

Holy Communion - a Loving Community

Holy Communion Facts:

When you look at the altar, you might notice that it looks a little bit like a big dinner table. Dinner tables are where families and communities eat. Each week we approach the altar to receive Holy Communion. At some of our worship services, we even stand around it like a family gathered around a table.

Communion is for everyone! We are not “crashing” a party or intruding on a private gathering. Communion is a *community* meal!

We receive communion because Jesus invites us. His invitation began long ago with his disciples (Last Supper) and it continues today.

We come as baptized people. In our baptisms we are named children of God. We are Christ’s sisters and brothers, and we are named after him...*Christians*.

Communion brings us together - as *one* body of Christ. When we eat the bread and drink the wine we know that people have been remembering Jesus’ love like this for a very long time. We also know that people all over the world take communion. By eating from one piece of bread and drinking from one cup, we are reminded that we are all part of *one* body of Christ.

We eat bread and drink wine or grape juice that has *not* fallen from heaven but is ordinary bread and wine or grape juice made by real people, like you and me.

Holy Communion is also called “The Sacrament of the Altar” and “The Lord’s Supper” or “Eucharist.”

Watch as the pastor uncovers the bread and wine on the altar, answer the following with your own thoughts:

What shape is the bread? (This shape symbolizes completeness and God’s love, which is complete yet ongoing)

The pastor will pour wine into a cup called a **Chalice**. Why do you think he/she *pours* it?

Our chalices have spouts built into them to help us pour the wine into the individual communion cups. Why don’t we just fill all the little, individual cups instead of pouring each one from a single cup?

The pastor includes some special words and sentences when she/he prays the prayer over the bread and wine. These words are called, “**the Words of Institution.**” They are printed below:

Our Lord Jesus Christ on the night when 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.”

5. The word “institution” means to begin or start something. What was Jesus beginning when he said these words? (Hint: we celebrate this Sacrament during every weekly worship service)