

Holy Communion at Home

These are extraordinary times that have resulted in situations the church could have never even imagined. For instance, how do we share in Holy Communion when we cannot have public worship? Mount Olive has addressed this, as well as other congregations, by offering communion during our Sunday Online Worship. We are deeply aware of the exclusivity of this practice. It excludes those who aren't online or feel uncomfortable receiving Holy Communion without the physical presence of the congregation. This is a letter from Bishop Paul that offers another option for Holy Communion at home. Please remember that our Online Worship Communion and the Bishop Paul's option are only to address the present situation until we are able to again hold public worship.

Peace, Pr. Scot

Holy Communion is a special meal we celebrate when we worship. 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, in which the assembled congregation is led by an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament, 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 understand that in a time of emergency, all baptized Christians may be authorized to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Remembering also that Martin Luther provided the Small Catechism with the understanding that the home is the first church and the head of household the first pastor or teacher of the faith, we believe that it would be appropriate, during this time, for families to celebrate holy communion together in their homes.

This liturgy is designed for this use, and it is authorized by Bishop Erickson of the Greater Milwaukee Synod **only** during this unprecedented emergency, during which public worship gatherings are not allowed. Once these restrictions have ceased, we will joyfully return to our houses of worship to celebrate this meal together as the Church.

Preparations

When preparing a space for the meal of Holy Communion, give thought to creating a worshipful atmosphere. Churches often use unleavened bread to recall the Israelites hurried exodus from Egypt, however any bread will do, along with a small cup of wine or grape juice. This liturgy is designed to be led by a designated leader, which can be any individual the assembled group selects. We believe the meal is celebrated after God's Word is heard, so you might read a passage of scripture together and discuss how God is speaking to you in the biblical story, listen to a recorded sermon, or tune into a livestream or radio service before leading this liturgy. Light a candle or two, and you are ready to begin.

Holy Communion Liturgy

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

And also with you.

When our congregation gathered for Holy Communion with all the saints from every time and place, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and the love shown us in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The holy meal of the Lord's supper was shared.

Now we share this word of life, and this bread and cup of blessing, that we may share in these same gifts and be strengthened by the Christian community, even though we gather separately for now.

Let us confess our sins, all that we have done to hurt each other and ourselves, in the presence of God and of one another.

(Pause for a moment of reflection.)

Most merciful God, **We confess that we have messed up. With our words and our hands, we have not been kind to others or to our own selves. We are hopeless without your love. We are afraid of what could happen, and we forget that you are with us all the time to give us peace. We spend the night with worry instead of prayer. Forgive us again and fill us up with your abundant mercy.**

God is rich in mercy and love. No matter how much we fall short every day, God's love never runs out. Just as God's love is for us, so is the meal set before us. We are forgiven and ready to feast at the table, in the name of the one who died to set us free from the power of sin, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus 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. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Communion Distribution

Share the bread with each person, saying,

"The body of Christ, given for you."

Then share the wine or grape juice with each person, saying,

"The blood of Christ, shed for you."

Prayer After Communion

Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send love to conquer fear, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. **Amen.**