

***CRIBB<S>NOTE – April 20, 2008***

If you knew you only had one day to live, what would you do? Jesus faced that situation. He spent his last night with friends and shared a final meal. Once a month we gather at the Table for Communion, one of two sacraments recognized by the United Church of Christ. The other is Baptism.

Aware that his time had come to an end, Jesus invited his disciples to sit and eat together. It was a very simple meal that celebrated the ancient observation of Passover. In the Jewish tradition, every year families and friends continue to participate in Seder, the Passover meal. It is done in commemoration of the liberation of Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Tonight is the beginning of Passover.

As Jesus and his disciples ate, he began to teach them about his death. Of course, they did not understand what he was saying, but he tried to encourage them not to be afraid and not to worry. During their meal, Jesus expressed his love for his followers, including Judas, the one who betrayed him. Jesus used the occasion to stress everything he had been teaching them. He tried to help them see the purpose of his ministry and the importance of their faithful obedience to stay together, love one another, and bring healing to those they met.

Jesus had such confidence in his disciples, he assured them that even after they denied him and scattered because of fear, they would come back together and “do greater works” than they had seen him perform. Through their doubts and uncertainties, Jesus knew their hearts and commitment to follow the Way of Christ.

Up to this moment, we are still encouraged to overcome our flaws and keep the faith alive. We are encouraged to sit together, eat together, and go into the streets with the proclamation of Good News. Jesus never gave up on his disciples. Jesus has not given up on us.

This is a Good News/bad news moment in which we are living. It was a Good News/bad news night when Jesus and his disciples gathered in the upper room and ate their Last Supper. The Good News is God loves us and has sent the Holy Spirit to live within us. The bad news is that too many of us don't believe and have rejected this precious gift. We have become so busy with pettiness, we have inched Christ out of our lives. But, God never gives up on us.

On the night Jesus was betrayed, he took bread and after he had blessed it, he broke it and gave it to his disciples. He said, “Eat this for this is my body which is broken for you. Eat this in remembrance of me.” In the same manner he took the cup of wine; and after he had blessed it, he poured it and served his disciples. Then he said, “Drink this for this is my blood which is shed for you. Drink this in remembrance of me.”

We are invited to the Table. We are welcomed to come and dine with Christ. We are called to go into the streets and back alleys with Good News for the weary, frightened, and broken-hearted. There is a place for everyone. There is a place at the Table for you.