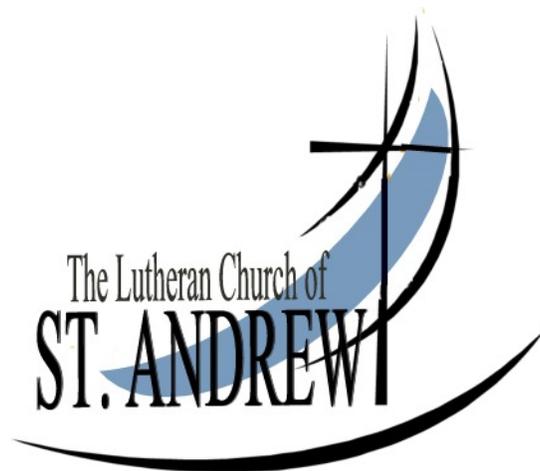


**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

**COMMUNION ASSISTANTS**



Lutherans believe that in Holy Communion the Body and Blood of Jesus is received with the Bread and Wine for the forgiveness of sins and strengthening of our faith. Baptized Christians who confess their sins to God, desire to live a new life in Jesus Christ, and affirm this statement of faith are invited to celebrate the Sacrament.

## BEFORE THE SERVICE

### General Instructions

- Check the monthly newsletter to confirm your team's assignment during the upcoming month. Double check fifth week Sundays for possible assignment.
- If you have been assigned:
  - Note the date and service.
  - Check to see if you have been designated as the "lead" assistant (indicated by an asterisk (\*) next to your name).
  - If you are unable to serve on your designated day, it is your responsibility to find a replacement. *Remember, "leads" can only sub for "leads".* Once a replacement has been found, notify the church office of the substitution.
- **Arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the service.**

### Communion Assistants:

- Check in with the lead communion assistant to receive your assignment. The lead assistant will be located near the small table in the Commons outside the doors leading into the sanctuary .
- There are typically five or six communion assistants at the 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM services and seven or eight at the 9:30 service (depending on whether there are 1 or 2 pastors), each with a specific responsibility as assigned by the lead assistant:
  - Bread (two pastors or pastor and one assistant-generally the lead)
  - Tray (two assistants)
  - Common cup (two assistants)
  - Collecting cups (Acolytes will typically perform this role at the 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM service; two assistants will be needed at the 9:30 service).
  - Runner (1 person) (An experienced assistant normally performs this function to replenish bread, wine, and cups). There may not always be a Runner at 8:00 AM.
- Communion assistants do not process or recess with the Pastor. You may remain in your seat until the beginning of the offertory at which time you should proceed to the center rear of the sanctuary and use the hand sanitizer on the two small tables

flanking the double doors. Remain in the rear and proceed down the center aisle to the altar after the Pastor has blessed the bread and wine. Communion assistants and acolytes will form a semi-circle in front of the altar to receive communion.

### **Lead Assistants:**

- If you have been designated as **lead assistant**:
  - Check to see if an assistant/guest pastor will participate in the distribution of communion.
  - Ensure that all communion assistants and acolytes are in attendance.
  - If there is a “no show,” solicit a trained volunteer from the congregation.
  - Ask the Pastor if there are any special instructions for that day.
  - Ask the Pastor whether there is communion at the altar railing or continuous Communion, and inform each member of the team (including acolytes). Remind each assistant of the process.
  - Remind the assistant serving the host to bless the children and any youth not receiving communion.
  - Remind the acolytes where the trays are located and to sanitize their hands after returning the empty cups to the sacristy.
  - **9:30 AM service only**: Confirm that a member of the Health and Wellness Ministry will commune worshippers in the pews who are unable to walk to the front of the church. Alert the Pastor if no one is available.

## DISTRIBUTING COMMUNION

### All Services

#### When the congregation communes at the railing:

- After the Pastor has blessed the bread and wine, communion assistants form a semi-circle in front of the altar to receive the sacrament. The lead assistant or second pastor communes the Pastor.
- Following their previously determined roles, communion assistants take the appropriate item from the altar (bread, tray of cups, common cup with purificator [wiping cloth]). The empty trays for collecting cups are on tray table located on the main floor near the sacristy door.
- The order for distributing should be: Bread, individual cups, common cup, empty tray for used individual cups. Do not crowd each other; leave an arm's length of space between each assistant.
- The Pastor(s) or Pastor and Lead assistant will distribute the bread. As you distribute the bread, you say:

"Take and eat, the body of Christ given for you."

or

"The body of Christ, given for you."

- If a child is present at the railing and you are not certain whether they have received instruction for communion, gently inquire of the parents whether they are to receive communion. **If the children are not of communion age or have not received instruction, the person distributing the bread should make the sign of the cross on his/her forehead and say one of the following (or similar) blessings:**
  - ❖ "May the love of Jesus be yours now and always"
  - ❖ "The blessings of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are yours. Rejoice!"
  - ❖ "Be filled with the Spirit of Jesus and rejoice. You are God's child forever."
  - ❖ "You are God's child forever. Nothing can separate you from His love."
  - ❖ "The Lord bless you and keep you."

- The assistant with the tray follows **about four people behind the Pastor**. As you approach each individual, be aware as to whether they will be taking wine from you, or prefer the common cup. For those taking wine from you, say:

“Take and drink, the blood of Christ shed for you.”

or

“The blood of Christ shed for you.”

- As the tray becomes almost empty (not enough cups to serve the next table), the runner should replace it for you with a full tray from the altar. In between tables of communicants, and as time allows, the runner should transfer the few cups left in the almost empty trays to a fuller tray. Be sure that every tray has two or three glasses of white grape juice available for each table of communicants for worshippers who do not partake of alcohol.

- If you run out of trays during distribution, there are usually additional trays that have been prepared for other services located in the sacristy behind and to the right of the altar. If you run out of trays at the later service and there are none prepared in the sacristy, the runner or other available assistant should quickly fill a tray. If the wine that is used to fill the tray has not been consecrated, then Pastor alert as to the need to do so.

- The assistant with the common cup follows behind the tray and offers wine to those who indicate a preference for the common cup (usually identifiable because there is no small cup on the railing in front of them). Maintain control of the cup as you offer it to the individual and say:

“Take and drink, the blood of Christ shed for you.”

or

“The blood of Christ, shed for you.”

- After each communicant sips from the cup, wipe the cup (both **inside** and outside of the rim) with the cloth provided (the purificator) and turn it so that the next communicant is drinking from a different spot.

- As the cup becomes almost empty (not enough remains to serve the next table), the runner will refill it with from the flagon on the altar.

- Due to the need for two communion teams and the potential difficulty for communicants to hear a dismissal, no dismissal will be given for each table. The

congregation will be instructed to leave the table once they have received the sacraments and spent a brief moment at the altar railing.

- The assistant or acolyte collecting cups follows the distance of **about four people** behind the person with the common cup. The communicants will either place their empty cup directly in the tray or place it on the railing to be collected. You may stack the cups in the tray, but it is best to *limit the height of individual stacks* to avoid toppling and an unsightly appearance.
- After all tables have been communed, the Pastor may need to commune worshippers in the pews who are not able to come forward to the railing. The Pastor will ask a communion assistant who is distributing individual cups to follow him. Before leaving the altar, ensure that there are an adequate number of cups remaining to meet the needs of worshippers in the pews (eight to ten should suffice). The Pastor serves both the bread and the wine. The communion assistant should take the cups from the communicants and replace them in the tray.
- **9:30 Service Only:** Members of the Health and Wellness Ministry will commune worshippers in the pews who are unable to walk to the front of the church. If no one is available to do this, the Pastor will do so. Proceed as instructed above.
- When all communicants have received bread and wine, the Pastor will provide a dismissal for the entire congregation by making the sign of the cross and offering a dismissal such as the following:

“May this body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in the one true faith. Amen”

or

“Christ is with you. Go in his peace.”

or

“The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.”

**For continuous communion:**

- After the Pastor communes the assistants and the lead communion assistant or second pastor communes the Pastor, communion assistants, following their previously determined roles, take the appropriate item from the altar (bread, tray of cups, common cup with purificator [wiping cloth]). The empty trays for collecting cups are on a tray table on the main floor near the sacristy door.
- Assistants should be spread along the base of the steps as follows:
  - ✓ The Pastor and assistant charged with distributing the bread will stand in the center of the aisle at the base of the steps.
  - ✓ The assistants with the common cup stand a few feet to the side of the person distributing the bread.
  - ✓ The assistants with the trays stand a few feet to the side of the person with the common cup.
  - ✓ The assistants collecting cups stands are few feet away from the person with the tray.
  - ➔ The “runner” should stand at the top of the steps so that they can observe when new trays need to be provided, the chalice refilled, or the bread replenished. Be sure that the communion assistant with the tray always has several cups of white grape juice available for worshippers who do not partake of alcohol.
- If you are serving the bread, as the individual approaches you, hand them the wafer and say:

“The body of Christ, given for you.”

If a child approaches and you are not certain whether they have received instruction for communion, gently inquire of the parents. If the children are not of communion age or have not received instruction, the person distributing the bread should make the sign of the cross on his/her forehead and say one of the following (or similar) blessings:

- ❖ “May the love of Jesus be yours now and always.”
- ❖ “The blessings of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are yours. Rejoice!”

- ❖ “Be filled with the Spirit of Jesus and rejoice. You are God’s child forever.”
  - ❖ “You are God’s child forever. Nothing can separate you from His love.”
  - ❖ “The Lord bless you and keep you.”
- If you are serving the wine, either from the common cup or the tray, say:
- “Take and drink, the blood of Christ shed for you.”
- or
- “The blood of Christ, shed for you.”
- After each communicant sips from the common cup, wipe the cup (both *inside* and outside of the rim) with the cloth provided (purificator) and turn it so that the next communicant is drinking from a different spot.
- The runner is responsible for replenishing items. If you need assistance, signal the runner for help.
- After all worshippers have been communed, the Pastor may need to commune those in the pews who are not able to come forward to the railing. The Pastor will ask a communion assistant who distributed the individual cups to follow him. Before leaving the altar, ensure that there are an adequate number of cups remaining to meet the needs of the worshippers in the pews (eight to ten should suffice). The Pastor serves both the bread and wine. The communion assistant should take the cups from the communicants and replace them in the tray.
- **9:30 Service Only:** Members of the Health and Wellness Ministry will commune worshippers in the pews who are unable to walk to the front of the church. If no one is available to do this, the Pastor will do so. Proceed as instructed above.

## AFTER DISTRIBUTION

- The assistants responsible for collecting cups place the trays with empty cups on the counter in the sacristy (to the right and behind the altar). Do not throw away the empty cups. This will be done by a member of the Altar Guild. Sanitize hands by using hand sanitizer or washing hands with soap and water before returning to your seats.
- The lead communion assistant (or the “runner”, as pre-determined) is responsible for covering the wine trays, cups, etc., with the white cloths. The common cups should first be covered with the soiled napkin used to wipe the cup after each communicant (purificator). Then, place the stiff white board on top (“pall”), followed by the white cloth (veil).
- If you were assisting the Pastor with communion in the sanctuary, or serving as the Pew Communion Assistant, and do not return before the sacraments are covered, take the tray to the sacristy and leave it on the counter.
- Do not exit the Chancel area in the front but return to your seat going behind and down the side aisle so as not to draw attention to yourself. This may mean waiting on the side until the Pastor has finished speaking and the recessional music has begun.

### COMMUNION DIAGRAM



RUNNER \_\_\_\_\_

