

A Brief Explanation of Our Communion Practice

In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christ gives to the communicants His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. He declares the forgiveness of sin to all believers, and strengthens their faith.



The Communion service is traditionally a faith community event rather than a private event. Communion is the successor to the Passover, which was celebrated in the biological family. Communion is celebrated by the faith family, which is baptismal, not biological. It is a water family, not a blood family. This sacrament is meant for believers (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). It is the way that God unites His church, sustains the church and grows *faith, hope and love* as the church participates in this shared grace together. Communion is God's way of delivering assurance of the forgiveness of sins to the flock. Being unworthy of Jesus' body and blood is the primary reason to receive the forgiveness of sins promised in communion. But it is possible to receive Communion with an unworthy attitude. Therefore, self-examination is called for (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31):

1) Do we believe the promises? *"Without faith it is impossible to please God"* (Hebrews 11:6).

2) Do we recognize Jesus' presence? *"Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself"* (1 Corinthians 11:27, 29).

3) Are we reconciled with our fellow believers? Matthew 5:23-24 and 6:12, 14-15 have traditionally been understood to mean that being reconciled to one another is essential if we are to be reconciled to God. Or, if we have been reconciled to God, reconciliation to each other is mandatory. If we do not value reconciliation with others, we put ourselves in a place where we are distancing ourselves from God's will for us. We are living in rebellion.



4) Do we recognize that our sins are wrong and that they will be the death of us? (1 John 1:5-10) Do we realize that Jesus is the only way that we can live? *Therefore, we invite those who confess Jesus as their savior from sin and death to receive the gift of forgiveness of sins offered and gifted in this sacrament*



Special Note: Because Communion requires time for self-examination, we do not encourage Communion to children until they are old enough to be taught and old enough for self-examination. Through teaching they will appreciate its significance. Traditionally Lutherans have used Confirmation Classes as the time of teaching about the Lord's Supper. These classes are taught with the use of Luther's Small Catechism, which is one of our church's official Confessions, and which we believe to be a faithful summary of the teachings of Holy Scripture on those matters that are directly applicable to a Christian's preparation for Communion (Heb. 13:7-9a). If you would like a copy of the Small Catechism for personal instruction or to instruct your children please contact the Pastor or the church office.