

You Are Welcome at The Lord's Table

At St. John's United Church of Christ, the Communion Table is "open to all Christians (baptized persons) who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people." (Book of Worship UCC). Please know that we welcome you to join us in this sacrament! Some visitors from churches which believe communion should only be celebrated among Christians who are in full doctrinal agreement might not choose to participate. We respect their decision.

The origin of Communion

The record of Jesus beginning what Christians call Communion, the Lord's Supper or Eucharist is recorded in Scripture:

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:12-26 Luke 22:7-38

1 Corinthians 11:17-33

Eating the bread and wine recalls the table fellowship Jesus shared with his disciples, and in particular the Last Supper on the night before his death as well as his appearances to the disciples during meals following his resurrection (Luke 24:13-35). Throughout its history these Biblical events have been central to the Church's worship life.

Communion Renews What Baptism Begins	
Baptism	Communion
Participation in Christ's Death <i>Romans 6:3-4</i>	Participation in Christ's Death <i>1 Corinthians 10:16</i>
Receiving the forgiveness of sins <i>Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 6:11</i>	Commemorating the forgiveness of sins <i>1 Corinthians 11:24-25; Matthew 26:28</i>
Receiving the Holy Spirit <i>Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:13</i>	Celebrates Christ's Abiding Presence <i>John 6:56</i>
Initiation into the Body of Christ <i>1 Corinthians 12:13</i>	Shows the unity of the Body of Christ <i>1 Corinthians 10:17</i>

The meaning of Communion

Jesus himself told us what eating the bread and drinking from the cup means. "This is my body broken for you." Referring to the cup, Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Paul adds that taking communion is a remembrance and proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus until he returns. (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Communion is also a renewal of God's activity in our lives through our baptism, as the table above explains.

The United Church of Christ Book of Worship reminds us that "the invitation and the call [to the supper] celebrate not only the memory of a meal that is past, but an actual meal with the risen Christ that is a foretaste

of the heavenly banquet at which Christ will preside at the end of history." Communion is:

- ✘ a joyous act of thanksgiving for all God has done, is doing, and will do in redeeming of creation;
- ✘ a sacred memorial of the crucified and risen Christ, a living and effective sign of Christ's sacrifice in which Christ is truly present to those who partake
- ✘ an earnest prayer for the presence of the Holy Spirit to unite those who partake with the Risen Christ and with each other, and to restore creation
- ✘ an intimate experience of fellowship in which the whole church in every time and place is present and divisions are overcome;

- ✘ a hopeful sign of the promised Realm of God and return of Christ

What do the bread and wine mean?

The broken bread and poured wine represent—present anew—the crucified and risen Christ. The wheat gathered to bake one loaf and the grapes pressed to make one cup remind the gathered participants that they are one body in Christ, while the breaking and pouring announce the costliness of Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin. St. John's uses grape juice routinely, and offers gluten-free bread upon request.

What words are used?

Many liturgies from the UCC Book of Worship, The New Century Hymnal, ecumenical and global sources are used here. At the heart of the rite are Jesus' unchanging words about the bread and the cup found in Scripture.

How is Communion served?

St. John's United Church of Christ serves communion in two ways. Sometimes the bread and juice are passed in the pews; we eat the bread and drink the cup as we receive it. Most often we go to the front of the sanctuary to receive communion; we

receive the bread and dip it in the cup, eating it immediately. The pastor presides at the Table, normally assisted by altar servers/ acolytes, and lay people .

What about children?

While practices vary within the United Church of Christ, at St. John's, children are welcomed to the Table at their parents' discretion provided they have a basic understanding of the sacrament's meaning. The Pastor is available to assist parents in teaching their children about communion.

How often is Communion served?

St. John's United Church of Christ serves Communion on the first Sunday of every liturgical season as well as special worship services. A schedule is posted in the church building and on our web site.

In the early church Communion was served each time the believers met to worship, a practice continued and encouraged by the Protestant Reformers. Gradually the frequency of communion decreased in many Protestant churches. This United Church of Christ is trending to weekly communion.

Welcome To Christ's Table

at

St. John's
United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. William M. Lyons
Pastor