

## YOUTH SUNDAY

“Do This in Remembrance of Me”

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008

Haley Conger

Matt Scardine

Hannah Wagner

Michael Brandner

Luke 22:7-20

*7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.’ <sup>9</sup>They asked him, ‘Where do you want us to make preparations for it?’ <sup>10</sup>‘Listen,’ he said to them, ‘when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters <sup>11</sup>and say to the owner of the house, “The teacher asks you, ‘Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ” <sup>12</sup>He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.’ <sup>13</sup>So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.*

*<sup>14</sup> When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>He said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ <sup>17</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ <sup>19</sup>Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ <sup>20</sup>And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’*

### Pastor Jeff’s Intro

This is the second year since I’ve been here that we’ve had a Youth Sunday at Ridge Church and I am so excited to have this great opportunity. Some of my earliest memories of feeling as if I might be called to ministry are of helping with services like this when I was in youth group myself. I think these worship opportunities are great, not just for the youth involved, but also for the church as a whole.

Last fall Steve and I were doing some sermon planning and talking about the weeks between Christmas and Lent. I knew that I wanted to have a Youth Sunday again this year and with Lent beginning as early as it is we decided that today was the best day

to do this. It's a big day for the Ridge Youth already; doing the Souper Bowl of Caring to raise money for our hunger ministries, and having our Super Bowl Party tonight, but we are really excited to be able to lead worship today because it is a communion Sunday.

Over the last several years, as a pastor and as a Christian, I've come to see that most people give communion too little credit. I see people all too often boil communion down to being only about the forgiveness of sins. Communion is an important reminder of God's unconditional love and the forgiveness that we are offered by God, but it can have so much more meaning if we only give it the chance.

And so I am very excited to have four preachers this morning who are going to share a bit about different ways to understand communion and the ways in which those understandings can impact our lives as Christians.

Haley Conger

Hello, my name is Haley Conger. I am 14 and a freshman at Munster High. I've been involved in youth group for 4 years, ever since 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

One of my friends once told me a story about how she needed a pair of headphones. She went to her dad and asked him if he could find a pair of headphones for her. Later on he brought her three pairs of headphones. When she tried them out she discovered that the first pair didn't work at all. The second pair worked just fine, but the covering was coming off the wires at the end and she would need to do a little work to fix them. The third pair was in perfect condition. Which do you think she picked? She picked the second pair, which needed a little TLC but still worked fine. That way somebody else could have the perfect pair. Many people would have picked the perfect pair. I am not going to lie, so would I. She knew that she really didn't need that perfect pair when the 2<sup>nd</sup> pair met her needs.

Many times we confuse our wants and our needs, but communion can help us recognize the difference between the two. During the last supper Jesus saw the disciples' need for guidance and comfort and placed their needs over his own wants when he told them that when they drink of the cup and eat the bread, to remember him. Jesus was reminding his disciples and us that he will never truly be gone. There is a great quote in a book that I recently read that says, the dead are never really gone, they live on in our hearts and minds.

When I was little there were many cool new gadgets that I wanted: a Ferbie, a tomacachi, and an inflatable chair, just to name a few. My sisters told me that they were going to get me a Ferbie for my birthday, and when I didn't get one I cried. Jessica and

Lindsey both had tomacachis but Lindsey spilled yogurt on hers at school and used water to try to clean it off – no more tamacachi. Jessica and Lindsey both also had inflatable chairs. I would always want to sit in theirs but they would never let me. Jessica's got a hole in it pretty quickly, and she recalls that they were pretty uncomfortable. Looking back I realize I didn't need any of these things, and all were fleeting wants. I got over the Ferbie quickly when I realized how annoying they were. I forgot all about the tomacachis and the two inflatable chairs. But what remains is the fact that even though all of my many wants weren't filled, I was happy and all my needs were provided for. Many times we let our wants become needs – I really need that new I-phone, or that self-parallel-parking car, or a bigger house. When we remember Jesus' words and actions, it's easier to keep things in perspective. We can be like my friend who was looking for headphones; we can meet our needs and allow others to do the same, some times by sacrificing a few of our wants. As we celebrate communion today, may it be a reminder to us that Jesus calls us, to remember the difference between our wants and our needs. May we be reminded of the way in which Jesus lived his life and reminded of the way in which Jesus calls us to live ours.

Matt Scardine

Hi, my name is Matt Scardine. I'm 13 and in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Highland Middle School. Today I'm going to talk about communion.

When I was in about the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, most of my catholic friends were getting their communion. They were also getting tons of money for their communion, and spending it on nice things. I remember my friend A.J. bought a Nintendo Gamecube – it was sort of a big thing at the time. I had wanted one for the longest time and I was so jealous that the next day I went out and bought one. The only thing I was thinking that whole time was, *I'm not catholic because...?* It wasn't until later on that I realized communion wasn't about getting money to have expensive things. It's about being invited into a life of service.

There is a kid who I used to know who is a 7<sup>th</sup> grader. He has two sisters, three brothers, and a dad who's not the best parent. His dad also works two shifts at Nabisco so he rarely got to see him. They also all live in this tiny, cramped house, and on top of it all, his mom died a few months ago. He rarely went to church, he felt hopelessly lost, and he also felt that if he had the money he would be happy, until he came on a youth retreat. On the first day he didn't seem too happy. On the second day he came up to me and said, "I'm ready to have some fun." Through out the rest of the day he had tons of fun, and forgot about all of his troubles. Then when we had communion, his face just lit up because he was invited into our congregation; he was invited into a life of service.

During communion Jesus invites us into a life of service because he lived a life of service. He didn't worry about Nintendo Gamecubes or the latest technology or money or anything like that.

I know most of you probably don't want a Nitendo Gamecube, but during the Super Bowl today you may see commercials for that new flat screen HDTV or that new car and you may think you need these things to be happy. But all you need to realize is that you are being invited to live the life that Jesus lived which is a life of service.

Hannah Wagner

A lot of you probably don't know who I am. That is to be expected seeing as I don't go to this church. In fact, I'm not even Methodist. My name is Hannah Wagner and I am Catholic. I am 14 years old and I am in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I go to Munster High School. There are three reasons I am up here today. Firstly, because I belong to the youth group here at Ridge. Secondly, because Brandner peer-pressured me into it and thirdly, because I want to share with you my experience and my journey-in-process to become closer to God.

Last year, before making my Confirmation at Saint Thomas More, I was very worried. I was mostly because I thought that after I made my Confirmation it meant that I had to believe everything that I had ever learned in CCD, everything that the church believed. That scared me a lot because there were quite a few things I had learned that I did not agree with 100%. I thought that maybe because I didn't agree with everything that the church said that I shouldn't be making my Confirmation. Then, one day at CCD, my teacher, Ms. Godlewski, told us something that relieved me greatly. She told us that making our Confirmation did not mean that we had to believe everything the church believed; it meant that we were becoming closer to God. She said that however we found God was wonderful. It was great if we continued our faith in Catholicism, but it was also great if we found God and became closer to him in another way.

Like many teenagers, I often question my faith. I don't think this is a bad thing, God gave us brains for a reason. He gave us brains so we could explore our faith, and become closer to him. Communion makes me feel especially closer to God because, to me, the bread and the wine, symbolizing the body and blood of Christ, that we receive

when we take Communion make me feel almost like I am having my own piece of God. That he is sharing himself with me when I receive these gifts. When I take communion, whether it be at church on Sunday or on a retreat with youth group, I feel that it is nourishment for my journey to become closer to God. I think most of us feel the same way.

Last year, when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Wilbur Wright, I befriended a 7<sup>th</sup> grader in my art class. As I got to know her, I learned that she didn't have many friends and her family life wasn't too great. After talking to her for a few weeks, I invited her to youth group. She didn't go to church very often and at first she declined, saying that she would be uncomfortable because she didn't know anything about church and God. But after a few days, I convinced her to come with me. She came for about a month or so and loved it. At youth group, she made tons of new friends and had a great time. She looked forward to it each week and often thanked me for inviting her to come. Then Jeff began talking about the youth retreat. She was really excited to be going on the retreat. On the retreat, we received Communion. I watched her as she received Communion, her eyes lit up and she looked truly happy. I don't think this story just pertains to one single person, it pertains to all of us. I think for most of us, when we receive Communion we feel especially close to God as we receive that nourishment for our journey.

So what do I want you to take away from this? What was my point in being up here? Not only do I want to urge you to use your mind to explore your faith and become closer to God, but today as you receive Communion, I want you to think about your journey. I want you to think about how far you have come, and I want you to remember

that throughout your journey, God is always with you. I challenge you to continue your journey and to find God, however it may be.

Michael Brandner

Good morning! My name is Michael Brandner and I have been involved with this youth group for about 5 years now. I'm 16 and a sophomore at Lake Central High School. This is my second youth Sunday and my second opportunity to give a sermon at youth Sunday. Unfortunately I don't have a Rex Grossman joke this time. I know I know, maybe next year if the Bears actually make it to the Superbowl.

Today, in case you haven't noticed already we're talking about Communion. For me Communion is a special time. For those of you who don't already know 9 years ago I was diagnosed with Juvenile Osteoporosis. I know what you're thinking, "how does a kid his age get osteoporosis," well it happens. At first I didn't really know or understand what I had. As I got older I realized fully what my condition was. It has often been hard to deal with. I tend to be cautious with my activities so that I don't fracture something. I don't play organized sports for the same reason, and this has been difficult also. Other kids who don't understand will make jokes about it. Before I became a member here at Ridge I just pretended I didn't even have osteoporosis. This Ridge church family and the youth have helped me realize that I am still a normal person just like the rest of them. They have helped me through all the bad times. I have to say that the first thing that helped me get through this was Communion.

I don't have all the answers when it comes to Communion, but I know that it is a start to a relationship with God. I think if we are all honest with ourselves, there are times when you take Communion like it is a symbolic act, and don't even give much thought to the whole process. Sometimes we might think of Communion as the "magic" that gets us to heaven. I mean after all, if we are good Christians and take Communion

then we should be “good to go” for another week, right? I don’t think that is what Jesus’ sacrifice is all about. I personally look at Communion as a remembrance of Jesus’ sacrifice and hope for each and every day. Hope that when times are difficult we know we are not alone. That through Jesus we can be confident we can have a relationship with God.

I have already told you a little bit about my osteoporosis, and how I have learned to deal with it. Unfortunately, I am not the only one that has to deal with it. My parents also have to struggle with understanding why I have this. My mom in particular struggles, as I guess any mom would. I think there are two things that have helped us to deal with the struggles. The first is the loving support that our Ridge family gives to us. The second is the gifts that Holy Communion offers to us. What does it offer us, you ask? Well, it offers us hope, God’s grace, and forgiveness.

In just a few minutes we will all have the opportunity to take Communion. I challenge everyone to take a few moments to really think about what Communion means to you, and hold on to the HOPE that it offers to all of us.

On behalf of myself and the youth here we want to thank you, our Ridge Church family for all of the love and support that you give to this youth group. We would also like to thank Jeff for giving us the opportunity to give a little something back to our Ridge family. Thank you and enjoy your Superbowl Sunday.