

SPECIAL  
SUNDAY

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

# SERMON STARTER



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

# SERMON STARTER

On World Communion Sunday, you are invited to incorporate this sermon starter based on Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4 as part of your order of worship. The sermon starter is designed to stand alone or to coordinate with the World Communion Sunday liturgy, offering talk and children's material.

**S**ibana Esina had a dream to serve people with disabilities in Zimbabwe. She saw how people were marginalized because of a lack of accessible spaces or accommodations. Of specific concern was the lack of accommodations for people with hearing loss



With help from a World Communion Sunday scholarship, Esina was able to pursue a master's degree in special needs education, with a specialty in hearing and speech impairment education. She has found a way to "write the vision and make it plain" through interpreting worship services in sign language.

"The righteous live by their faith," God declares through the prophet, Habakkuk (2:4).

Like us, Habakkuk is disturbed by the violence and destruction he witnesses. He is concerned that justice is corrupted, preventing people from experiencing the fullness of life.

He laments and calls out to God. He demands a response. Because clearly this is not what God envisions for creation. And God agrees; the spirit of the proud "is not right in them" (Habakkuk 2:4).

God responds that Habakkuk will receive a vision that he will declare to the people clearly. It may not come right away. But this is not the end. What is happening now is not the end of the story. God

The righteous live  
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Habakkuk 2:4, NRSV



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is not finished with us yet. And in the meantime, the people are to live in faithful right relationship with God and with one another. God sends prophets like Habakkuk and leaders like Sibana to share God's vision.

*What is the vision that we as a congregation are receiving from God? How do we make it plain for our community and throughout the world? How are we empowering the next generation to live with faithful righteousness?*

The United Methodist Church as we know it has an uncertain future. But one of the things that has not changed is our connection with other United Methodists and our ecumenical connections with other Christian denominations. This is a congregation that lives out our faith by (list some of the ministries that work with young people in the community and/or ecumenical relationships).

On this World Communion Sunday, we see injustice in the world. We see pain and suffering. We perhaps feel helpless. And we hear the words of

God through the prophet, "the righteous live by their faith."

The younger generations have visions and dreams but they are not easily accessible. They are concerned about the injustice and violence around them and want to make a difference. With education and training, they can pursue the vision for a future of hope. Young leaders like Sibana are agents of transformation and we can partner with them "living by our faith."

As we join in Holy Communion today, we come to a table that is as wide and long as God's love for us. We remember the injustice that killed Jesus on the cross. And we remember that was not the end of the story. Like the visions that God has instilled in our hearts, God's love cannot be killed.

As we come to the Lord's Table, bring your dreams. Bring your visions. In the act of Holy Communion, may the vision be strengthened to glorify God not only in this community but across the world. Amen.

