**Wish We Could Stay Longer!**

A Sermon Preached at Lawrence Park Community Church, March 1, 2020

1 Corintians 10:11

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 For me, the Lord's Supper now, and the pancake luncheon we are going to enjoy after today’s worship service, are like this:

 I have a very best friend. We have been best friends since university. Better yet, my wife Irene and my friend's wife are best pals too, so the four of us love nothing better than to get together as often as we can. We have our hands on each others’ hearts.

 Trouble is, for years we lived hundreds of miles apart, so we didn’t see each other often enough. But when we did it went like this.

 We tumble out of the car. Their front door flies open. Arms fly up as we embrace each other. Hellos all around. The kids laugh on account of the excitement. We speak ritual words, like "How are you?" and "How was the ride?" and "Come on in." Its always the same. We're happy, giddy, and already wishing we could stay longer.

 Next, we get down to the business of catching up. My friend wants to know what I've read. I want to know how his job is going. She wants to know about Irene’s dad, who is ill. They want to know how the kids are doing in a new school.

 Then we sit down to eat together. We hold hands and give thanks. We are calmer now. We pass around a favorite dish made just for us. Someone pauses with serving to listen to someone else make a comment. Even the kids are soaking up every word. Fresh strawberries and ice-cream for dessert. Coffee from the deli. As the kids drop off to sleep, we push our plates back and have a glass of wine. Dark falls and crickets call. We're quiet together, sometimes, now. Satisfied. Comfortable. Intimate.

 Finally, sadly, we get up to go. We are just passing through. We pick up the sleeping kids and stuff them in the car. Hugs all around. "See you. I'll miss you. Your turn to phone. Bye. Bye." Good-bye.

 For me, the Lord's Supper is like that meal with my friends. A deep longing has now been fulfilled. It isn't magic, really, but it is divine.

 Such meals are not just for friends; but they make us friends, bind us closer. And the same is true for the Lord’s Supper this morning, and the pancake luncheon after. Eating together binds us together. This is very important for the apostle Paul, who says, "Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor. 10:17).

 At least that is how it is in the Bible. In fact, in the early church, any worship without celebrating the Lord's Supper was unimagina­ble. In the Bible the Lord’s Supper was a real meal where people ate real food, not just a symbolic piece of bread dipped in wine—it was a real meal like our pancake luncheon is a real meal. In fact, I sort of think about today’s pancake luncheon as an extension of the Lord’s Supper we celebrate during worship. Real meals are for real friends really communing, really reaching out for each other. So, we read that in the early church they “broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46). We’ll do that now, and in our fellowship hall.

 Of course, the Lord's Supper means other things too. On this first Sunday in Lent, in particular, the Lord’s Supper reminds us of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, before he died on a cross. I have preached on that, regularly, in the past.

 But this morning let’s focus on how this meal brings us together, makes us one body where every one of us counts. Let’s tumble out of our pews, eat some bread and wine, and in just a few minutes, gather round the tables in the fellowship hall. We’ll all wish we could stay longer.