



SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2020 MORNING MESSAGE

COMMUNION SUNDAY

TRANSITIONAL PASTOR TED LAND

BRADENTON, FLORIDA

Greetings in Christ Jesus!

The first Sunday of each month, we are observing the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We share the Lord's Supper not in the Sanctuary of a church, not in fellowship with one another, not with one loaf and one cup, but with whatever is at hand.. We celebrate the Sacrament wherever we are. It may be in a living room. Or a den. On the lanai or by the pool, it could be on a boat or on the beach. But wherever we may be, when I speak the Words of Institution, when I offer the Prayer of Consecration, when I break the bread and lift the cup, the Lord is present with us.

It has taken me a while to warm to the concept of virtual or online Communion. My personal sacramental theology and the Confessions of our denomination and our Book of Order were all formulated long before the thought of virtual worship and online Communion were even dreamed about.

We have seen changes in the last few months that we could not imagine happening in our lifetime. In what I hope and pray will be my last fulltime Ministry, I find myself doing things I never dreamed of doing. Five decades of experience did not prepare me for five months of pandemic.

Each week, I participate in video conferences with other pastors. I never dreamed of doing that. We share helpful hints, we support each other in our efforts, we pray together. I have participated in monthly peer support groups, ministerial associations, clergy and spouse suppers, but nothing like the online community we are experiencing.

I realized this week that all of our church boards, committees, teams, and all of the Presbytery committees are meeting online, and many of the Presbytery groups will continue to do that. I have often spent more time driving to and from a meeting than I did in the meeting, so this will be a blessing we had not anticipated.

I have attended meetings from the study at Palma Sola, from our Perico apartment, from our ranch in Desoto County, and from our future retirement home in Marianna.

John Wamsley, the pastor of the Presbyterian church in Marianna, does two online services every Sunday. The first is short, informal, usually outdoors, He has been at Florida Caverns State Park, at Blue Springs Recreation Area, at Citizens Lodge Park, even in a cemetery.

Elizabeth Deibert, pastor at Peace Presbyterian Church on the other side of Manatee County, has recorded sermons from her mother's home church in Faison, North Carolina, and from her daughter's home in South Carolina while helping her mother recover from a fall and her daughter with a brand-new baby boy.

Most of us pastors had never done anything like what we are doing. It is challenging, but it is also energizing and also exhausting. Those in my weekly meetings agree; we are reaching more people with the gospel each week online than we did in person. And we will keep on posting services and lessons on line when we begin gatherings again.

A new wind is blowing.

Could it be the Pneuma?

The Holy Spirit?

I think it is.

Your Transitional Pastor,

Ted Land