WE ARE A EUCHARISTIC PEOPLE

AND WE LONG TO GATHER AT EUCHARIST TOGETHER AGAIN.

UNTIL THEN....

In the last few weeks, we've spent a great deal of time reflecting theologically, spiritually and prayerfully, as well as staying abreast of CDC guidelines and directives from the State. I say **WE** as I've been meeting virtually with the Ministry Team and Trustees, as well as talking with other ECC pastors. This is a time unlike any other and we've really needed to focus on ritual, tradition, and sacrament, as well as the role of community gathered in one place, versus community gathered from our separate homes. And we've also had to think about the precautions due to the virus itself. Let's face it practicing social distance and the concern for spread impacts everything we do right now. But, one thing we all agee- when we are together in prayer the Holy Spirit brings us together across the miles.

We are a Eucharistic people and the Sacrament of Eucharist is very important to our souls. And yet in these times, we are unable to celebrate Eucharist in the way that speaks to our hearts. So how do we celebrate in a meaningful way, remembering that Last Supper that Jesus shared with his loved ones. Following the direction of Bishop Francis Krebs, the Presiding Bishop of our Ecumenical Catholic Communion, as well as the prayerful ways we have been asking the Holy Spirit to guide us through this process, we will ask God who is the source of all blessings, to bless a bit of bread and wine, or crackers and grapes, or whatever you may have. As Bishop Frank said ***"we may ask the Holy Spirit to bless these elements so that we may experience our life and unity in Christ. If indeed we experience hope and love and faith, we will have a sign that God is truly present (for these “theological virtues” cannot be present without God being present) and that we are truly united in them. We are missing the most basic actions of actually physically gathering as the Body of Christ, of breaking and sharing the bread and sharing the cup, etc. There is a lot that is missing. But we are doing our best to be faithful to God in a difficult time and to draw sustenance from God’s gifting hand. It won’t be the Eucharist in the way that we would prefer, but it could be a rich time of faith “together,” and certainly a way to encourage each other, and more importantly to receive God’s encouragement, in our socially distanced lives."***I see it as sharing what the disciples called an "Agape Meal." In the early church they each brought something to share, like a potluck and they shared a whole meal together when they gathered, not just bread and wine. It will not replace the longing in our hearts for that Sacramental consecration of Eucharist that we celebrate in the sanctuary that we love, surrounded by our Mary Magdalene Family for sure. But while this is not Sacrament with a Capital "S", I believe that there are many ways that we celebrate **s**acrament with a small "s" by sharing God's love with others in our daily lives. While recognizing that this Sunday and subsequent weeks are different from what we are used to, I took comfort in Bishop Frank's closing line. "***Let's not underappreciate what we are doing, i.e., sharing our life in the living God who sustains us in all circumstances."***

So in preparation for liturgies, light a candle, gather a bit of bread, crackers, grapes or wine whatever you may have on hand. And have your laptop or mobile phone ready to connect over the internet. If you have any particular prayers for the Prayers of the Faithful you can type those in the comments and everyone will be joined together in those prayers. May we feel the unity of being connected through the Holy Spirit, praying with one mind and one heart!!