April 9th, 2019

Springfield Presbyterian Church

Maundy Thursday

7:30pm

Wilderness of Coronavirus – Virtual Church – Week Three

An Upper Zoom

I. A holy, upper room

One of the traits that I love about our sanctuary is that it is on the second floor – it truly is an upper room. And we gather here, tonight, in the upper room, via the upper zoom, separated by geography but connected through this feast. In fact, it is a feast that has connected us with this historical night for centuries. As we gather together, we remember the feast that Jesus shared with his disciples, a simple, but sacred meal, shared together.

Jesus puts the symbolism in front of us, as we listen to the initial Scripture reading tonight from the letter to the Corinthians. We remember that as we eat or drink the elements, it becomes less about what is in our hands, but more about what is in our hearts. Whether you come tonight with the classic bread and wine or a nacho and salsa, we take whatever we have on hand, and we remember that anything in this moment can be sacred. We need not come with fancy bread or wine, but ourselves, and what we have, for God ordains it as holy.

We will recount the steps to calvary later on, where painful words need to be spoken and realities need to be understood. We go from this meal together into another part of the service where we see things break down, both slowly and swiftly, where the King that was welcomed with palms becomes the King dethroned. Or so it seems here, tonight, in this moment.

We come tonight to remember, to tell the story, not because it is fun, not because it is easy, not because we long to feel the trauma that radiates these readings. Yet you cannot have Easter without Maundy Thursday. You cannot have Easter without Good Friday. You cannot rejoice and celebrate the resurrection unless you see the road that has taken Jesus there.

So that is solemnly what we do here tonight, we eat together, we drink together, we sing together, we pray together, we cry together, we hope for Sunday. We lean in to the meal, to the retelling of this painful road to the cross, and live in the uncomfortable space of sadness.

Usually, when I end a reflection or a sermon, I have a challenge or I try to use uplifting words. Tonight is not that night; tonight is a night where we sit in the darkness, acknowledge the sadness. I cannot make tonight beautiful, or at least traditionally, but maybe in the sacredness and holiness of this space, maybe as the Spirit washes over us at this meal and in these texts, we faithfully recall God’s saving and redemptive act and find beauty therewithin. Amen.