

Communion

Welcome!

The following pages have been provided to give you a simple background of Communion with suggested guidelines on how to administer and devotions to enrich your time.

As a general practice, we highly recommend taking Communion in community with others. At CCF, on the first Sunday of every month we enjoy taking communion together during our Celebration Services and encourage you to participate in those times. However, we do recognize that unforeseen circumstances occur that may cause you to miss this opportunity. Therefore, these pages have been provided so that you may enjoy the blessing of coming to the Lord's Table (Communion) either individually or in your Grace group.

What We Believe

Meaning and Symbolism of Communion:

Communion, sometimes called "The Lord's Supper" or "Eucharist", is a time where Christians identify with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16, 11:20). It is a time where Christians are gathered together to remember the Lord's broken body and His shed blood for all people (Luke 22:19-20). Most importantly, as believers in Christ participating in Communion, we further remember the importance of Christ's death as the payment of for our redemption.

Jesus Christ instituted communion on the eve of His death when He ate the Passover meal with His Disciples (Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). At the Passover meal, bread and wine were served as symbols in remembrance of God's grace and deliverance for the people of God out of Egypt (Exodus 12). Jesus, as the Son of God who embodies grace and deliverance for the people of God, then increased the symbolism of the bread and wine (today many churches, including CCF, use unleavened crackers and grape juice).

The bread symbolizes Christ's body, which was beaten and broken for us as He was crucified for the sins of humanity (John 3:16-17). The juice or wine symbolizes the blood of Jesus that was shed for us as He paid for our sins (John 10:17-18; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:8-9).

At CCF, we believe that Christ, according to His promise, is really present in the sacrament. However, His body is given, taken, and eaten only in a heavenly and spiritual manner. No change is effected in the element; the bread and wine are not literally the body and blood of Christ nor is the body and blood of Christ literally present with the elements. The elements are never to be considered objects of worship. The body of Christ is received and eaten in faith. We recognize that for some, this view of the elements is not true of the tradition you may hold. In our desire to honor you, any of the Pastors would love to dialogue with you further so that we might not hinder one another in growing in Christ around the Communion Table. Our foundational default is that we want Christ to be *present* with us every time we remember Him.

Essentials for participating in Communion:

Jesus commanded His disciples to observe communion (Matthew 26:26); therefore, anyone who participates in the "Lord's Supper" must first place their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (see how to accept Christ). Secondly, it is important that we prepare our hearts before participating in communion (1 Corinthians 11:27) as we recognize it is a holy encounter with the Lord. Therefore, an examination of the heart for any unconfessed sin is an important part of your preparation (1 Corinthians 11:28; 1 John 1:9).

Communion is a time for reflective worship which should include the following:

- 1) **A remembrance:** Give yourself an opportunity to reflect back on the Lord's death on the cross. His death was not only for our atonement but also substitutionary. It was substitutional in that Jesus died in our place so that we might live. He truly did take our sins upon Himself so that we could receive His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- 2) **A redeclaration:** A reminder to yourself and to others of your personal faith and testimony in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life.
- 3) **A reflection:** A time to look at your current walk in Christ and to ask God for hope, healing, encouragement, forgiveness, and joy. What a great opportunity to thank God for the privilege of being His child.
- 4) **A relationship:** When we participate at the communion table with Christ's body, we are reminded that we are part of the greater body of Christ that we get to enjoy. The communion table reflects a place of unity for His children and an answer to His prayer (John 17).
- 5) **A reminder:** Communion not only allows us to look back and present but also forward. Every time we are at the table, we have an opportunity to be reminded that Jesus is coming again. The Apostle Paul said we're to "Proclaim the Lord's death until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:26). Communion foreshadows the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelations 19).

In His Grace, may the Lord richly bless you as you enjoy your time at the Communion table either personally or corporately and may we continue to look forward to a time where we all sit together at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Pastor Fraser

Suggested guidelines

Personal Communion:

1. Find a quiet place (a place becomes Holy because God is with you).
2. Prepare the elements.
3. Take your time!
 - a. Options (start with prayer, worship, giving thanks).
4. Listen to one of the devotions from our Communion Services.
5. Read the gospel accounts (Mark 14; Luke 22; Matthew 26).
 - a. Ask yourself what it would have been like to have been there. (John 13-14)
6. Read the apostle Paul's instructions (1 Corinthians 11)
7. Read aloud: "Take it; this is my body"
 - a. Take the cracker or bread and be reminded of what Christ has done (see ideas from Essentials for Participating in Communion section).
 - i. Reflect on the following:
 1. What places are broken or bruised in your life?
 2. Ask for His compassion and insight for those areas.
 3. Thank Him for taking those afflictions on your behalf.
8. Read aloud: "This is my blood of my covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many."
 - a. Take the juice and be reminded of how Jesus has cleansed you, healed you, and saved you.
 - b. Hebrews 8-10 are great reflection chapters on what the blood of Christ has done and is doing on your behalf.
9. Sing or read a Psalm that is meaningful to you (start with Psalm 23 or Psalm 100 if you are unsure.)
10. Finish with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Grace Group Communion:

1. The Personal Communion could always be adjusted to include others by others reading the scripture, prayer, or worship out loud.
2. Below is a suggested liturgy if you are looking for a starting place with your Grace Group.
 - a. **The Invitation:**
 - i. *Read by Grace Group Leader:* Welcome, to all those here. Today we have an opportunity to participate in communion together. We recognize that the grace of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of our sins is the invitation to His table. The communion table is reserved for those who have made a declaration by faith that Jesus is the Savior and Lord of their life. If you are here and have not made that step we would welcome you to make that decision right now because

we, and most importantly God, want to invite you to the wonderful life of walking with Jesus by faith. Is that anyone here? (Pause for response)

b. The Confession:

- i. Prayer read by member:* Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, righteous judge, we confess that we have all fallen short of the glory of God. We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge that we are hopeless without Your grace. Have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of Your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for us. Forgive us. Cleanse us. Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life and to honor and praise Your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- ii. Prayer by whole group:* Matthew 6:9-13 [9] "This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, [10] your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. [11] Give us today our daily bread. [12] Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

c. The Affirmation of Faith and Thanksgiving

- i. Prayer by member:* O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who with great mercy has promised forgiveness to all who turn to You with hearty repentance and true faith, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins, make us strong and faithful in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- ii. Grace Group Leader reads aloud:* At all times and in all places, it is always right and proper that we should give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.
- iii. Grace group together prays:* Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts! Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Glory to you O Lord most high. Amen.

**Suggestion: Read a Psalm together

d. Prayer for Communion:

- i. Grace Group member or leader prays:* Lord, we do not come to Your table with self confidence and pride, trusting in our own righteousness, but we trust in Your great and many mercies. You, O Lord, are unchanging in Your mercy and Your nature is love. Grant us, therefore, God of mercy, God of grace, the ability to eat this communion in spirit and in truth. As we partake at this table may we remember the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of His shed blood, so that we may live and grow in His likeness, and, being washed and cleansed through His most precious blood, we may evermore live in Him and He in us. Amen.

ii. Grace Group Leader prayer for the elements:

1. Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by His sacrifice, offered once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient

atonement for the sins of the whole world. We come now to Your table in obedience to Your Son, Jesus Christ, who in His holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of His precious death until He comes again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we, receiving this bread and this cup, as He commanded and in the memory of His passion and death, may partake of His most blessed body and blood.

e. Gospel Reading:

- i.* Choose a member to read one of the Gospel Accounts of Communion

f. Taking of Communion:

- i.* Grace Group Leader states: "In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, (take the bread in his/her hand.) and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples,

1. At this time you can pass the bread or the Grace group leader can serve each member.

- ii.* *Grace Group Leader states:* "Jesus said, 'Take; eat. This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"

1. *The Leader might say,* "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you so that you may have everlasting life."

2. At this time eat the bread.

- iii.* *Grace Group Leader states:* "In a like manner, after supper He took the cup, (hold up the cups or cup) and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." Amen.

1. At this time, you can pass the cups or the Grace group leader can serve each member.

2. After all have been served, state "Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful."

g. Prayer or sharing of thanksgiving:

- i.* Have group members each take a moment to share or to pray.

h. The Benediction:

- i.* Grace Group Leader: "May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen."