

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER



What does the sacrament of the Lord's Supper mean?

On the day of his resurrection, the risen Christ made himself known to his followers in the breaking of the bread (See, for instance, Luke 24:30-31). In a similar way, Christ makes himself known to us today in the breaking of the bread and in the sharing of the cup. Though it is mysterious, we believe that we experience the presence, grace and power of Jesus Christ in a unique way when we share in this sacrament together. Among other things, in this sacrament, we are reminded that in spite of our sin, we are covered with the grace of God because of the broken body and shed blood of Christ on the cross. When we share together in the bread and cup, God's covenant of grace with us through Christ's sacrifice is, once again, reaffirmed.

Are there other names for this sacrament?

Yes, and each one expresses something different. *Communion* emphasizes what we have in common. In the sacrament we are together not only in our shared faith but also in our common need for Christ's grace and truth in our daily lives. The term *Lord's Supper* reminds us that we share this meal in the memory and Spirit of the risen Christ who so often shared table fellowship with his followers and many others, rich and poor, sinners of all kinds. The name *Eucharist* is an expression which means "good grace." It helps us remember that the sacrament is a precious gift which God has given to his people. As this term is used widely in all sorts of Christian traditions, we are reminded that the sacrament is a celebration which joins together a great diversity of Christians around the world.

Who may receive the Lord's Supper in the Presbyterian Church?

Any baptized child or adult of any Christian church is invited to take part in the Lord's Supper. Those who want to participate in the Lord's Supper, but have not been baptized, should speak with one of our pastors about being baptized. Faith Church practices an "open table," meaning that we do not limit the table to only members

of the Faith community, or to Presbyterians alone, but invite all baptized followers of Jesus Christ to share with us in this sacrament.

At what age should children partake in the Lord's Supper?

There is no "right age" to begin receiving the Lord's Supper. Once again, children should first be baptized. Also, we ask parents to pay attention to when a child begins to express an interest in receiving the sacrament and has demonstrated some ability to do so with an appropriate level of seriousness. Once that happens, parents should take some time to carefully explain to the child, in terms he/she can understand, the meaning of the sacrament. For younger children, it is helpful to continue to remind them of these things each time the sacrament is celebrated, answering their questions along the way. Pastors, by the way, can be helpful along these lines.

How frequently is communion celebrated at Faith?

It is our current practice to celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of every month at both services, weekly on Wednesday evenings during the seasons of Advent (four weeks before Christmas) and Lent (six weeks before Easter), and at other special occasions. We are free, of course, to celebrate the Lord's Supper whenever the community gathers for worship.

Is there any difference between communion that is passed in the pews and communion which we go forward to receive?

No. One method is not better than the other. Here at Faith, it is typically our practice to go forward to receive the Lord's Supper. This method is called intinction. Other congregations have other practices which equally express the full meaning of the sacrament. We do, however, always make a point of bringing the bread and cup to those in the pews who are unable, for whatever reason, to come forward. Please note that those who are homebound for whatever reason are encouraged to contact one of our staff or deacons to arrange home communion on Sundays when it is celebrated.