

*Lord, illumine our hearts, illumine our minds, illumine our spirits,
That we may be like lanterns, shining your light into this world. Amen.*

I have a great recipe for communion bread.

It makes bread out of ordinary ingredients,
bread that makes saints out of ordinary people.

This bread tells a story of our life in Christ – it starts with water,
as Christ-followers do, the water of baptism.

We add yeast, which is a small thing that starts a reaction that brings life.

Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven itself was like a little yeast

that a woman kneaded into the dough, and it leavened, lifted the whole loaf.

That dough might be the church, might be the whole world –

and it's a dough that really needs some leavening,
some fiercely accepting love of Jesus worked through it.

We are that yeast, catalysts of a chemical reaction of love.

But yeast requires a sweetening agent to get it going – my recipe uses honey.

A psalm speaks of the Law of God as sweeter than honey.

We should feel some sweetness in a community centered on Love. I hope you do.

After you add the sugar or honey, you let the yeast proof –

let it sit a moment and see if bubbles start appearing, if it's moving, alive.

You have to be sure it's alive, or the dough won't rise.

Every day of our lives as Jesus-followers we're invited to "proof."

If nothing's bubbling in us, ain't nothin' gonna happen to the rest of the loaf!

Okay, what comes next? In my communion bread recipe, you add some oil.

In baptism, the oil represents the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit, my friends, is power.

A church without spiritual power is... not the church.

Healing, forgiving, proclaiming love and justice – there's got to be power at work.

Then there's flour – we'll call that all the stuff of life. It all gets added in.

There's one last ingredient: salt. One time I forgot to add the salt. I thought,

"It can't be that important, can it?" That bread tasted awful! I couldn't use it.

Bread without salt is ... like anything without salt. Bland. Dull.

If a church is bland and dull – forget it. Toss it. Close it.
Doesn't matter how pretty our buildings or our music is;
doesn't even matter how many people we feed at our Food Pantry on Fridays
– Jesus said we were to bring salt to the world around us.

He said to be salt and light.

Now, I can imagine what it means to be light – we've all experienced what
happens when you're in the dark and someone turns on a lamp or a candle.

You scouts who have been on overnight camp-outs
know what it means to bring light.

But what does it mean to be salt? To be salty?

What do we know about salt?

Salt is a flavor and brings flavor to food you add it to – that's how we know it best.

Salt can be a preservative, keeping meat from rotting.

What in our community that could use some preserving?

Civility, integrity, the ability to speak with love to people we disagree with?

Salt can melt ice – who around us is frozen and needs their heart thawed out?

And here's something: Salt is an agent that releases the taste of other ingredients.

When Jesus says we are to be salt for the world, we are to be “flavor enhancers!”

We help to elicit the gifts of other people to partner in God's mission.

That's why I'm so excited about our new relationship with all our scouts –

they are going to help elicit our gifts, and we're going to help elicit their gifts,
and together we are going to make so much more of an impact on this
community around us than any of us could do alone.

I don't know what our partnership will grow into, but it's more than projects
the scouts can do for us, and the space we can offer them.

We are going to be partners, working together on the values of
service and character that our scouts uphold.

We are going to salt the people around us with hope, with love, with peace,
with power. And help to release those qualities in them.

Our church is going to salt them with Jesus.

It is Christ within us that makes us salt, his tears, his blood.

That's what empowers our work that shows to the world the power of God.

That reading we heard from Isaiah reminds us that what God wants is wholeness.

Healing and restoration and reconciliation – repairing the breach.

That's what we are about as Jesus people in this world.

We are about more than modest improvements and acts of kindness. Jesus calls us to facilitate radical transformation of people, communities, the world. His first disciples had to be willing to be radically transformed, and then they were ready to be agents of radical transformation for the world around them. We can read in the gospel the halting progress those men and women made in taking on this mission of God. We see times when they failed, when they allowed the short view to sway them from the big vision – but we are testament to the fact that they prevailed. And we need to be willing to let the love of Jesus radically transform us too – like dough becoming bread.

What happens next to bread? It's ready to be eaten. But we all know that if bread is to be eaten, it has to be cut or broken. So we are a loaf that is delicious, but has to be broken to be consumed. We have to be broken, separated into smaller bits in order to feed the world. Just as our Eucharistic loaf gets broken to feed us. I once asked a group of people to tell me their experience of Holy Communion; Some found it moving, some felt nothing, but one woman said, "Oh, you give us this little piece of bread, and we give it away all week, and then come back for more." I cannot think of a better description of what we're about here on Sundays.

But something mystical happens – this bread we are, this Body of Christ dispersed all over the place during the week comes back together the next week! Here we are, whole again. More whole because our scouts and their families are with us. More whole, because Jesus is with us. More whole because we love.

Let your light so shine before others, Jesus said, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Here we are, salt for the world, our light breaking forth like the dawn!

Amen.

Matthew 5:13-20

Jesus said, "**You are the salt of the earth**; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others**, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; **I have come not to abolish but to fulfill**. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Isaiah 58:6- 12

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the fast that I choose: **to loose the bonds of injustice**,

to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Is it not to **share your bread with the hungry**, and **bring the homeless poor into your house**; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly;

your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say,

Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

if you **offer your food to the hungry** and **satisfy the needs of the afflicted**,

then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places,

and **make your bones strong**; and **you shall be like a watered garden**,

like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.