

Further Risk Reduction Changes to Communion Distribution Practice

First, I want to thank you for adapting along with us as we implement a few changes to our Communion distribution practice, effective this Sunday, December 13, 2020. These changes are a result of the desire to attempt to continue to offer an in-person option for worship in the weeks ahead, if we are able. As Covid-19 numbers rise in the Commonwealth of Virginia and around the country, we are making every effort to reduce risk as much as possible.

During the pandemic we have been receiving Communion one person at a time at the front of the nave. This greatly reduced the level of risk and allowed communicants to come forward to receive, as we are used to in the Lutheran tradition. However, we are now taking the further step of shifting to a pre-packaged Communion cup that contains both the bread and the wine. We will use a method of consecration that is familiar to many Baptists and Presbyterians but may seem unusual to us at first. These steps are temporary risk reduction measures because of the pandemic.

So, what are these steps? Social distancing, and facemasks that cover mouth and nose are still necessary as we enter the building and while we are inside. As you enter the sanctuary, please begin by sanitizing your hands at the folding tables. Then select one of the Communion cups from the table and take it with you to your seat. At the time of Holy Communion, everyone will remain in the pews at their seats, and will be invited to hold their cups up. I will consecrate them together at the same time using the Words of Institution as we normally would. As always, we trust Jesus to show up because he is our Lord and this is his Supper and he promises that he does show up. He is both the host and the meal.

One advantage to remaining in the pews is that anyone who desires to kneel may do so at this time, using the kneelers at their seat. After the Words of Institution, we will hear the first verse of a hymn for meditation as we prepare to partake of the bread and wine. I will then lead us in partaking of each Communion element with the familiar words, "This is the body of Christ given for you." Then we will remove the wrap from the bread side of our little cups, and eat together. Then we will turn over our cups to prepare to drink, and I will say "This is the blood of Christ shed for you." There will be another verse of the hymn for mediation after we have partaken. The service will then continue as normal. After worship, please dispose of used cups as you exit by depositing them in the waste receptacles that have been moved to the back of the sanctuary, under the folding tables by the doors.

Thank you for your flexibility, patience, and understanding as we continue to adapt to the circumstances that we find ourselves in during these days. We look forward to the day when such risk reduction measures are no longer needed.

The Lord bless you with Advent hopefulness as we wait and watch for Christ's coming!

Pastor Chris