



## Q&A about Communion

By Pastor Darren

### How will we celebrate communion?

For the next few months I will not serve communion in our regular worship service, but I will bring communion to homes and serve using safe practices on the first Mondays of the month (see below).

When Governor Holcomb and the CDC issue updated information indicating that COVID-19 is more controlled, we will transition back to communion in our regular worship service on the first Sunday of the month, but with enhanced safety features. However, we cannot provide a date when that transition will occur. Even when we move back to corporate communion, home communion will continue to be offered.

American Methodism has a long history of quarterly communion which provides a precedence for this temporary suspension of its celebration in our regular worship. This is not ideal, but it is a practical balance between the physical and spiritual well-being of our congregation.

### Why do communion at all?

Communion is a sacrament and a sacrament is a visible sign of grace that Jesus began in his ministry and commanded his followers to observe. Jesus calls us to observe communion as a meal:

- that remembers his death,
- that nourishes us with his Spirit,
- that practices his hope, and
- that makes us his church.

When we take communion we become the body of Christ united by his Spirit and we practice his love by sharing with one another. (Read Matthew 26:26-29, Luke 24:13-31 and I Corinthians 11:17-34.) For more about our beliefs, read ["This Holy Mystery,"](#) the official teachings of the United Methodist Church that General Conference adopted in 2004.

### How can I schedule Pastor Darren to bring communion to me?

Please contact my assistant, Nancy Fykes, at [nfykes@northchurchindy.com](mailto:nfykes@northchurchindy.com) to set a time on the first Monday of the month and arrange for it to be done in a safe manner. Please let her know how many will be receiving it in your household.

### **Will it be safe?**

Yes. Every measure will be taken to ensure your safety. The elements come prewrapped and self-contained. Thursday night they will be consecrated on the communion table in a tray. I will bring them to your porch and then stand at a safe distance while the recipient takes them. Then I will offer a blessing. If additional or different measures need to be taken, please let me know. Please be prepared to wipe the sealed elements prior to opening them.



### **What is 'virtual communion' and why not do it?**

"Virtual communion" or "online communion" is when persons have their own communion elements in their home and the pastor blesses them online (either through live streaming or as a recording), and the participants serve themselves.

While you will hear of some United Methodists doing this (including some bishops), the official teachings of the denomination discourage this practice. Why?

Communion is one of several "means of grace." A means of grace is a ritual or spiritual practice through which we experience the Holy Spirit. Several means of grace can be experienced fully through social media and online conferencing, such as our Wednesday Bible studies and our regular Sunday 11 a.m. service.

But there is something unique about communion being taken in person with an actual bread and cup. Communion expresses the communal sharing of our faith and it affirms that Christ is present in tangible ways as we share together. Communion, like baptism, is a means of grace when we share it together.

And like baptism, there are extenuating circumstances when we cannot experience it together. This is why the pastor "extends the table" by bringing it to the members who cannot come to church. In such cases the pastor is the representative of the entire congregation to those who are at home, in the hospital, etc. Being the church's representative is one of the purposes of ordination.

### **I have heard of other churches that are taking communion as a drive through or drop in. Why are we not doing it?**

Like virtual communion, these alternative ways of taking communion take away from the communal nature of the sacrament. The sacrament becomes a mirror of our individualistic and consumerist culture rather than a means of the uniting and transforming grace of God. For these reasons the official teachings of the denomination rejected these methods.

Learn more about these issues by reading what United Methodist theologians are saying:  
["What We Can and Cannot Do Through the Internet."](#)

Also, because our congregation does not practice weekly communion, we can wait and do it properly when we are able to come back together in the coming weeks.

Please join me every Sunday at 11 a.m. through our live stream on  
<https://northchurchindy.com/>.

This Holy Mystery: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/this-holy-mystery-a-united-methodist-understanding-of-holy-communion>

What We Can and Cannot Do Through the Internet:  
<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/10207/what-we-can-and-cannot-do-through-the-internet>