

October 7, 2018: World Communion Sunday

Today is World Communion Sunday and many Christians throughout the world (of several different denominations) will be celebrating this sacrament, given us by Jesus Christ. Participation is optional, of course. But it is very neat to think of Christians unified in their devotion to Jesus Christ and being obedient to his command to take the bread and wine, in remembrance of his sacrificial and redemptive death on the cross.

Always observed on the first Sunday in October, this day calls the Church to be the universal, inclusive Church. All human beings are welcome here. The day was first observed by Presbyterians in 1936, adopted by the Federal Council of Churches in 1940, and shortly thereafter observed in Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches.

Today, *World Communion Sunday* is one of six churchwide special Sundays in the United Methodist Church that are intended to illustrate for us all, the nature and calling of the church to be the people of God, at work in the world. The special offering taken on World Communion Sunday is sent to our conference office in Springfield, and used to provide Ethnic Scholarships and Ethnic In-Service training. At least half of the money collected is reserved for ministries beyond the United States.

The other special Sundays include *Human Relations Day* - promoting the development of better human relations through support of such programs as the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program; *One Great Hour of Sharing* - encouraging us to share the good ness of life with those who are hurting through support of the General Board of Global Ministries; *United Methodist Student Day* - supporting students as they pursue higher education, by providing scholarships and loans through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; *Peace with Justice Sunday* - witnesses to God's demand for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world and goes for Peace with Justice ministries; and *Native American Ministries Sunday* - reminding the Church of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society, half of the offering remains in our conference to develop and strengthen Native American ministries within our conference, and a fourth goes toward scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology and a fourth goes to support the Native American Urban Initiative.

