

THE TABLE EXTENDED: A HOME COMMUNION SERVICE DURING A TIME OF PANDEMIC



INTRODUCTION FROM PASTOR MICHAEL COFFEY

We are living in extraordinary and challenging times as we face the COVID-19 pandemic together. Necessary safety practices have kept us from gathering at the church for worship and sharing holy communion. Many Christians find participation in the Lord's Supper an important part of their spiritual life and strength for the journey of life. I am providing an option with this table communion service for the home for those desiring it during the pandemic.

Normally an ordained minister presides at the table proclaiming God's Word and Christ's blessing with a gathered community. When persons are unable to attend worship with the gathered community, the pastor may send lay ministers to extend Christ's table to the place where the sick and homebound are. In this home communion service, I am authorizing church members in each home to celebrate communion as an extension of our shared table meal of the church, which we are unable to gather around during the pandemic.

Here are a few guidelines to follow when using this home service:

1. This service is offered for use in the home only during the period of the pandemic when we are unable to gather as church for worship. When we resume gathering for worship use of this service in the home should end. During an interim period when some are able to gather and others are not, those who are unable to gather may continue to use this resource.
2. This service is offered to supplement our livestream worship gathering which brings us together as a community even across distance. It may be used at another time or following the livestream service.
3. Our Lutheran church teaching is that the Word and the Meal are shared together. Scripture, reflection, and prayer are essential parts of receiving Christ in the meal. These should be included in the use of this home service. If using this service after the livestream Service of the Word, you may begin with the Meal portion of the service.
4. Our congregation follows the church's historic practice of offering communion to all who are baptized. All baptized persons gathered with you are welcome to partake, regardless of age or church affiliation. Any gathered with you who are not baptized should be welcomed at the table as a sign of Christ's hospitality, and instead of

receiving the bread and wine, may be offered a blessing. All are invited to the journey of faith in Christ that leads to the baptismal font.

5. Everyone gathered at the table is invited to leadership roles. If children are present, they may be encouraged to help lead.
6. Whether using this service with others or alone, you may give thanks for the communion of saints past and present who are part of the body of Christ with us in all times and places, remembering that we are never alone.
7. Bread and wine are normally used for communion. Various kinds of bread, whether leavened or unleavened, gluten or gluten-free, may be used. Various kinds of wine or grape juice may be used. Whatever forms of bread and wine are used, they should reflect the sacredness of the meal.
8. Persons may receive only bread or only wine when communing.

RESOURCES

This service includes the use of the Prayer of the Day from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Scripture readings assigned for each Sunday from the Revised Common Lectionary, and suggested songs. These resources may be helpful in preparing for this service:

1. The weekly Saturday email devotional sent from the church includes the Prayer of the Day, the list of Sunday readings, and suggested prayers of intercession.
2. Our web page called Home Worship Resources includes links to documents with prayers of the day and lectionary readings. <https://www.felcaustin.org/home-worship-resources>
3. The web page also includes a document with suggested songs to use at home that are easy to sing, with links to online recordings for many of the songs.

PREPARATION

Preparation for worship is a helpful and important way to participate meaningfully and prayerfully. You are encouraged to find ways to make your table service time and space meaningful, beautiful, faithful, and prayerful, such as:

- Removing distractions like television and electronic devices, if you aren't using them for worship resources
- Lighting candles
- Placing a cross and other symbols, icons, and artwork on or around the table
- Placing a Bible on the table and using it to read the texts
- Using a meaningful or beautiful cup and plate for the bread and wine
- Playing devotional music in the background
- Making use of silence when it is helpful to prepare, pray, or meditate

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This liturgy may be led by one or led by all.

✠ GATHERING

INVOCATION

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

SONG

A song may be sung if desired.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

For peace in ourselves, for peace in the world,
for unity in the church in all its diversity,
for our congregation and all whom we connect with,
for health and healing, justice and mercy:

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

*The Prayer of the Day is prayed by a leader or by all.
These prayers are found in the worship resources listed above.*

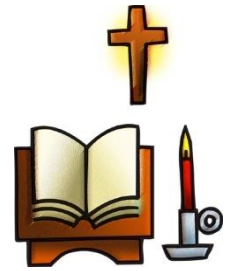
✠ WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

One or more assigned readings from the Sunday lectionary may be read.

The Psalm may be read or sung.

The Gospel reading is always read.



REFLECTIONS

Reflections on the readings and their meanings for our lives today may be shared aloud, meditated on silently, or written down.

SONG

A song may be sung if desired.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Prayers are offered for the church, creation, nations and governments, those in need, our congregation, the local community, joys and concerns of the day, and in remembrance of the saints who have gone before us. If sharing prayers in a group, each intercession may conclude:

**Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.**

PEACE

*The Peace is shared among those gathered as a sign of reconciliation and unity in Christ. For those who are alone, a prayer for peace for others and yourself may be offered, such as:
May the peace of Christ be with me and all who share in this extended table of grace.*

✠ MEAL

OFFERING

*This may be a meaningful time to make your offering using the various electronic giving options available. You can find more information here:
<https://www.felcaustin.org/information/giving>*



OFFERING PRAYER

God of mercy and grace,
the eyes of all wait upon you,
and you open your hand in blessing.
Fill us with good things at your table,
that we may come to the help of all in need,
through Jesus Christ,
our redeemer and Lord. Amen.

TABLE PRAYER

The bread and the wine are placed in the center of the table gathering.

When we gather as church around Christ's table,
now extended here to us gathered at home,
we hear these holy words proclaimed:

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.



LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Grant us peace.

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

Padre nuestro que estás en el cielo,
santificado sea tu nombre.
Venga tu reino.
Hágase tu voluntad
 en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día.
Perdona nuestras ofensas
 como también nosotros
 perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.
No nos dejes caer en tentación
 y líbranos del mal.
Porque tuyo es el reino, tuyo es el poder
 y tuya es la gloria,
 ahora y siempre. Amén

DISTRIBUTION

The bread and wine are shared with all who are communing, using these or similar words:

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*All those who are not communing may be given a word of blessing,
using these or similar words:*

Remember you are a beloved of God always.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, we give you thanks
that you have extended Christ's table here
and set before us this feast,
the body and blood of your Son.
By your Spirit strengthen us to serve all in need
and to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

✠ SENDING

BLESSING

Almighty God bless us,
defend us from all affliction,
and fill us with love for one another and our neighbors
until we gather again in the joy of the Spirit. Amen.

SONG

A song may be sung if desired.

DISMISSAL

The Spirit sends us forth to serve.
Thanks be to God!

HOSPITALITY

Those gathered may continue to enjoy hospitality time together through food and conversation.

This may be a time to contact others who are not gathered with you and share in conversation.