**FOR THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO CELEBRATE THE LORD’S SUPPER WITH YOUR FAMILY AT HOME.**

A few comments before getting into the “how to” of Home Church Holy Communion.

1. The Lord himself did not specify how many times “often” meant. Throughout church history congregations have celebrated the Lord’s Supper in a variety of ways. One tradition was to have communion 4 times a year, other traditions had communion once per month or twice per month.

Some congregations enjoy the Lord’s Supper weekly. However many times a year a congregation celebrates the Lord’s Supper is neither commanded or forbidden, except that it be done “often.”

That our congregation cannot celebrate Holy Communion together is a great sadness. It will be a great joy to be together and experience our fellowship once again. However, if you wish to have communion at home, I would like to give you some guidance from the Word of God and my experience as a pastor.

2. Jesus said where 2 or 3 are gathered that He is there with them. It is quite appropriate for your family to celebrate communion together. An ordained pastor is not needed.

Our former head elder gave the example of his small congregation in Nebraska which rarely had a called pastor to serve the church. When it came time for the Words of Institution the WHOLE CONGREGATION spoke the words together. That practice exemplifies the teaching that the people of the congregation are the “Church.” When you have the **Word of God**, with the **People of God**, doing the **Work of God**, guided by the **Spirit of God** the church is living in a God pleasing manner.

When a congregation calls a pastor to serve, the church does not relinquish its privileges as the **Priesthood Of All Believers**. The pastor typically serves in a public manner, but the members of the Body of Christ are still empowered to do the work of ministry God has called them to do. Hence, any Christian can baptize a person and a clergyman is not absolutely necessary. So too, in the situation we find ourselves in, the individual members and families can exercise their ministry by together receiving the Lord’s Supper at home.

3. There is a built-in bias against small numbers of Christians exercising the ministerial powers because we are so used to large numbers. We often belittle the “2 or 3 gathered in Christ’s name” as somehow of less value than 2 or 3 hundred gathered together. The power of God is not in the number of people but in the efficacy of His Word and Promise – especially, when receiving the forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament.

4. No one should be compelled to go against their conscience in the matter of Home Church Holy Communion. Some of you may feel uncomfortable administering and receiving the Lord’s Supper away from the gathered congregation. Do not go against your conscience. You are free to take communion at home or not.

5. The practice of Home Church Holy Communion is very similar to Shut-in Holy Communion for those unable to leave their home (like we are doing now) or those in nursing homes. Again, the number of people is not the issue but God’s Means of Grace offered in the Lord’s Supper for the forgiveness of sins.

**Necessary Elements for Celebrating the Lord’s Supper**

To celebrate the Lord’s Supper you will need **God’s Word (which we will provide below), bread and wine or grape juice.** When Jesus instated Holy Communion, he was in the midst of celebrating the Passover with His disciples. As such, it can be assumed that the bread would have been unleavened bread and the “fruit of the vine” would have been fermented at that time of year, hence, wine. Christians throughout history have allowed for both leavened and unleavened bread when having Communion. Since the Holy Scripture does not refer to wine but uses the more generic term “fruit of the vine,” both grape juice and wine of any sort have be used as well.

You can designate one person as the Leader but feel free to simply read in unison the Holy Communion Service below. This is a complete Service of Holy Communion. This can be used at a later time. You may omit those sections that have already been part of today’s Maundy Thursday service.

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**But if we confess our sins,**

 **God, who is faithful and just,**

 **will forgive our sins and**

 **cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** (1 John 1:8-9)

Let us confess our sins to God, our Father.

**Forgive my sins, O Lord,**

 **forgive me**

 **the sins of my present and**

 **the sins of my past, the sins of my soul and**

 **the sins of my body; the sins which I have done to please myself, and**

 **the sins I have done to please others.**

 **Forgive me my wanton and idle sins,**

 **forgive me my serious and deliberate sins,**

 **forgive me those sins which I know and those sins which I know not,**

 **the sins which I have so labored to hide from others**

 **that I have hid them from my own memory.**

**Forgive them, O Lord, forgive them all.**

**Of Your great mercy let me be absolved, and**

**of Your bountiful goodness let me be delivered**

 **from the bonds of all that by my frailty I have committed.**

**Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior. Amen.**

Almighty God in his mercy has given his Son to die for you and for his sake forgives you all your sins. As a servant of the Word I announce to you the forgiveness of all your sins

 in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH** *(Based on Colossians 1:13-20)*

**We believe that God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and**

 **brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,**

 **in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

**Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.**

 **For by him all things were created:**

 **things in heaven and on earth,**

 **visible and invisible,**

 **whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;**

 **all things were created by him and for him.**

**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

**And he is the head of the body, the church;**

**he is the beginning and the first born from among the dead,**

 **so that in everything he might have the supremacy.**

**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and**

 **through him to reconcile to himself all things,**

 **whether things on earth or things in heaven,**

 **by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.**

**Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth,

 for you have had mercy on us children of men and

 given your only-begotten Son that

 whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for the redemption you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send your Holy Spirit into our hearts

 that he may establish in us a living faith and

 prepare us joyfully to remember our Redeemer and

 receive Him who comes to us in his body and blood.

Amen.

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father who is in heaven,
 hallowed be Your name,
 Your kingdom come,
 Your 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 Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

**THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed,

took bread, and when He had given thanks,

He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said:

**“Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”**

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and

when He had given thanks,

He gave it to them, saying:

**“Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood,**

**which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.**

**This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”**

Distribute bread to one another saying–

**“Take and eat, this is the true Body of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,**

**given unto death for your sins.”**

Distribute wine to one another saying –

**“Take and drink, this is the true Blood of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,**

**shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.”**

Blessing a non-communing:

**“Child of God, You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit in your Baptism and**

**marked with the cross of Christ forever.”**

Together you may say departing words –

**“May this true Body and true Blood of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,**

**strengthen and preserve you in the one true faith till life everlasting.”**

You may make the sign of the cross and say “Depart in Peace”.

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

We give thanks to You, almighty God,

 that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and

 we implore You

 that of Your mercy

 You would strengthen us through the same

 in faith toward You and

 in fervent love toward one another;

all this we boldly ask through Jesus Christ,

 Your Son, our Lord,

 who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,

 one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace

**Amen.**

**Christian Questions and Their Answers**

**Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament**

After confession and instruction in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the pastor may ask, or Christians may ask themselves these questions:

**1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?**

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

**2. How do you know this?**

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

**3. Are you sorry for your sins?**

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

**4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?**

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Rom. 6:21, 23.

**5. Do you hope to be saved?**

Yes, that is my hope.

**6. In whom then do you trust?**

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

**7. Who is Christ?**

The Son of God, true God and man.

**8. How many Gods are there?**

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?**

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

**10. Did the Father also die for you?**

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.

**11. How do you know this?**

From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

**12. What are the words of institution?**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

**13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?**

Yes, I believe it.

**14. What convinces you to believe this?**

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

**15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?**

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

**16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?**

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

**17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?**

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

**18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?**

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

**19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?**

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

**20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?**

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5.

Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

*Note:* These questions and answers are no child’s play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked.”

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