



John August Swanson, *The Last Supper*

Greetings!

Please read these communion texts:

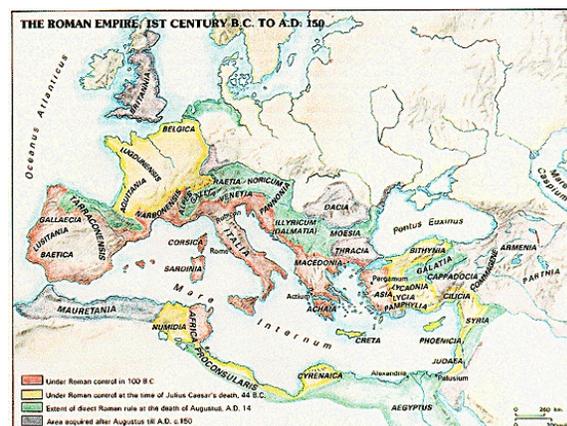
[Luke 22:14-23:56](#)

[Acts 2:46-47](#)

[1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#)

While not an exhaustive list of communion texts, before us are three practices. In Luke, Jesus and the Disciples are sharing the Passover Meal together. In Acts, we see an early Christian community that demonstrates that breaking bread is a ritual of being together. The meal not only sustained the body physically, but became the spiritual piece that held the believers of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and hoped-for return. Corinthians signals a big change - the diaspora of Christians in Europe. These people, too, had similar practices as we find offered to us by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles.

The Christian movement arrived in Europe through the work of the first century missionaries. The church was attractive because it incorporated a portion of its sacramental life in the context of daily living. Daily they remembered the life, death, resurrection and promised coming of Jesus. On Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, they celebrated in larger



venues as meeting in public became possible, blunted earlier by regional and general persecutions. By the 3rd century persecutions gave way to the general acceptance of Christianity.

Eventually, Christianity was embraced and became the religion of the Empire as proclaimed by Constantine on his deathbed in 337 AD. This changed the holy meal known as the Eucharist and by a myriad of other names. This early style became known as the Prayer of Great Thanksgiving and was first offered by Hippolytus of Rome in 214 A.D. As one of the earliest church liturgies for Holy Communion, it became popular for its simplicity but also for its theological richness, holding the above mentioned essentials of faith in Jesus. If you [click here](#), you can download a historical and biblical explanation of the Prayer of Great Thanksgiving, prepared by Duke Professor Lester Ruth.

Early Methodists used a different tradition for Holy Communion. It comes from the English Book of Common Prayer as prepared by Thomas Cramner, published in 1549. John Wesley, himself an Anglican priest, would have used an updated prayerbook rather than the original that Cramner published. Wesley used his prayerbook every day of his life for devotion, worship, and to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. He used it from childhood until his death. The prayerbook was the core of Wesley's life and he taught it in the early Methodist communities in the British Isles. John Wesley sent the *Sunday Service of Methodists* to the fledgling Methodist communities in America. Wesley's Communion Liturgy was very formal, as was the prayerbook style. You can still find this service, in more modern language, as the *Service of Word and Table IV* found on page 26 of your United Methodist hymnal.

After extensive ecumenical and theological study by many of our United Methodist scholars, a proposal was made in the 1970s to include the Great Thanksgiving style of Holy Communion or Eucharistic Prayer in the UMC. *The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving* was authorized by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church and was finally published in 1989 in the United Methodist Hymnal for use in worship. It is *Service of Word and Table I* found in the front of your hymnal. In one location both ancient (214 AD) and our own historic Methodist communion (1784) traditions are honored. As a pastor, I have used both over the years to the spiritual benefit of all the people we have served.



He Qi, *The Last Supper*

On Sunday October 3, United Methodists around the globe will celebrate the great ecumenical event known as Worldwide Communion Sunday. We will read holy biblical texts and share the elements of Holy Communion, regardless of the liturgy used. In that moment we all will evoke the presence of Christ among us once again.

At 12:30 p.m. we are inviting you to join us from around your altar table with friends of your faith community (or on your own) for a district-wide Communion Service. [Click here](#) to sign up and get a link to the Zoom event. We look forward to

sharing in this meal together.

A Closing Prayer

O God, we join with our sisters and brothers around the world
in remembering Christ's sacrifice for us.

For the opportunity to eat and drink together
and for the life we have received,
we give you thanks and praise.

In the abundance of your many gifts,
grant us grace to fill one another's lives with love.

Redeem, restore and remold us until we are made new.

Transform our daily bread into the bread of life,
and the cup that we drink into the cup of salvation.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(United Methodist Book of Worship 431)

Peace,



Rev. Dr. Todd D. Anderson, West Ohio Superintendent
Ohio River Valley District, United Methodist Church

