

## **What is Communion?**

The celebration of communion emphasizes remembrance, community, and hope:

- *Remembrance* of our Lord's self-giving death on the cross and the resulting forgiveness of our sins.
- *Community* with our resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ, and with the other members of our congregation.
- *Hope* for the ultimate triumph of Christ when followers of Jesus Christ will be raised from the dead to live forever.

The Bible tells us that on the night he was betrayed and handed over to death, Jesus broke bread and gave it to his disciples, saying that it was his body. He then shared a cup of wine with his disciples, saying that it was his blood, poured out for the forgiveness of human sin. You can read the whole story in [Matthew 26:26-29](#).

Following Jesus' example and instruction, when the church celebrates the Lord's Supper today we share the bread and wine with each other as a sign of remembering Christ's sacrifice and experiencing the presence of Jesus with us today and in the future.

When we participate in communion with the right attitude, we are filled with the Holy Spirit who nourishes and strengthens our faith so we can live for Him.

## **What happens during communion?**

Through our prayers and the sharing of bread and wine we are joined to Christ and, through Christ, to each other. We remember what God has done for us. The incredible saving power of our Lord's death and resurrection is made real for us as it touches us, changes us, and heals us. Communion reminds us exactly what our Lord suffered on our behalf.

We gather at the table with joy. Our eating and drinking are a celebration of our risen Lord, who is present with us through the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us. We give joyful thanks for what God has done and is doing in our lives and in the world.

We come to the table in confidence of our salvation. We look forward with joyful anticipation to the coming reign of God when "steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (Psalm 85:10).

### **Who may participate in communion?**

All those who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus alone for their life and salvation and have publicly professed their faith are welcome to participate in communion together.

Baptized children of believing parents may participate as long as parents have explained communion to them and they understand the meaning of faith in Jesus Christ and the commitment to loving God and others.

### **How often does North Ridge Community Church practice communion?**

The practice of the early church and the teaching of the reformers in the 16th century was to celebrate the Lord's Supper each week. The Book of Church Order, the RCA's governing document, calls for communion to be celebrated at least once every three months, if possible.

At North Ridge we feel the weekly repetition of communion or the infrequent celebration every three months may prevent us from experiencing the power and meaning in celebrating communion together as the family of God. We celebrate communion every six weeks with the hope of making it a fresh, holy, and life giving experience.

### **How does North Ridge Community Church practice communion?**

In order to keep the celebration a fresh and holy experience, we practice diversity in communion. We may have people come forward to the table and take a piece of bread from a loaf and dip it in a common cup of juice, or they can take a pre-cut piece of bread and an individual cup of juice and some use individual cups. Sometimes we have the elements distributed to the people as they remain seated.

It is our desire that you experience the love and grace of the risen Lord Jesus as you participate in communion at North Ridge.