

Detailed Instructions and Thoughts for **Digital At-Home Communion**

In this time of disconnection and isolation, we will do what we can to create connection – even in the digital space! To that end, we will share communion together through our digital worship! Though it feels weird – it definitely does to me – we can create a space and time to share the sacrament and, hopefully, a real connection to one another.

Read on for explanations and instructions on how – and why – we will share the sacrament in the digital space. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call or email me (gracepastor@gpcf.org) so I can help you find answers.

Preparing the Elements

As Presbyterians, we believe the elements remain as bread and juice/wine. When we share communion together, even though I say special words over the elements, they do not change in substance. Instead, the Holy Spirit enters them – and us – mysteriously.

We believe the Holy Spirit can enter elements in any time and space, not just in the same physical space I say the special words in; our God is more powerful than our human buildings and human institutions. With that in mind – and after a lot of prayer – we recommend you gather the elements yourselves from what you have at home and what you can safely buy in the store. As we partake together, we know the Holy Spirit joins us and believe this serves as an appropriate way to share the sacrament and connection in this unique time while remaining safe.

What are the Recommended Elements?

In helping you know how to gather the elements, our Book of Order provides guidance for the bread – “[t]he bread used for the Lord’s Supper should be common to the culture of the congregation...” (W-3.04013) – and the old Book of Common Worship for the juice/wine – “...wine or unfermented grape juice...” (p. 43). In plain English, we recommend delicious bread and red grape juice/wine, having a sizable bite of bread and significant swallow or two worth of juice/wine in an individual glass/cup

for each person who will partake. A shot glass – without logo – would be a perfect vessel for this (even if it feels a bit weird).

What are the Acceptable Elements?

As the Session discussed, acquiring special elements – especially elements you do not regularly keep in your homes – may create undue risk for you and be wasteful if you only consume what you use for communion. With that in mind, we have some suggestions for acceptable alternatives:

For Bread: Something bread like (tortillas and crackers come to mind). It should be delicious, but it should not be desert like (donuts, cookies, muffins, etc.). Cake is not bread.

For Juice/Wine: Optimally, it will be a red juice that you enjoy and has a tartness to it or White Grape Juice or White Wine. If red juice is not available, 100% juice of any kind would be acceptable. If you cannot reasonably acquire any of those options, please use water over other drink substances. Water is life-giving; Pepsi and Kool-Aide are not.

For both elements, you should enjoy whatever you choose within these parameters. Communion serves as a delicious foretaste of what is to come; disgusting elements do not serve that purpose.

Partaking of Communion Online

Spiritual Matters

Though we forget to say this, we should remind ourselves of the spiritual preparation one must make before partaking in the meal:

Worshippers prepare themselves to celebrate the Lord's Supper by putting their trust in Christ, confessing their sin, and seeking reconciliation with God and one another. Even those who doubt may come to the table in order to be assured of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ. (W-3.0409)

The service prepared will have confession within it, and hopefully will help you to seek the reconciliation with God we pray for – especially in this time of Lent. Pray on and contemplate the meaning of the sacrament, the meaning of community, and your place in the reconciling Body of Christ before the service on Sunday.

And know, no matter how this goes, we have a gracious and loving God. God loves you; this sacrament will neither condemn nor save you. Christ has already saved you; this just gives you a foretaste of what is to come.

Practical Matters

We hope as many people as possible can use Zoom with webcam during our communion service. We will share the Zoom screen with everyone visible while we partake. If you cannot join in this way, do not worry; we welcome to partake of the sacrament, no matter how you connect to the service.

Have your elements with you before the communion service has started, or better, as the service begins. Having them for the entirety of the communion liturgy will make it a more meaningful experience – and you will not need to rush to get them right before we partake and possibly miss the joint experience.

When you partake, we will partake of both the bread and the cup as a community, first the bread and then the cup. I will instruct you over video of when to partake.

After the sacrament, if you have any remaining elements, dispose of them appropriately. Consuming them is most appropriate, but you may also consider returning them to the Earth.

Please try to partake during the livestream. If you cannot, we welcome you to participate later with the recording of the service and encourage you to video chat or call another person to share the communion together. Deacons and Elders of Grace and Pastor Rob will joyfully partake with you if you schedule with them.