



The Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top

9 Chestnut Street, Mountain Top, Pennsylvania 18707
pbychmt@verizon.net • 570-474-9951 • pbychmt.org



Members and Friends of The Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top

Re: **An Invitation to Online Communion**

Dear Members and Friends,

This Sunday, during our worship service, we will be celebrating online communion as a congregation, joining those who are attending online and those attending in person worship. Celebrating at the Lord's Table together is a time we are united with the global church, affirming of our baptismal vows, and receiving the invitation extended to us by Jesus Christ. A significant part of celebrating communion is the preparation of space. Our Directory of Worship says, "Space for Christian worship should include a place for the reading and proclaiming of the Word, a font or pool for Baptism, and a table for the Lord's Supper." All of these are present in our sanctuary.

For the Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top's participation in online communion, the Session and I encourage you to engage in the following intentional practices of remembering your baptism, setting up your space, reading the Word, and what online communion will entail.

- **Remember Your Baptism:** At 10:45am, go and wash your hands, remembering your baptism. As we gather at the Table, we are reminded of our baptismal promises, so participating in a hand washing—something that we all do, reminds us that God continually transforms the ordinary into the sacred.
- **Cultivate Your Space:** Set up your communion space in a way that reflects your understanding of partaking in this meal. Perhaps it will mean putting a colorful scarf over a coffee table, perhaps spreading out a blanket on the floor, or putting a piece of paper on a tray table and writing out words and phrases you want to be reminded of while partaking of communion.
- **Prepare Yourself:** Just as you took time to remember your baptism, intentionally spend time in the Word. Read over the scripture passages outlined in the church bulletin for the worship service in advance, as a way to prepare your heart for the service of worship as well as the Lord's Supper.
- **Prepare Your Elements:** Select a cup, plate and elements that represent your household. The Directory of Worship states: "*The bread used for the Lord's Supper should be common to the culture of the congregation*" (*Book of Order W3.0413*). This might look like anything from goldfish and apple juice to crackers and wine! I encourage you to use the elements in your own spaces. You do not need to purchase the exact bread and drink used in communion at our church.

Some possibilities for bread:

any kind of bread
crackers
pita or nan
chips
tortilla

Some possibilities for beverage:

grape juice
any other type of juice
wine
water

- **Taking the Lord's Supper:** As usually occurs within worship, I will speak the **Invitation to the Lord's Table, The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, and Words of Institution**. Once the Words of Institution are spoken, I will extend the invitation for all to take their bread and we'll eat it together, and then for everyone to drink from the cup together. Doing this at the same time together, we show our oneness in Jesus Christ, by taking the elements of communion together as a community of faith. To conclude, as we usually do together in worship, we will together read the **Prayer After Communion** from the bulletin.
- **Conclusion of Worship:** The Directory of Worship states, "*At the conclusion of the Service for the Lord's Day, the bread and cup are to be removed from the table and used or disposed of in a manner approved by the session, in keeping with the Reformed understanding of the Sacrament and principles of good stewardship. This may be accomplished by consuming what remains or returning the elements to the earth.*" (Book of Order W3.0414). I encourage you to eat and drink the remainder of the bread and cup elements as being good stewards of the earth. If you prefer not to consume them, then be intentional in how you return the elements to the earth.

I hope that you will find these steps meaningful and helpful as we join online in the Lord's Supper. For some, this may feel awkward, so know it is your individual decision to participate in this manner. If you do not feel comfortable, you may abstain from online communion. This is the Lord's Table, and our Savior invites all who believe and trust in him to share in this sacrament.

Jesus Christ meets us at the table by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the power and meaning of this sacrament is not limited only to participating physically together. COVID-19 brought to us extenuating circumstances and challenges to our past ways of being the church, which includes the celebration of the Lord's Supper. I believe that God, who is always constant and present, is using the difficult and challenging times in the life of our church to help us expand our faith and see and experience God in new ways.

God's peace,

Lory D. Ryan

Rev. Lory D. Ryan, Pastor

cc: Dr. Susan Malkemes, Clerk of Session