

SPECIAL
SUNDAY

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

SERMON STARTER



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The people of The United Methodist Church®

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This sermon starter is part of the World Communion Sunday pastor and leader kit and connects with the theme “God’s Promise of Joy.” It can be adapted for your context and integrated into your worship service.

In this letter to the church in Philippi, Paul shares what is known as the Kenosis hymn, describing how Christ went from all the benefits and privileges of being God to taking on the lowliest, most disregarded and humble type of person as a vulnerable baby.

From the time of his birth, Jesus ministers from the margins of society. He lived his life among those who had fewer options and whose circumstances often led to societal judgment.

Paul reminds God’s church in Philippi that they are called to imitate Christ. Paul asks them to be united and to have one mind with Jesus.

I think about the struggles of God’s people to have one mind with Jesus. It feels like there is so much division in the world. At the same time, unity in Christ is not about

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ignoring the struggles of those who are marginalized for the sake of “getting along.” When we come around the Lord’s Table today on World Communion Sunday, this unity in Christ is reinforced as we join with Christians everywhere to partake in this holy meal.

When we receive Holy Communion, I invite you to remember Paul’s message that we have everything we need because God is at work in us. You each have all the tools you need to respond to God’s call on your life. You have what you need to make



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your joy complete even as you are part of restoring joy in the world by supporting others who are responding to God's call in their lives. How will you embody the hands and feet and mind of Christ in the world, charged to do God's work?



World Communion Scholars Jorge Saiete with his wife Sandra in Mozambique. *Photo courtesy Saiete*

I think of Jorge Saiete, who grew up at the United Methodist Cambine Mission Station in the southern part of Mozambique.

Jorge was born during the civil war that killed his father and destroyed everything his

family owned. Raised by a single mother who struggled to care for seven children, Jorge took up fishing when he was eight years old to help support them. With encouragement from his church in Cambine, he also worked hard in school. He studied the causes and impacts of the civil war,

and committed to working in his professional life to prevent that kind of violence from happening again.

He is pursuing a master of public education degree with the help of a World Communion Scholarship from Global Ministries.

Today we have an opportunity to be of one mind, embodying Christ's love with our offering on this World Communion Sunday. When our gifts join with other United Methodists, we equip young leaders to become the best versions of themselves, both personally and professionally. When we invest in their education and development, we are not only supporting them as individuals, we are also contributing to the greater good of society.

Through serving others we can find our joy is complete when we reflect the love of Jesus into the world.

Friends, God came to us as Jesus to be with us as humans made in God's own image. Have you ever noticed that when you serve others, emptying yourself, not denying your self-care or boundaries, but imitating Christ, opening yourself to new relationships, and making discipleship a priority,



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you begin to experience purposeful realignment of your soul that reflects God's love for you? When you fill yourself with actions that reflect discipleship, you empty yourself of that which is not of God. In that pouring out of yourself, God's love for creation breaks through and multiplies into the world.

We are all human, but when we come together in the mind of Christ, recognizing our humanity, offering forgiveness and extending grace, we see amazing signs of God's kingdom in our midst. Paul writes, "Therefore God exalted

him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." (Philippians 2:9-10 NRSVUE)

Moving forward with a humble posture, on your knees for Jesus, I invite you to be open to the wonder, be open to the gratitude, be open to the life-giving love that fills you and that restores joy for God's people throughout the whole world.



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—PHILIPPIANS 2:9-10 NRSVUE



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