‘Celebration’ is not a word that jumps to mind in the current global situation. Everyone has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and, in general, it has been a negative experience. Sickness, death, and financial insecurity are certainly not matters to be celebrated, and thus we find ourselves globally in an un-celebratory atmosphere.

Most of our celebrations have been affected by the pandemic as well. People need to decide whether they are going to have a smaller birthday party than usual or no birthday party at all. Weddings are being postponed or end up being a lot smaller than initially planned. People had to adjust their Christmas celebrations due to travel restrictions and limited numbers of people at social gatherings. Even our weekly Sunday services, where we get to celebrate our faith together with fellow believers, have been influenced. These are just a few examples of how the pandemic has influenced our joyous celebrations.

This combination of living in an atmosphere of sickness, death, and financial insecurity – together with the removal of celebratory occasions – over a prolonged period, could have detrimental consequences on society. Ultimately, the uncertainty and insecurity, together with the loss of laughter and joy, will lead to the loss of hope and end up in depression.

Christians, however, always have a reason to celebrate, and should not get caught up in the atmosphere of the world. Philippians 4:4-7 states: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

No matter the circumstances, Christians always have a reason to celebrate and rejoice, because not only do we have eternal life, but we have eternal life with Jesus. It is, therefore, a twofold reason to celebrate. We celebrate the fact that death has lost its sting, and we no longer need to fear it, but we also get to spend eternity with Christ, while already living in relationship with Him now.

As believers, we celebrate this undeserved grace by sharing in communion together. Eating the bread as a symbol of His body and drinking the wine as a symbol of His blood. Communion is a gift that can be celebrated as often as you like. It is a symbolic reminder that we truly have reason to rejoice; always!

As a family, we celebrate communion together on Friday evenings in the same way that Jews celebrate Shabbat. We observe some Shabbat rituals, but for us, the emphasis falls on sharing communion together. It is always extra special to share it with fellow believers, but even during the lockdown, when it was just my wife and I, together with our two boys, it was still a joyous way of ending the week. To sit down together and thank the Lord for the week that has passed, and no matter what happened within the week, to celebrate His saving grace by sharing communion together and entering His rest.

It is a weekly celebration to remind us why we truly have reason to rejoice, always. No matter what the circumstances are, it draws your attention back to that which is truly important, and especially during a pandemic. It is a reminder that even death should not be feared because He has already overcome death on our behalf.
So, if you are struggling – if uncertainty, unpredictability, financial insecurity, sickness, and death have taken their toll on you – just turn to Christ, take the bread as a symbol of His body and the wine as a symbol of His blood, and celebrate your salvation in Him!

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