

Instructions for Holy Communion at Home during Time of Quarantine and Stay-at-Home Orders

Background:

In Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and 1 Corinthians 11, we hear Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper, also known as The Sacrament of the Altar, Holy Communion, or the Eucharist. Jesus instituted this on the night before his death – what Christians today call Maundy Thursday.

When we join together in Holy Communion in worship, we hear the “Words of Institution” – the words that tell the story of the institution of the sacrament. These words pull together these four different accounts.

Generally, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is held within the gathered assembly of believers. We join together in this meal each Sunday when we are in person because it centers our focus on Christ, and because the Sacrament of Holy Communion works these promises: the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Partaking of the Sacrament also is comforting to the soul, connecting self to the past and future.

At this time, we are limited in our ability to gather together to join in this Sacrament. And yet the power of God to forgive sins, give life, and bestow salvation are not limited.

As Lutherans, we believe that a sacrament has three parts: a physical object, God's Word, and God's Command to “do this”. In Communion, the physical elements are bread and wine (or grape juice). The gathered believers, wherever they are, joining together in the promise of Jesus and in worship of the Triune God, receive these promises through the sacrament.

As Lutherans, we also believe that the pastors are not more special than anyone else; rather the pastoral office of Word and Sacrament (preaching and teaching; Communion and Baptism) are entrusted to certain individuals so that right order may be maintained in the congregation. In times of emergency, pastors are entrusted to continue caring for people; one of the ways we can do that is that for a time we entrust the sharing of the Sacrament of Holy Communion within the home, since that is the only gathering of Christians we are able to have at this time.

You are invited to partake of Holy Communion in your home; if you live alone, Christ is present with you. If you live with others, invite them to partake with you. If you do not wish to take Communion until we are gathered back together as a body of believers, physically present with each other, that is fine as well. We trust that Christ is present with us through the Word, through worship, and the community we can find at this time.

For Holy Communion, you will need the words below, and bread (or another grain-based food), and wine (or grape juice). If you don't have these items, anything you do have available will be fine.

What to say (The 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.”

(The Words of Distribution)

Taking the bread, say to the person you are Communing:

The body of Christ, given for you.

Then, taking the wine or juice, say to the person you are Communing:

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Once everyone has Communed, one person will say the blessing:

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bless you and keep you always in God's grace. Amen.