

St. Michael Lutheran Church

At Home Communion During Pandemic

Holy Communion is a special meal we celebrate when we worship together. The bread and wine become for us the body and blood of Christ through the proclamation of God's promise of mercy. While this is normally practiced in a public service of worship with the assembled congregation, in these days of the Coronavirus pandemic, such gatherings are not possible. Fasting from Holy Communion until we are able to worship together is one faithful response. Another faithful response would be to celebrate this meal at home.

As Lutherans, we remember that Martin Luther provided the Small Catechism with the understanding that the home is the first church and the heads of the household also serve as a teacher of the faith. With that in mind, we believe that it would be appropriate, during this time, for families to celebrate holy communion together in their homes.

This brief liturgy is designed for this use in the home using Zoom, where the Pastor will preside over this special meal with those who have received home communion kits. *(These kits are available for pick up in the church office.)* Communion in this way will continue until virus restrictions and precautions have ceased and we are able to joyfully return to our house of worship to celebrate this meal together side by side.

Preparations

When preparing a space for the meal of Holy Communion at home, give thought to creating a worshipful atmosphere. Designate a "sacred space" in your home for this meal. It could be a quiet corner where you reflect each day, or perhaps at your family dinner table where your family gathers for meals and conversation each day.

The communion elements that you have been provided from the church should be prepared prior to the online service. Carefully peel off the seal on the bottom of the cup and remove the bread, then peel off the seal on the top portion of the cup. At the appropriate time in the liturgy you will be instructed to eat and drink.

Light a candle to represent Christ's presence at your table.

Children are encouraged to participate in this experience. Perhaps have some grapes available for them to eat. Also, have a small dish of water on the table near the candle. At a certain point in the liturgy, parents are asked to dip a finger in the water and make a sign of the cross on the child's forehead with the blessing provided. Let your child also do the same for you, giving you a blessing. It is important to welcome their participation and explain to them the meaning of what we are doing.

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

All: And also, with you.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

(A moment for reflection)

All: Gracious God, we confess that we have sinned, by our thoughts, by our words, things we have said and things we chose not to say, by our actions, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not always been kind to others. We are a hopeless people without your love. Forgive us and give us strength to turn from sin and to serve you in newness of life. Amen.

P: By water and the Holy Spirit, God gives us a new birth and life. God's love never runs out. Just as God's love is for you, so is the meal set before us. God forgives us all our sins and strengthens us in all goodness and love.

All: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

P: *Let us pray ...* Ever-loving God, your Son gives himself as living bread for the life of the world. Fill us with such a knowledge of his presence that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life to serve you continually, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

All: Amen

COMMUNION LITANY

P: Responding to the command of our Lord and desiring His life-giving presence, we come to the Supper.

All: The love of God is a gift we do not deserve.

P: Responding to the command of our Lord and desiring the life-giving presence of Christ, we share the body and blood.

All: We come with our wounds and faults, ready and willing to be refreshed with the true presence of Christ among us.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Our Lord, on the night he was betrayed took bread and gave thanks; broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

Those not receiving Communion may receive a blessing. Parents should dip their fingers in the bowl of water and make a sign of the cross on their child's forehead and say the following a blessing:

Leader: You are a child of God and God loves you.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

L: *Let us pray ...* Almighty God, you provide the true bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that we who have received the sacrament of his body and blood may abide in him and he in us, that we may be filled with the power of his endless life, now and forever.

All: Amen.

SENDING

L: Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

DISMISSAL

L: Let us Bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!