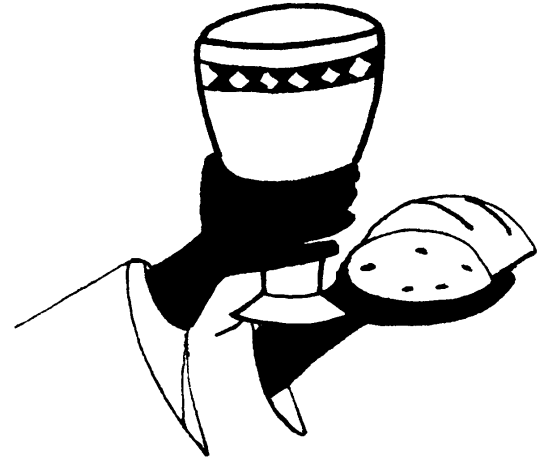


FIRST COMMUNION

We give God thanks and praise for this step of faith in the life of children faith development of your child. Our goal is to work with parents and adults to help lay down a faith foundation in the life of a child so that in God's timing, the child would want to be a disciple of Christ. We want to help you teach your child that God loves them unconditionally.



This First Communion material is for children in second grade or older. It is up to the parents to decide what age their child will receive Holy Communion, even before second grade. You and your child can learn about what this meal is about. Bringing up a child in today's complex world is quite a responsibility. It takes loving care, courage and the nurturing support from others to share the love of God with one another. It is important to teach children rules and then to demonstrate forgiveness. The holy meal is a time for them to know they are forgiven and they are called to forgive others as well. We are grateful for this community of faith that supports children in this journey of faith.

In learning about Holy Communion, we remember that we have been invited to a table of grace. Through Baptism, God adopts us as children, brings each of us into God's family and sets us on a path of faith. We continue to grow in that gift and one day, teenagers will affirm that they are disciples of Jesus Christ. This step of learning about Holy Communion is a step of growing up.

Through Holy Communion, children and parents can say that their relationship is growing. Holy Communion will remind youth and parents that forgiveness is key to all relationships. Parents, family members and children make mistakes and need God's love.

We ask you to watch a couple movies together as a way to learn together. We ask adults to share what Holy Communion means to them. When did you first receive Holy Communion? We encourage you to participate at worship on the date of your First Communion. We will encourage parents and/or others in the family to be the ones who give Holy Communion to the children for the first time. Please call the office to learn more about picking a Sunday for your special day.

Sunday Worship - (9:15am (in person and Facebook Live)

Zion Lutheran Church

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Rev. Dr. Michael E. Thomas

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WHAT IS HOLY COMMUNION

BACKGROUND OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Hebrew Passover Meal was celebrated every year as a remembrance of them being freed from bondage in Egypt by the power of God. They were instructed to kill a Passover lamb each year, and have a meal together where they remembered their history. Through the meal, the Hebrew people celebrated and gave thanks to God for saving them in the past.

The reason Holy Communion is called the Last Supper is because Jesus shared this last meal or supper with his disciples the night before he was killed. This Last Meal was the Passover Meal where bread and wine were used. Jesus gave the bread and wine of the Passover Meal new meaning when he broke the bread and poured out the wine. Jesus told his disciples that he would be broken and he would be poured out in his death. Jesus told his disciples to repeat this meal as a way to remember his love.

Jesus did not die because he was guilty, but because everyone else was guilty. In the Old Testament, an animal was sacrificed as a way of paying for their sins. God sent Jesus to pay the price of sin for the whole world. Jesus is the "lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world". We are set free today by the price Jesus paid on the cross. We remember that God's promises are real when we share in Holy Communion.

Holy Communion is communing with Christ. Christ is present with His people, just as he was present with the disciples at the Last Supper. Christ is truly present "in, with and under" the bread and wine as we eat and drink in faith. We don't understand how this happens, but we believe it to be true. The two other views are different from the Lutheran-Christian views.

Roman Catholic = only body and blood (transubstantiation) - no longer bread and wine

Lutheran = body & blood and bread & wine (real presence) - Jesus is in, with and under
- "Mysteries of God" (Ephesians 3:3-9)

Reformed = bread and wine only (symbol) - never the body/blood of Christ



WHAT IS HOLY COMMUNION?

1) HOLY COMMUNION IS A SACRAMENT: All of life is sacred (holy and created by God). A sacrament is defined as “an outer sign of an inner grace”. The Lutheran-Christian definition of a sacrament has these three characteristics:

GOGG - Gift Of God’s Grace - Forgiveness of sins

PEA - Physical Element Attached - Bread and wine

CBC - Commanded By Christ - “Do this...”

These three together make up the two sacraments in the Lutheran Church (also Baptism).

- 2) HOLY COMMUNION IS REMEMBERING - Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” We remember Jesus' life, death and resurrection - and all that he has done for us - when we receive communion. If we are not intentional about remembering what God has done for us, we will soon forget. Repetition is the mother of learning!
- 3) HOLY COMMUNION IS GIVING THANKS - When we remember what Jesus did for us, we truly are thankful. We have nothing to give to God but our thanks for the gift of forgiveness. One name for communion is “Eucharist”, which means “thanksgiving”. We receive the forgiveness of our sins when we participate in Holy Communion. This forgiveness is something to be very thankful for all year long. Make a list of 50 things you are grateful for in your life
- 4) HOLY COMMUNION IS CONFESSING - Jesus said that this gift is given to us “for the forgiveness of sin.” We confess or admit that we are sinful in the things we have done or have left undone and that our sin made it necessary for Jesus to die for us. Jesus commands us to receive this gift and to share God’s forgiveness with others.
- 5) HOLY COMMUNION IS RECEIVING - We open our hands to receive Holy Communion. We don’t grab for it but we look forward to the bread being placed in our hands as a special gift. When a wonderful and unknown special package arrives in the mail, we receive it with an open hand and hopeful heart. It is a gift that we don’t deserve and we receive it with gratitude.
- 6) HOLY COMMUNION IS GROWING - We eat food to grow. We receive this spiritual food to grow our love toward others and grow our faith in God ***“Oh Jesus, be with me now as you were with the 12 disciples; forgive me my sins and help my faith to grow. Amen.”***
- 7) HOLY COMMUNION IS CELEBRATING - We may walk with sadness going up for Holy Communion, but we can leave the table with a sense of joy knowing that our sins are forgiven.
- 8) HOLY COMMUNION IS FAMILY - We commune together as a family with Jesus in a mysterious way. We commune with those throughout the world and with those who have died before us (the communion of saints). When we commune, we become the body of Christ and we learn to pour our lives into the lives of others. We welcome all Christians from other denominations to the table who believe that we receive the forgiveness of sins in communion. (open communion)

The Last Supper of Jesus

YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST - When you receive Holy Communion, we believe that Jesus is really present in, with and under the bread and wine. Jesus is now present in, with and under all you do. You become the body of Christ to others. Consider

LAST SUPPER IN THE BIBLE - Here are the four Gospel stories about the last supper of Jesus:

1. Matthew 26:17-22 - "On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.' " So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, LORD?"
2. Mark 14: 22-26 - "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."
3. Luke 22:31-34 - ""Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." 33 But he replied, "LORD, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." 34 Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."
4. John 13:1-5 - "It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served... so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."



A) WHAT IS COMMUNION?

Holy Communion is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ given with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us to eat and drink.

B) WHERE DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY THIS?

Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul say: Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread and when he gave thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body, given for you; do this in remembrance of me." After the same manner, Jesus took the cup and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this all of you, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me."

C) WHAT BENEFITS DO WE RECEIVE?

The benefits of this sacrament are pointed out by the words, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. These words assure us that in the sacrament we receive forgiveness of sin, life and salvation. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

D) HOW CAN EATING AND DRINKING DO THIS?

It is not eating and drinking that does this, but the words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sin." These words, along with eating and drinking, are the main thing in the sacrament. And whoever believes these words receives exactly what they say, the forgiveness of sins.

E) WHEN IS A PERSON RIGHTLY PREPARED TO RECEIVE THIS SACRAMENT?

Fasting and other outward preparations serve a good purpose. However, that person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words, "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words "for you" require simply a believing heart.

First Communion Bread Recipe

A recipe for unleavened bread

- 2 Cups of whole wheat flour
- 1 Cup of half and half (cream and milk)
- 2-3 Tablespoons of Honey

Mix the flour, milk and honey together. Spread the mixture 1/8" thick on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes, then at 375 degrees for 7-10 minutes. DO NOT OVERBAKE. While the bread is warm, take it out of the pan and place it on a dish towel to cool. Bring the bread to worship the day you are to receive Holy Communion and bring it to the Sacristy so it can be placed on the altar.

Communion in the Bible

Communion Terms

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 12:1-3	Blessed to be a blessing
Exodus 12:1-14	Passover story
Exodus 16:9-31	Manna story
Leviticus 16:9-31	Day of Atonement (scapegoat)
Psalms 51	Confession

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 26: 26-29	Words of Institution
Matthew 28:19-20	Great Commission
Mark 14: 22-25	Words of Institution
Luke 22:14-19	Words of Institution
John 6:33-35	Jesus is the bread of life
John 13:1-30	The Last Supper of Jesus
Acts 2:42 & 46	Sharing of a meal

BODY OF CHRIST

I Corinthians 11:17-34	Share the body of Christ
I Corinthians 12:12-26	Many parts, same spirit

FORGIVENESS

Genesis 33:4-15	Esau forgives Jacob
Genesis 50:15-21	Joseph forgives his brothers
Psalms 86:1-5	God's forgiveness when we ask
Matthew 6:9-15	Lord's prayer about forgiving
Isaiah 55: 6-9	Seek God's pardon
Jeremiah 31:31-34	New covenant of forgiveness
Romans 3: 23-26	God forgives all sin
Ephesians 4:32	As God forgives
Hebrews 9:28	Jesus died to forgive us

ABSOLUTION- We tell someone they are forgiven.

ALTAR - A table where bread and wine are placed. This was a raised structure where animals were sacrificed in the Old Testament.

COMMUNICANT - A person receiving communion.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS - The people who believe and live forever as God's children in heaven.

CUP or CHALICE - Cup that holds the wine.

COMMON CUP - A cup we drink from at Holy Communion.

ELEMENTS - The bread and wine

EUCCHARIST - Means thanksgiving

FLAGON - Pitcher to hold communion wine

HOME COMMUNION - Communion kits that are placed on the altar the first Sunday of the month and taken to shut-ins

INTINCTION - Bread is dipped into the cup

LAST SUPPER - The last meal Jesus shared with his disciples, a name for communion

LORD'S TABLE - Altar where we receive communion.

PATEN - The plate that holds the bread

THANKSGIVING - We respond thankfully after receiving bread and wine with an "Amen" or "Thanks be to God"

WORDS OF INSTITUTION - The words of Jesus repeated by the pastor before we share communion



Full communion is when two denominations develop a relationship based on a common confessing of the Christian faith and a mutual recognition of Baptism and sharing of the Lord's Supper. This does not mean the two denominations merge; rather, in reaching agreements, denominations also respect differences. These denominations worship together, may exchange clergy and also share a commitment to evangelism, witness and service in the world. Each entity agrees that even with differences, there is nothing that is church-dividing. A central document to Lutherans is the *Augsburg Confession*. Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession* states that "the true unity of the church" is present where the gospel is rightly preached and sacraments rightly administered. The ELCA is committed to this model of full communion as an authentic expression of Christian unity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FULL COMMUNION: For the ELCA, the characteristics of full communion are theological and missiological implications of the gospel that allow variety and flexibility. These characteristics stress that the church act ecumenically for the sake of the world, not for itself alone. They will include at least the following, some of which exist at earlier stages:

- common confessing of the Christian faith
- mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord's Supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchangeability of members
- mutual recognition and availability of ordained ministers to the service of all, subject to the disciplinary regulations of other denominations
- common commitment to evangelism, witness and service
- means of common decision-making on critical common issues of faith and life mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between denominations.

FULL COMMUNION PARTNERS: The ELCA is in full communion with these denominations. We have created joint partnership agreements and the links are noted in this section.

[Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](#) Full Communion partner since 1997. To read a brief history of this full communion partnership, click [here](#).



[Reformed Church in America](#) Full Communion partner since 1997. To read a brief history of this full communion partnership, click [here](#).



[United Church of Christ](#) Full Communion partner since 1997. To read a brief history of this full communion partnership, click [here](#).



[The Episcopal Church](#) Full Communion partner since 1999. To read a brief history of this full communion partnership, click [here](#).



[The Moravian Church](#) Full Communion partner since 1999. To read a brief history of this full communion partnership, click [here](#).



[United Methodist Church](#) Full Communion partner since 2009. To read a brief history of this full communion partnership, click [here](#).



Youth Are Asked To...

1. Watch the movie (Passover scene), ["Prince of Egypt"](#) and the movie ["The Jesus Film"](#)
2. Write a list of 50 things you are grateful for in your life...
3. Memorize the 3 things that make up a sacrament...
4. Read and discuss page 7 Bible passages...
5. Fill out this form and send to Pastor in preparation for receiving First Communion...

Full name of child		
Date of Birth		
Place/Town of Birth		
Baptized?	Yes or No (circle)	
Date of Baptism		
Place of Baptism (Church & Town)		
Grade in School (Name of School)		
Parents Name		
Parents Name		
Guardian Name		
Marital Status	Married	Divorced Widow
Parents Members	Mom?	Dad?
Address/City		
Phone #		
E-mail		
Date to receive First Communion		
Participate in Service by:	WHAT TO DO THAT DAY?	WHO?
	Bring Baptism Candle	
	Read Lessons	
	Banner	
	Make Cup and Plate	
	Bring Bread	
	Music to share	
	Acolyte/Light Candles	