

Sharing Stories Eucharist

This Eucharistic prayer was written during a joint "Churches of Openshaw and Abbey Hew Together" service which looked at the theme of the Eucharist and tried to explore our different understandings of what it was about. Early in the service Tim invited people to share particular memories or stories of Eucharist, Communion, Mass, the Lord's Supper etc. during which Clare wrote notes and phrases on a flip chart. Then while the younger people were out making bread and the rest of us reflected a bit more, Clare crafted the words and phrases into a Eucharist about Eucharist. So here is the Sharing Stories Eucharist written collaboratively by three churches together. Needless to say, we ended by sharing the prayer and using the bread we had baked to celebrate Eucharist together.

We dress up and comb our hair to look our Sunday best
But God is content with jeans and walking boots and windswept hair;
We shape our hands carefully to receive the bread
But God is happy with hands that get dirty and care for others.

For if this is from God
It can only be a blessing.

We attend classes to find deep theological meanings
But God asks us to find meaning in each other;
We create rules and rituals and membership rites
But God squashes rules, flings open the door and invites everyone.

For if this is from God
It can only be a blessing.

We lay white cloths, gather wafers and fill thimble-like glasses
But God delights in garlic naan placed on outdoor stones;
We feel guilty and unworthy and always fall short
But God smiles as a goat finishes the bread and a dog knocks over the wine.

For if this is from God
It can only be a blessing.

For in an ordinary Palestinian home
Jesus gathered his followers together
They ate, laughed, shared stories and memories
And Jesus takes the ordinary unleavened bread served with the meal
Takes it, breaks it, and in sharing it
Finds meaning in gathering and eating together;
"This is my body given for you
Do this in memory of me."

For if this is from God
It can only be a blessing.

[Share bread]

For in an ordinary Palestinian home
Jesus gathered his followers together

They drank, laughed, shared stories and memories
And Jesus takes an ordinary cup and fills it with table wine
Takes it, blesses it, and in sharing it
Speaks the hope of new life found in community;
"This is my blood poured out for the life of the world
Do this in memory of me."

For if this is from God
It can only be a blessing.

[Share wine]

We have gathered together
We have shared bread and wine
Stories and laughter
Hopes and fears
May we go out
And speak the hope of new life
Into our communities
And the world.

For if this is from God
It can only be a blessing.

© Churches in Openshaw and Abbey Hey Together, drawing on stories, memories and phrases shared by the congregation as part of a service reflecting on the Eucharist, crafted into this liturgy by Clare McBeath, 2010