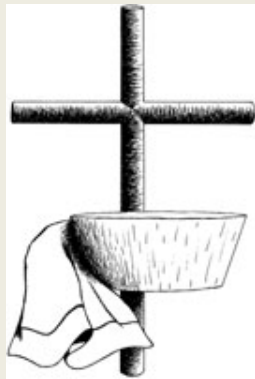


DEACON UPDATE



LOVE FEAST

March 2013

As you read this, no doubt preparations are well underway for Holy Week. And, for most of us in the Church of the Brethren, one of the major events of the week is Love Feast.

By now you probably know who is setting the tables, preparing the food, baking the communion bread, buying the grape juice. You know who is assigned to pull the basins and towels out of storage, and who will wash those same towels afterwards. If you are like many congregations, you are also asking the "how many?" question, uncertain of the number of people to expect. You need to be sure to have enough but at the same time are worried that there may be too many empty seats at the tables. With all of this preparation and uncertainty, is it really worth it, for fewer and fewer people?

Not long ago I heard a pastor of some 30-odd years in the Church of the Brethren say this: "If we were to stop celebrating Love Feast, we might as well stop being Brethren. It's that core to our tradition. It's what we are about." Wow. Does your congregation understand Love Feast as such an integral, sacred part of what we are about? We Brethren say we are here to continue the work of Jesus, and Love Feast is a time when we don't have to ask "What would Jesus do?"—we simply do exactly what he did the night before he died: we share a meal and wash each others' feet, in an expression of servanthood and love we rarely see in our day-to-day lives. Sacred time, indeed.

I worry that Love Feast for many has become just another church activity. I also worry that as deacons we get so wrapped up in the preparations, the who-is-going-to-do-what part of this key element of our tradition that by the time we sit down to wash feet and share the bread and cup and sing and pray, we scarce take the time ourselves to remember why we are there. Let's make a point this season to invite others to join us in this sacred tradition—and then to be fully present with them, and with God, for the holy time it truly is.

—OVER—

"Do this in remembrance of me." –from Luke 22:19

Donna Kline

Donna Kline, director of Denominational Deacon Ministry
dkline@brethren.org
800-323-8039, x306