

*The Marquand Reader is the newsletter of the daily
ecumenical worship program.*

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• **Trans Awareness Week at Yale**

For the third consecutive year, Marquand hosts this week a worship service in tandem with trans-week at Yale. This year signals a few developments. For a start, trans-awareness week at Yale is now in the Fall rather than the Spring, and the events span two weeks instead of one. In previous years in chapel, we have hosted services of stories and songs, exploring "trans" liturgical resources and styles (including space formation, symbols, and trans-gendered pronouns); this year, however, we are deeply honored to be led in worship by Erin Swenson, the first known mainstream Protestant minister to make an open gender transition while remaining in ordained office. Rev. Dr. Swenson is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), and a licensed marriage and family therapist, and we are delighted to welcome her as our preacher on Monday morning.

Trans-awareness week at Yale provides an opportunity for all of us in Marquand to learn about sex and gender diversity and its relation to the Christian life and, particularly, worship. For some, this service will be one of many they have attended exploring trans identity as a sacred reality and holding up the Christian witness and theological insights of trans people. However, for others it will be their first such service and so we offer the following glossary of terms associated with trans-gender awareness (which has been authored by successive generations of Marquandites), and some further resources for reading.

Transsexuals are individuals who have a gender identity (the sense of being a man or a woman) different from their anatomically prescribed sex. They sometimes seek medical treatment to change their physical attributes to correspond with their gender identity; this treatment may include hormone therapy, electrolysis, and surgery, among other options.

Cross-dressers wear clothing usually associated with the gender "opposite" to their anatomical sex. Cross-dressing may be part-time or full-time, in the privacy of a person's home, in public or in multiple venues in between. Their difference from transsexuals is that the cross-dressers' self-identity regarding gender remains the same as their anatomically prescribed sex. They usually do not seek medical treatment. Cross-dressers can be attracted to either same-sex or opposite-sex partners, or both.

Intersexed (or hermaphroditic) individuals are born with genitals that show characteristics of both sexes or are opposite to their genetic sex. Such people constitute 2,000 of all US births annually. Many such people are surgically "corrected" in infancy, and some grow up to feel like

they have had an essential part of themselves taken away without their consent; these surgeries also often diminish later sexual sensation and enjoyment.

Transgenderists live as members of the other sex, but without the need or desire to alter their bodies that transsexuals experience. Some live permanently as members of the other sex, while others assume gender identities outside of the male-female two-gender model — this latter is sometimes called *Third Gender* lifestyle.

Androgynes, Gender Benders and Gender Blenders merge the characteristics of men and women in various ways that are sometimes subtle, sometimes shocking, sometimes neither.

Drag Queens and *Drag Kings* present larger-than-life images of men and women in public performance, exaggerating certain sex-gender stereotypes for entertainment, making a living, attention, or self-gratification, among other motivations.

Transpeople / Transgendered People are group nouns that are often used to describe all transgendered and transsexual people (all the above). *Transgender* or simply *trans* is the umbrella term for all the above human identities, relationships and performances.

Bisexuals are not the same as transgendered people. Bisexuality is a sexual orientation (like heterosexuality or homosexuality), not a gender status. Bisexuals are people who each mate with men *or* women — they are individuals who are neither “straight” nor “gay”. Many bisexuals do not see gender characteristics (male, female, etc) as strictly prescribed and so, not surprisingly, they are often the partners of transpeople.

If You Would Like To Read More, Here Are Some Resources:

Books:

Currah, Paisley and Shannon Minter, *Transgender Equality: A Handbook for Activists and Policymakers*. New York: The Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2000

Mollenkott, Virginia, *Omnigender: A Trans-religious Approach*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2007.

Stryker, Susan and Stephen Whittle, eds., *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Tanis, Justin, *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2003.

Wilchins, Riki Anne, *Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender*. Milford, CT: Firebrand Books, 1997

Online:

More Light Presbyterians: <http://www.mlp.org/>

The Transgender Law & Policy Institute: <http://www.transgenderlaw.org/>

Southern Association of Gender Education: <http://www.transgeorgia.org/Home>

Hearty Eucharist

Most Fridays in Marquand, the form of the worship service is based in a single Christian denomination or group's worship style, and our ecumenism grows as we participate in one

another's ways of worship and note both our commonalities and differences. Occasionally, however, we explore liturgies that have been specifically designed to express the common roots and/or shapes of Christian worship. Thus, for example, earlier this semester we celebrated the Lima Liturgy together. This week we use another such deliberately ecumenical form, the Hearty Eucharist.

“Hearty Eucharist” was the initial idea of Ian Doescher, a chapel minister who, in the Fall of 2002 wondered whether we couldn't occasionally celebrate communion here in a way that was more like a real meal. The idea grew through discussion and a small study group on early church meal practices (particularly Denis Smyth's *From Symposium to Eucharist*), and a liturgical form was devised in which the serving and sharing of food happens first, and the talking and singing develops later, over the course of the meal—as it does at home.

The rite has been honed over the years (and will doubtless continue developing), but two things remain: the attempt to imagine and connect to early church practices is paramount, and the meal-like qualities of the worship service are accentuated.

Regarding the former, like the disciples and Jesus, and their later followers, we bless bread and wine, share it together in a spirit of community and friendship, and sing hymns together. In addition to bread and wine, we also serve one another olives, cheese, olive oil and fruit because it is thought that these are the foods that were consumed at the earliest Eucharists (along with, occasionally, fish). There was a strong emphasis in the early church on the distribution of food and other goods to those in need after the meal, and so when you come to Hearty Eucharist this week, please don't forget the food baskets outside the chapel doors for those in need.

Regarding the latter, we try to recreate the feeling of a meal by the ways we set up the space, by the ways we engage one another and then, fundamentally, by taking a plate, being served, sharing food with one another, holding a cup of wine (or water/juice) and eating over time while hearing from one another.

Why is it important to accentuate the meal-like aspects of Eucharist? Meals are common to all human beings (albeit it in different forms), and, given that Jesus gave himself as food and drink in a redemptive meal, they are, in a sense, the core ecumenical act. They are also a statement of (or opportunity for) profound justice-making in the world, given our relationship to those who are hungry or have no one with whom to eat. But there are more basic reasons, too. Ian Doescher, writing for the reader seven years ago, quoted Jim White, from *Christian Worship in North America*:

“I know of no more common act of blasphemy than a family keeping television on during dinner time. Apparently this is a frequent occurrence in American homes today. It indicates that we have forgotten how to eat. “Liturgists have worried for years about how to get a parish to understand itself as a community and especially how to make the Eucharist a common meal. Perhaps we have begun at the wrong end. If we don't understand how to eat together as a family, that small ecclesial community, how can we possibly comprehend what it means to eat together as a congregation, that larger ecclesial community? Each family is a congregation in miniature. If we can't share a meal at home how can we possibly do it in church?”

And so we share not just a morsel of bread or a sip of wine; rather we share small chunks of bread and small cups of drink. From this we get the word “hearty”. It does not mean we eat till we're stuffed (how, in this world, can we do that?); but, rather, that we partake of real food and real drink, in the forms in which we they are used in meals in homes — and in familiar quantities, too.

We thus explore, on this one day each year, one alternative to the “economic” Eucharist of every other day.

For this to work without hurting the earth, we need to use no paper or plastic. So, please bring your plates and cups, and please bring as many extras as you can spare for those who either cannot bring such things or else forget to do so. Please label or mark each piece with your name on their undersides and drop them off at chapel any time before Friday morning. We will wash them and leave them for you to pick up on Friday afternoon. Please don't think someone else will do this! Bring your plates and cups, and link up your table at home (minus the television!) to the table in Marquand.

A Look Ahead to This Week in Chapel:

Monday

Worship for Trans-Week at Yale. Rev. Dr. Erin Swenson, preaching (see above).

Tuesday

Graduating Student, Kaz Bem, preaching

Wednesday

Sung Morning Prayer — the John Tirro setting continues.

Thursday

Led by Yale Black Seminarians, exploring stories of conversion.

Hearty Eucharist

Rev. John Gage, Senior Minister of United Church on the Green, and Supervised Ministries Practicum Leader at YDS, will preside and preach as we share our meal (see above).

Roundtable Discussion

The next of our regular round-table discussions about worship in Marquand, what it means for ecumenism, and how to apply it to your home or future church will be held this coming Thursday, 11/12, in the Common Room from 12.30 - 1.15.

All are welcome.

Siobhán Garrigan
Dean of Chapel