

32963 Faith page, 9-30-10
By Rev. Drs. Casey and Bob Baggott
Community Church of Vero Beach

A World of Hope

This Sunday is Worldwide Communion Sunday, one of the better ideas of the Christian Church, we think. After all, churches around the globe have their own patterns and schedules for the celebration of the sacrament of communion. Some celebrate weekly or even daily. Some celebrate monthly. Some celebrate quarterly. In other words, Christians around the world celebrate communion quite regularly – but not necessarily in concert with one another.

So once a year, on the first Sunday in October, all churches everywhere are encouraged to host a particularly festive celebration of communion on what is called Worldwide Communion Sunday, with the awareness that their sisters and brothers in faith are also celebrating on this day. From sun-up in New Zealand to sundown in Alaska, Christians will gather in thatched huts or great stone cathedrals, in simple white clapboard meeting houses or elaborate stained glass-enhanced structures -- and in every setting, communion will be shared.

This Sunday in our church, children will assist in our worship wearing the clothing of other nations, several languages will grace our prayers, and the bread we share in communion will be baked with olive oil from orchards of Palestinian Christians in Israel. Each of these aspects of our worship will remind us of our linkages to others across the globe.

Other churches will have their own ways of celebrating Worldwide Communion Sunday. But wherever communion is shared, the Christian faith asserts, Christ is there present, and we faithful followers are reminded of our unity with Him and with one another.

Worldwide Communion Sunday originated during World War II when the divisions that tore at the fabric of humanity threatened lives and nations and cultures. And today, a Worldwide Communion Sunday is just as relevant, just as needed, just as urgent, as it was in the 1940's.

Our world is still war-torn and divided. Whatever our religious heritage or commitment, we watch in anguish as misunderstanding leads to distrust, and distrust leads to violence. Our world knows little peace.

Worldwide Communion Sunday may not overcome the world's unrest. But it is a step toward urging cooperation and mutual appreciation. It is a way to encourage ourselves to acknowledge our interdependence with others, everywhere.

In this tumultuous period, when the world longs for peace and hope, we pray that each of you will find your avenue for peacemaking and bridge building. And perhaps, one day, communion (literally "fellowship" and "sharing") will be possible for us all!