



Holy Communion Guide

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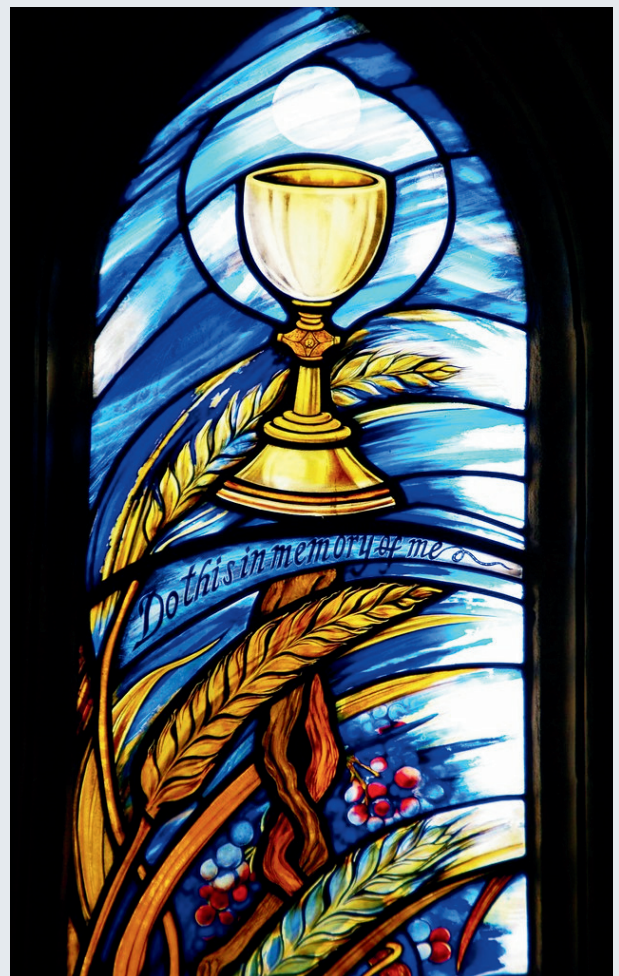
Our Holy Communion Service: A simple guide for anyone new to church

Welcome. We are so glad
you are here.

Holy Communion is also called the Eucharist, which means thanksgiving. In this service we gather to worship God, listen to the Bible, pray for the world, share bread and wine, and are sent out to live for Jesus.

This booklet is here to help you feel at home. It explains what is happening as we move through the service, and gives you a few words and prayers to listen out for along the way.

You are welcome to join in as much or as little as feels comfortable. You can sing, pray, listen, sit quietly, or simply take it all in. However you have come today, you are welcome here.



The Service Books

In church, we use different coloured books at different times of the year.

Red Book

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany

This book takes us through the season of preparing for Jesus, celebrating his birth, and remembering how his light is revealed to the world.

Advent is the time before Christmas. We prepare our hearts and wait for Jesus.

Christmas celebrates Jesus being born.

Epiphany means "showing" or "revealing". We remember how Jesus was first revealed to us as the light of the whole world.

Blue Book

Lent and Easter

This book takes us through the season of turning back to God, walking with Jesus towards the cross, and celebrating his resurrection.

Lent is a quieter, more serious season. We say sorry, pray, and prepare for Easter.

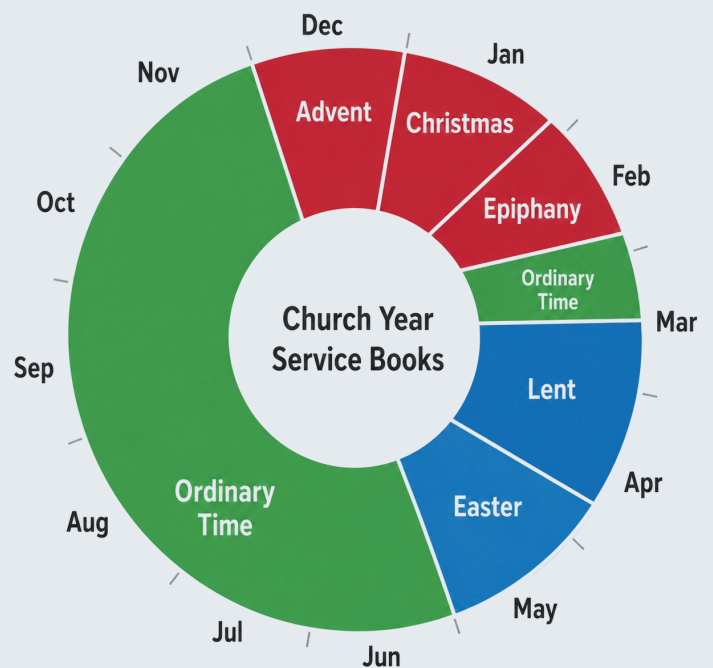
Easter is the joyful season when we celebrate that Jesus is risen from the dead.

Green Book

Ordinary Time

"Ordinary" does not mean boring. It means ordered, numbered, everyday time.

This is the season when we learn what it means to follow Jesus in normal daily life: at home, at work, at school, with our neighbours, and in the world.



For some special services, we may use our 'Family Communion Books'

The Welcome

**At the beginning of the service,
we gather together.**

You are invited to join in with all the words in **bold** in your service books

The priest may say: 'The Lord be with you'
and we respond: '**And also with you**'

This is a way of saying: God is here with us.

There may be a few words of welcome, and introductions, especially if there is a baptism, festival, special Sunday, or visiting preacher.

Listen out for:

"Grace, mercy and peace..."

"The Lord be with you..."

"Welcome..."

What is happening?

We are becoming one worshipping family, gathered in God's presence.

"The
Lord is
near to
all who
call on
him."

—
Psalm
145:18

"Come,
let us
sing for
joy to the
Lord."

Psalm
95:1

Hymns

We usually sing a hymn or worship song near the beginning, between readings, and before/after Communion

Some hymns are traditional, with words Christians have sung for many years. Some songs are more modern.

You do not have to sing if you do not want to. You can simply listen.

What is happening?

Singing helps us worship with our whole selves: our breath, bodies, minds and hearts.

As we praise, we come into a greater awareness of God's presence and peace.

Listen out for:

Words about God's love, holiness, mercy, creation, Jesus, the cross, resurrection, or the Holy Spirit.

"Search
me,
O God,
and
know
my
heart."

Psalm
139:23

Notices

Sometimes there are notices near the beginning or end of the service.

These are short announcements about church life: services, events, prayer gatherings, children's groups, community activities, or ways to help.

What is happening?

Church is not just one hour on Sunday. It is a community of people learning to follow Jesus together.

Prayer of Preparation

Near the beginning of the service, we may say a prayer together:

*Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden...*

This prayer asks God to prepare our hearts.
It reminds us that we do not need to pretend with God.
He already knows us completely, and he loves us.

What is happening?

We are asking the Holy Spirit to help us worship, listen, pray, and receive from God.

Listen out for:

"Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts..."

"By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit..."

“Create
in me a
pure
heart, O
God.”

Psalm
51:10

Confession

**Confession is when we say
sorry to God.**

We remember the things we have done wrong, the love we have failed to show, and the ways we have turned away from God and from one another.

There is often a short silence as we call to mind what we want forgiveness from.

Then we may say words such as:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

After this, the priest speaks God’s forgiveness over us. This is called absolution.

What is happening?

We are not trying to make ourselves look good. We are coming honestly to God, trusting his mercy.

Listen out for:

“Let us confess our sins...”

“Lord, have mercy...”

“May God forgive you...”

“Glory to
God in
the
highest
heaven,
and on
earth
peace.”

Luke
2:14

The Gloria

**The Gloria is an ancient hymn of
praise, sung or said all over the world**

The Gloria is a joyful song of praise.

It begins:

*Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.*

We often sing it, or say it together.

The Gloria praises God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It is normally used in joyful seasons, but it is often left out during Advent and Lent, because those are quieter seasons of waiting, preparing and turning back to God.

What is happening?

After receiving God's mercy, we praise him for who he is.

Listen out for:

“Glory to God...”

“Lord God, heavenly King...”

“You alone are the Holy One...”

The Collect

The Collect is a short prayer for the day. It “collects” our prayers together and gives us the theme of the service.

The priest usually says:
Let us pray

Then there may be a moment of silence before the prayer.
At the end, everyone says:
Amen.

“Amen” means: Yes. Let it be so.

What is happening?

We pause and ask God to speak to us through the particular theme of this Sunday or season.

Listen out for:

“Let us pray...”

“Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord...”

“Amen.”

“Teach
me your
way,
Lord.”

—

Psalm
86:11

Bible Readings

The First Reading:

We listen to a reading from the Bible.

It may come from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the New Testament letters, or another part of Scripture.

At the end, the reader says:

This is the word of the Lord

We respond: **Thanks be to God**

What is happening?

Christians believe God speaks through the Bible. We listen for what God may be saying to us today.

Listen out for:

A word, image, phrase, or story that stays with you.

The Gospel Reading:

The Gospel reading is a reading from Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. These books tell us about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

We usually stand for the Gospel.

The reader may say:

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to 'N'.

We say: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

What is happening?

We stand because the Gospel is especially important. We are listening for the voice and actions of Jesus.

Listen out for:

What Jesus says.

What Jesus does.

Who Jesus notices.

What surprises you.

“Your
word is
a lamp
for my
feet, a
light on
my
path.”

Psalm
119:105

“Speak,
Lord,
for your
servant is
listening.”
—

1 Samuel
3:9

The Talk

The talk, or sermon, helps us understand the Bible readings and what they might mean for our lives.

It may explain the background of the passage, connect it with Jesus, and help us think about faith in everyday life through modern stories or challenges.

What is happening?

We are asking: What is God saying? And how might we respond?

You might ask yourself:

What encouraged me?

What challenged me?

What might I carry into the week?

Response

After the talk, there may be a short time to respond.

This might be silence, a hymn or song for reflection, a prayer, a question, an action, or simply a moment to think.

What is happening?

We are not just hearing information. We are making space for God to speak to our hearts.

You might pray quietly:

“God, what do you want me to notice?”

“Jesus, help me follow you.”

“Holy Spirit, show me what this means for me.”

“Let us
hold fast
to the
hope we
profess.”

Hebrews
10:23

The Creed

The Creed is a statement of Christian faith.

When we say it, we join with Christians across the world through over 1700 years of Church history.

It begins:

We believe in one God...

The Creed speaks about God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Church, forgiveness, resurrection, and eternal life.

What is happening?

We are saying together what Christians believe, even if some of us are still exploring or have questions. This is the shared faith of those all over the planet.

Listen out for:

“We believe...”

“For us and for our salvation...”

“We look for the resurrection of the dead...”

“Cast all
your
anxiety
on him
because
he cares
for you.”

1 Peter 5:7

Intercessions

Intercessions are the prayers where we ask God for something, and pray for other people.

We may pray for:

the Church,
the world,
our community,
people who are sick or suffering,
and those who are grieving.

Sometimes people read these from the book, other times they write their own, or just pray from their hearts as they feel led.

A common response is:

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

or:

Lord, hear us

Lord, graciously hear us

What is happening?

We bring the needs of the world to God, trusting his love and mercy.

Listen out for:

Names of people or places.

A repeated response you can join in with.

A moment of silence where you can add your own prayer.

“Let the
peace of
Christ
rule in
your
hearts.”

Col 3:15

The Peace

The Peace is a moment when we remember that Jesus brings peace between us and God, and between us and one another.

The priest says:

The peace of the Lord be always with you

We respond: **And also with you**

Then we may share a sign of peace. This might be a handshake, a smile, a wave, or simple words:

Peace be with you

What is happening?

Before we come to Communion, we remember that we are one family in Christ.

You do not have to move around if you do not want to.

A smile or nod is perfectly fine.

The Collection

During the Song after the Peace, there may be a money pouch handed round.

The Church is not centrally funded, but is a charity that exists purely on the donations of local people. Anything you're able to give is gratefully received, but it's your presence that we value the most.

Feel free to just pass on the pouch if you want to. No one will judge you either way.

Most churches also have contactless giving at the door, or giving by standing order, so many don't put physical money in the collection pouch.

“Taste
and see
that the
Lord is
good.”

—
Psalm
34:8

Communion

This is the heart of the service.

The priest leads the Communion Prayer, a great prayer of thanksgiving.

The prayer includes the words Jesus said at the Last Supper:

This is my body...

This is my blood...

Do this in remembrance of me.

There are several responses, such as:

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give thanks and praise

We may also sing or say:

Holy, holy, holy Lord...

Then we say the Lord's Prayer together.

The bread is broken, and the priest invites people to receive Communion.

What is happening?

We remember Jesus' death and resurrection, give thanks, and receive his presence through bread and wine.

Can I receive Communion

If this is your faith, you are welcome to receive communion, .
Gluten-free wafers are available on request.

If you would prefer a blessing, you are very welcome to come forward too. To receive a blessing, you can keep your hands lowered or bring your service booklet with you.

When you receive the bread or wine, the minister may say:

The body of Christ

The blood of Christ

You can reply:

Amen

“The
Lord
bless you
and keep
you.”

Numbers
6:24

Blessing

We receive God's blessing

After Communion, there is usually a prayer thanking God for feeding us, and asking for the Holy Spirit to fill us.

Then the priest gives God's blessing.
Everyone responds: **Amen**

What is happening?

We have gathered, listened, prayed, and received. Now God blesses us and sends us out.

Listen out for:

“Send us out in the power of your Spirit...”

“The blessing of God almighty...”

“Amen.”

Sending Out

The service ends, but our worship continues into daily life.

The priest or deacon may say:
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
All: **In the name of Christ. Amen**

What is happening?

Church does not end at the door. We are sent out to love God and love our neighbours.

You might ask:

What will I take with me today?

Who might I pray for this week?

How can I show God's love?

“And
surely I
am with
you
always.”

Matthew
28:20

After the Service

**After the service, there may be tea,
coffee, squash, biscuits, or cake.**

Please stay if you can. You do not need to know anyone already.

This is a good time to ask questions, meet people, or simply enjoy being part of the community.

If there's anything you would like **prayer** for, then the Priest is happy to chat with you and pray together.

What is happening?

Hospitality is part of Christian life. We share not only prayers and bread and wine, but friendship, conversation and welcome.

You are very welcome.

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