

“Something Special to See Here”
October 4, 2026

Isaiah 66:18b-24
I Corinthians 10:16-17

Well, it’s been quite a week here on Clinton St.

Driving to work last Monday, I unexpectedly found the street closed to traffic. Something was going on—although I had no idea what it was. Nor was I helped by the posters that cryptically announced: “Nothing Special to See Here.” And a recently built yellow wall—bearing the same message—obstructed my view of much of the activity.

I asked someone who appeared to be connected with all of this what was happening. He told me that ESPN was here after a 20-year hiatus, getting ready to broadcast from the Pentacrest before the Iowa-Ohio game on Saturday.

That, of course, was only half of it.

There was “Nothing Special to See Here”—except, of course, the new Caitlin Clark shoe. The activity around this footwear launch seemed to overshadow the return of ESPN, if that was possible.

So, it was only minor news on Friday when the Kitty Korner shut down after the front wall of its building collapsed.

And then, of course, Caitlin Clark herself arrived for the ESPN show on Saturday morning.

Surrounded by all of this, it occurred to me that there *is* something special to see—and not simply the usual and *unusual* activity of this great university town.

There *is* something special to see *here*, on our corner. And I invite you to look at it with me.

It starts with what scripture often tries to help us see—something not quite yet visible, but something certain, something that gives shape to our living and our acting.

As the Book of Isaiah comes to an end, the prophet directs our sight and our hope to the coming realm of God, telling us that God is “coming to gather all nations and tongues.” All people will be held in the love of God. And if this is not yet visible, Isaiah exhorts us to keep looking, keep living toward that day. It will be as if there were a new creation, a new beginning for this old and tired world and all its people, weary with hunger and warfare and chasing after all that does not give real life.

The prophet’s certainty grows out of a tradition of hope voiced by the Psalmist as well. In hope, they call us to look toward the time when the people of the world will find common ground and unity. The day is coming when all of us will know our shared status as those created in the very image of God: as the children of the living God, as the sisters and brothers of one another.

Look! The psalm that we shared this morning announces that there *is* something special to see here and it is the most amazing thing: Rahab—that is the nation of Egypt—Rahab and *Babel*—

yes *that* Babel—Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia—people of enemy nations—*these*, the Psalmist says, *these* people are all born in God’s holy city. Imagine, as one Old Testament scholar does: “Large, overpowering mythically evil empires, Egypt and Babylon, smaller threatening nations, Philistia and Tyre, and the alien and far away people of Ethiopia” *all* have birthright citizenship in Jerusalem...All the world is included in this city and benefits from its blessings and the love that God extends to it.”^{vi}

In this psalm, God is keeping a record of births. As is often the case, God seems very human—or maybe this is an echo of the hope that we humans might sometimes act in ways that approach the divine. God’s record keeping is different from ours. It announces of all people, all nations: “This one is born here.” No one is alien. Jerusalem—the city of God—is the birthplace of all people, the place where all may gather in peace, the place where all, regardless of origin, are brought into the household of God. It is a place of belonging.

The vision of scripture takes us well beyond exclusive and exhausted nationalism. This is a grace-filled announcement of good news: all people—*all people*—are included in the love of God.

“Look,” the prophet says. There is something special to see here. Look at what cannot yet be seen and live toward that vision.

And there is even more to see.

There is something special to see *here*, in *this* place, on *this* morning.

At a time when the United States is pulling away from the world stage; at a time when a xenophobic and racist administration seeks to deport massive numbers of people who have been living in this nation and in this city in peace, often for decades; at a time when cries of “America First” call us to look with hardened hearts at the suffering of the rest of the world, this morning we mark World Communion Sunday.

Liberal Protestants proposed World Communion Sunday in the 1930’s and encouraged its wider observance beginning in the 1940’s—at a time of economic inequality and uncertainty, at a time when the whole world sensed a gathering cloud of tension between nations and peoples. This is to say, it developed in a time similar to our own. It continues to inform our faith in these days. On this day, we are invited to look, to *see* what we share with other Christians, with other people of faith, and really, with all people.

This celebration began with the great hope that Christians around the world would gather at their various and varied tables on this first Sunday in October, showing our unity in our diversity. It began with the great and still unrealized hope of Isaiah that God would gather all nations and tongues, that the people of the world might live in peace with one another.

We have observed this day for decades in this place. In this celebration, we affirm our own specific faith that by partaking of the one bread, we are part of the one body of Christ. And we proclaim that in a greater way *we* belong to the *world* beyond our corner, that we are called to love our neighbors near and far.

When we come to the Table today, our eyes are opened to see that, in the words of the hymn, “In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north.” We announce the reality—glimpsed occasionally but not always obvious—that we are one in Christ with people around the world.

This day reminds us of the importance of the Lord’s Supper for our life together.

This day reminds us of our connections with people of other denominations and traditions.

And because we can so easily forget, this day also reminds us of our connections with people in other nations, with different backgrounds, different lives, and different ways of following in the Way of Jesus Christ.

All people are our “companions”—literally, those with whom we eat bread.

When we eat and drink, we are connected with those who prepared the food, those who processed the food, those who grew the food, and the earth that produced the food.

When we eat and drink, we remember that the Creator God made known in Jesus is the one who desires our well-being and delight—and not ours alone, but the well-being and delight of all people.

Here in this place, we find a table that in a small and particular way holds all of the gifts of God.

Here in this place, we find a meal that in a small and particular way ends our separation from God and one another and reconnects us with all creation.

Here in this place, we find food and drink that in a small and particular way offer the nourishment and joy needed that we might once again love our neighbors as ourselves.

This food and drink and meal and table come together to tell a particular story of the way in which God is bringing about the new creation through death and resurrection. They prepare us for the work that is still ours to do in these days of unraveling—weaving a new fabric of peace so that we might be a part of the realm of heaven that God is creating among all people.

World Communion Sunday, then, turns out to be far more important than we might ever have realized.

This table is where we begin the work of bringing peace into the world. This table is where we return again and again to be nurtured in that work, work that we are incapable of doing on our own strength.

God desires not only our good but also the good of all creation. And listen to that the other way. God desires the good of all creation—and God desires *your* good, yes, even *your own good*. There are signs of this often enough that we can dare to live in hope, we can choose to live in hope.

There is something special to see *here*: This congregation on this corner is vitally important. We don’t live in isolation. We have companions far beyond this corner.

We who are many are one body. When we come again to the Lord’s Table today, we come, as we do each time, as members of the one universal church. But perhaps today we come more

consciously aware that we are not alone on our journey. We walk together with men and women, boys and girls who live in unknown places, in unfamiliar—often inhospitable—situations.

Here we are fed. Here we find strength to continue walking together in suffering and joy, in faith and hope, knowing that in this city—and around the world—God is still with us.

This doesn't happen everywhere.

But look! There is something special to see here—and you are a part of it.

ⁱ Johanna Bos, "Psalm 87," *Interpretation*, July 1997, pg. 285.