

HOLY COMMUNION

Extending Christian Hospitality During **the COVID-19 Crisis**

(This is only to be viewed as temporary.)

The sacrament of holy communion is essential to Christian worship. Because of the pandemic that we are currently facing, and the limitations that it imposes, we are offering an alternative way to share in this means of grace. This virtual communion service is a symbolic way of allowing the body of Christ to share in the Lord's Supper. This will allow people of your congregation and online community to participate in Holy Communion from their homes as you lead online worship. This, however, is not a license to continue this practice when life returns to normal. Within our Wesleyan heritage, we must remember the place of Elders, Deacons and Local Pastors licensed for sacerdotal (priestly) ministries.

Specific Guidelines for the Practice for Online Communion:

(It is the position of this Bishop, that this privilege is for a season and that there will be a return to traditional practices in accordance with our liturgy as soon as possible.)

Instructions for Leading Online Communion

"We believe the Sacraments, ordained by Christ, are symbols and pledges of the Christian's profession and of God's love toward us. They are means of grace by which God works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening and confirming our faith in him."

"We believe the Lord's Supper is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another. Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until he comes." *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, Paragraph 104: Article VI – The Sacraments, pages 73-74.*

With this in mind, people of your congregation and online community may participate in Holy Communion from their homes as you lead online worship.

Scriptural setting -

Holy Communion is celebrated in the context of worship. When you worship online, you are part of the context. When a Scriptural context has not been presented, read one of the following Scriptures, (*Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29*), along with the following directives:

1. Pastors are encouraged to lead the liturgy. You, as the pastor, should take the lead. Online Holy Communion is still a community act of worship best led by Clergy.
2. Use the Communion Liturgy of Service of Word and Table found in The United Methodist Hymnal, or the United Methodist Book of Worship.

The Confession and Pardon, as well as the consecration of the bread and the cup provides the opportunity for the whole community to participate in the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please be sure to consecrate the elements prior to using.

3. Grape juice is preferable. (encourage online participants to have enough available for those worshipping in their location). If they do not have grape juice, use your best judgment in

recommending a suitable “fruit of the vine” replacement. The main point is to participate in the body and blood of Christ.

4. Bread or crackers (have enough available for those worshipping in your location).
5. As with each pastor and local church, there are numerous expressions of presenting and receiving the bread and the cup, Christ’s broken body and shed blood. Individual cups are encouraged but intinction may be practiced in individual home settings.
6. Be sure to close the Communion Service with prayer. If the Lord’s Prayer has not already been incorporated in the service, it can be used as a close to the communion time.
7. Share your experience(s) of encountering the presence of Christ during this sacrament. Sharing your experience helps all of us learn, grow and find new ways of being in relationship as the body of Christ.

Resources:

The Holy Bible

The United Methodist Hymnal

Bishop Tracey Smith-Malone, East Ohio

Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, West Ohio