

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

spirit & life

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE TIME OF
COVID-19

**Provided to the people of the Northwest
Intermountain Synod, ELCA**

by Rev. Kristen E.M. Kuempel, Bishop

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COMMUNION LITURGY ADAPTED FROM HYMNAL &
PASTORAL CARE RESOURCES FROM AUGSBURG FORTRESS

COMMUNION BREAD RECIPE PROVIDED BY LUTHER
SEMINARY, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
WWW.LUTHERSEM.EDU

THE PURPOSE OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Sacrament of the Lord's Table was instituted by Christ himself in "the night in which he was betrayed". It holds a central place in the Lutheran tradition, being one of only two sacraments recognized by the Lutheran faith: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In his Large Catechism, Martin Luther writes, "*...the Lord's Supper is given as...sustenance so that our faith may be refreshed and strengthened and that it may...become stronger and stronger.*"



In the church, we come to the Lord's table to be reminded of our identity as forgiven, beloved Children of God.

Under normal circumstances, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated within the context of our corporate worship services. However, with the development of the COVID-19 virus and resulting suspension of any circumstances that can be considered "normal", we find ourselves seeking different avenues to receive the benefits that the Sacrament provides God's people.

For many centuries, faith formation took place in the home, around the dining room table. Sunday school as we know it really didn't come into existence until the early part of the 20th century, an act which effectively put the accountability of teaching children the faith in the hands of the church and removed it from the home--where Martin Luther believed it rightly belonged.

In Luther's mind, education would also take place through sermons, but would function only to supplement the education that was happening at home.

For that reason, the act of moving the Sacrament into the home when the Church is living in extreme circumstances fits well with our earliest faith traditions.





CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION IN THE HOME

*The following recommendations are provided as a way to set aside a deliberate, sacred space in which to celebrate the sacrament. **Please make sure you have read through these guidelines prior to celebrating the Lord's Supper!***

FIRST THINGS

- *Establish a time to celebrate Communion. This may be as part of a recorded or live-streamed worship service led by your pastor, or it may be a separate event.
- *Because sacraments are always paired with the Word of God, plan to have a brief reading of scripture prior to speaking the Words of Institution if the Sacrament is taking place outside a streamed or recorded worship service.
- *While this is a deeply holy event, it is an event that has been established BY God FOR the people of God. If you stumble over the words, or make a mistake: don't worry! Correct yourself and continue with the service.
- *Because we trust that God has given us the gift of Holy Communion for our benefit, we also trust that the benefit will be given to us outside of our abilities to preside over the sacrament perfectly.
- *Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Table is not intended to take the place of celebrating the Sacrament in congregational worship. This guide is intended to be used to provide the comfort of the Sacrament to God's people in extraordinary times. When we are able to safely gather for worship together again, it is expected that you and your family will receive the Sacrament within the boundaries of our corporate worship service.

FIRST THINGS (CONT.)

*Those who preside over the Sacrament and those who receive it are to have been baptized, as this is a meal for the baptized Children of God. There are no restrictions on presiding over the Sacrament based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race, or ethnicity. If there is someone among you who is not baptized, but would like to participate in the Sacrament, they are welcome to come to the table for a blessing until such time as a baptism can be arranged. Such a blessing could be "May the love of Jesus bless and keep you."

*Be mindful to consecrate only the amount of bread & wine that you will consume in the course of the Sacrament. Any leftover bread or wine must be consumed either by the family, or the wine can be returned to the earth and the bread used to feed God's creation. Any remaining bread or wine is NOT to be thrown away, or saved for a later celebration of the Sacrament.

*If you have children: include them in the Sacrament as much as they are able. Let them hold the bread while the Words of Institution are being spoken. Let them give communion to family members. Additionally, providing the child is baptized, there is no reason the child can't also partake of the Sacrament if the child wants to and the parents/guardians are in agreement.

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SIN



SETTING THE LORD'S TABLE

*Clear a table to serve as a home altar. This could be a kitchen table, an end table in your living room, a kitchen island, or even a television tray.

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Clean the surface of any dust or crumbs. If you have an icon or table cross, you can place these on the table as well. Flowers, if available, are also acceptable--however, the most important things to have on the table are the bread and the wine.

*Light a candle to place on the table, much like the altar at church may have candles. This light symbolizes the presence of God among God's people.

*If you like, place a bowl of water on the table as well, to represent the Sacrament of Baptism. You can make the sign of the cross on your forehead with the water before you receive the bread and the wine.

*Set the table with the communion elements. While a recipe for bread is included in this booklet, any bread you have on hand will suffice. Crackers are also acceptable, particularly for those with a gluten intolerance. This can be placed on any sort of plate you have available.

*Likewise, any sort of wine or grape juice will be appropriate for celebration of the Sacrament. If you do not have wine or grape juice, you can simply celebrate the Sacrament with bread until you are able to get wine or juice.



communion bread

FROM LUTHER SEMINARY

(This recipe yields 4 loaves. The bread freezes well.)

Sift dry ingredients together three times (important!):

2 c whole wheat flour

1 c white flour

1 & 1/4 tsp baking powder

1 & 1/4 tsp salt

Stir in 4tsp oil. Set aside.

Mix wet ingredients together until dissolved:

3/4 cup + 2 Tbsp very hot water (minimum
of 180 degrees F)

3 Tbsp honey

3 Tbsp molasses

Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix well. Dough should be slightly sticky. Do not knead. Divide into four balls and flatten each into a 1/4 inch thick disk.

With a knife, score the top of each loaf into eight pie-shaped sections, so that the sections can be more easily broken off while serving. Alternatively, you could score a cross onto the loaf.

Lay the loaves on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and brush the tops of the loaves with oil. Bake an additional 5-8 minutes. Let cool.



HOLY COMMUNION LITURGY

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

FAMILY: And also with you.

LEADER: 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 a time.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

LEADER: 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.)

EVERYONE: 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, so 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.

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

EVERYONE: Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LEADER: 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.

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.

OR

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. 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." For those people who do not yet receive Communion, you can offer a simple blessing, "The love of Jesus surround you always."

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

LEADER: The body & blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

EVERYONE: Amen!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

LEADER: Life-giving God,

EVERYONE: in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people and free us from fear. 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.

