," Fareed said, and the others nodded. "We all just did our own things, and we didn't ever actually play soccer." "I thought no rules would make it more fun," Aisha said, "but now no one wants to play and I'm mad at my best friends."



Mr. Moses showed the friends what was on his clipboard. “I can help you, if you want. I made copies of the rules for soccer and we can hand them out in class so everyone understands. Then, I can come and be your referee to help everyone keep it fair and fun. What do you think?” The friends looked at each other. “I think,” Scott said slowly, “that would be very good for all of us.” The next recess was good rules recess, and it was great!

### Prayer:

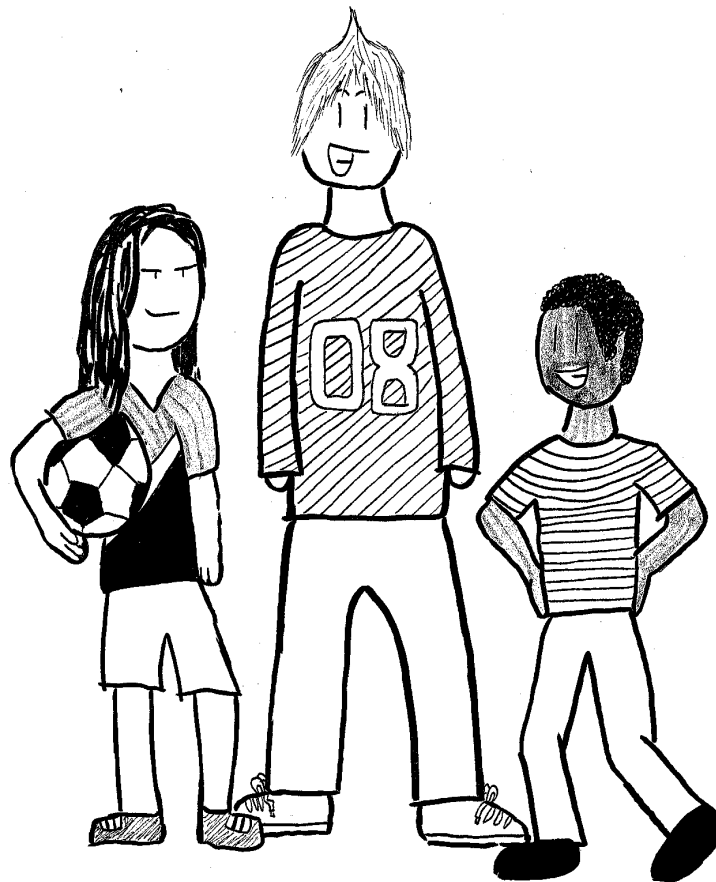
Dear God, sometimes we get frustrated when it seems like rules stop us from doing what we want to do. Please help us to understand that your good rules make things better for everyone. Thank you for the 10 Commandments. Thank you for stories of Jesus, who loves us and shows us how to care for each other. Thank you for the many different people in your church who find their unity in you by living your way. Amen.

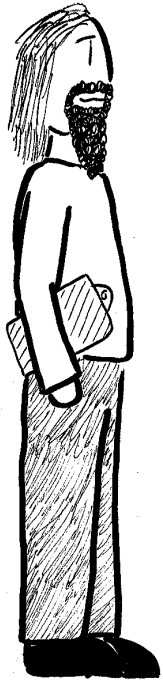
*(Options: Give each child a bookmark that lists the 10 Commandments, or have photocopies of some of the pictures to hand out as colouring sheets.)*

# No Rules Recess!

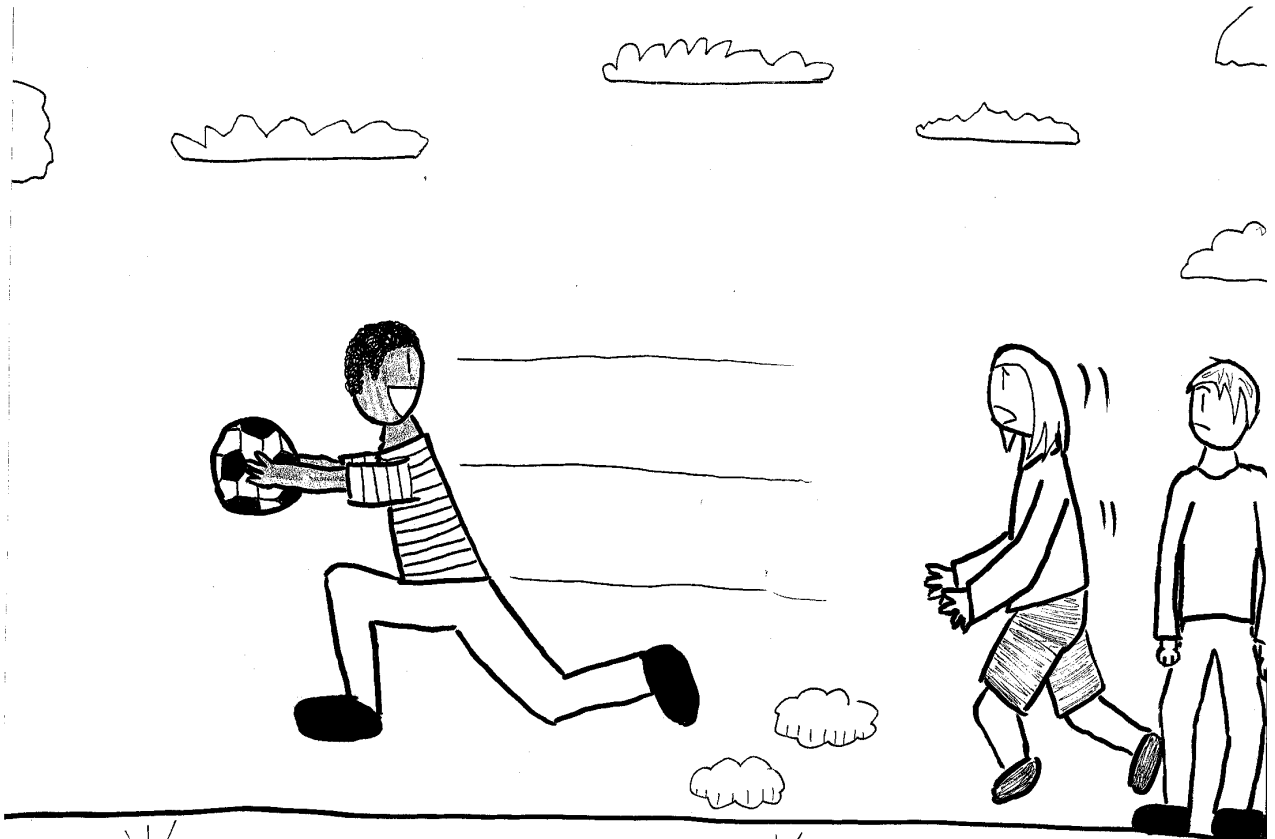
Written by  
Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Illustrated by  
Darian Wiebe Neufeld





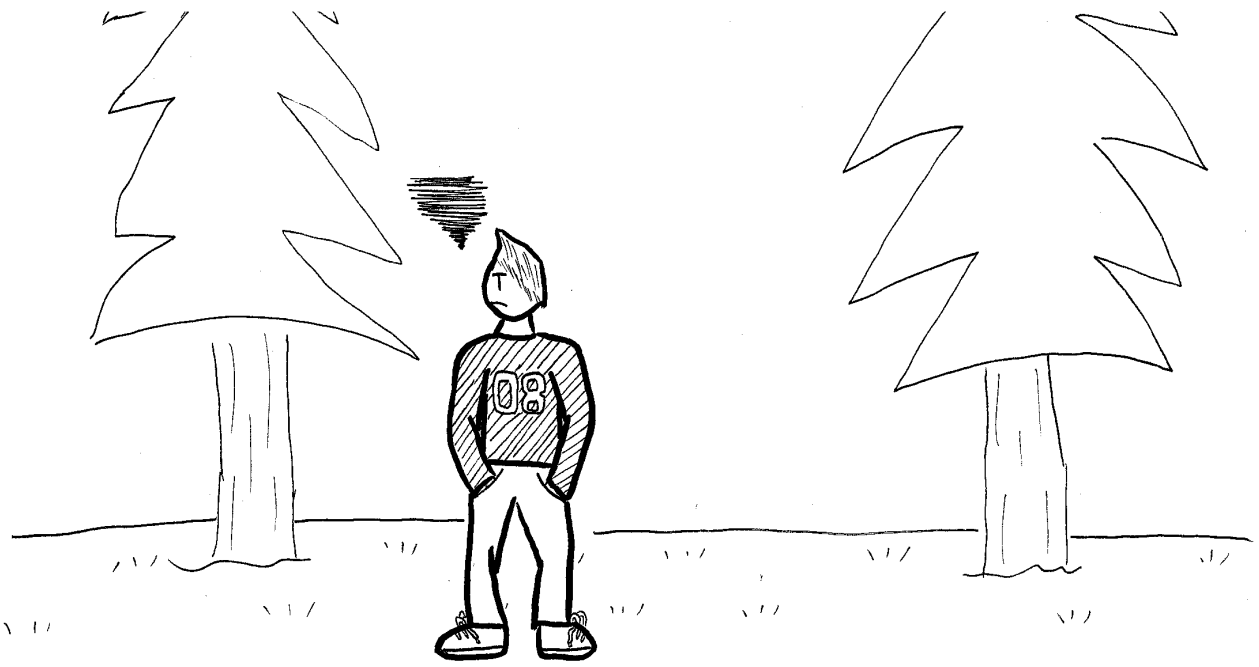
2



3







Appendix B for World Communion Sunday, October 5, 2014.

July/August 2014, *Equipping* #148

## Litany for Communion

Created by Adela Wedler, based on lectionary readings for October 5, 2014 and familiar covenant and communion scriptures.

### **Four Readers**

1: Laws

2: Decrees

3: Precepts

4: Commandments

1: I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me.

2: The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

3: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes.

4: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

### **Pause**

3: Laws

4: Decrees

1: Precepts

2: Commandments

3: Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

4: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

1: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

2: This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

### **Pause**

4: Laws

1: Decrees

2: Precepts

3: Commandments

4: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

1: You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

2: Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3: The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

### **Pause**

1: Laws

3: Decrees

2: Precepts

4: Commandments

1: Do not be afraid.

3: Jesus said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

2: Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.

4: Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

**Pause**

1: Laws

2: Decrees

3: Precepts

4: Commandments

All: Faith

1: The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold.

2: As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.

3: If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

4: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

**Pause**

1: Laws

2: Decrees

3: Precepts

4: Commandments

All: Faith