

## Professing Faith Celebrating the Lord's Supper

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

Communion is a sacrament, a holy time established by Jesus Himself for us to celebrate our relationship with God and the cleansing Jesus offers for our hearts. As Presbyterians, we believe we meet with the living Christ in the Lord's Supper. We believe Jesus is spiritually present as we partake of the elements of Communion. As we eat the elements, we are receiving Him and connecting with Jesus as we look to Him in faith. We seek His Spirit to help us have the power and strength to live with and for Him in the days ahead. It is a regular time of renewing and deepening our relationship with Christ.

At Third, we celebrate the sacrament Sunday mornings at 8:00am in Room 101 (except the first Sunday of each month) and each month on the first Sunday in all three worship services, 8:45am, 10:00am, and 11:15am. Children who have been instructed about the meaning of Communion and have put their trust in Christ are welcome at the Lord's Table when parent(s) or guardian(s) believe the child is ready. If your child does not yet understand the sacrament, you may still bring him or her forward when you come to the Lord's Table, and ask one of the elder/deacon servers to say a prayer of blessing over your child.

### **Ways to Assess Readiness:**

Seeing your children participate in Communion when they are ready is pure joy. Determining your children's trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior is imperative. Paul compels each person who approaches the table of the Lord to "judge the body rightly" (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Are your children able to tell you who Jesus Christ is and what His sacrifice on the cross means? Can they identify themselves as individuals who are forgiven in spite of sinful ways? Do they truly realize they need a Savior?

Expressing a personal faith commitment is an essential indication of your child's readiness for Communion. Talk with him or her about his or her trust in Christ and what the Table of the Lord means. Church leaders are available to meet with you and your children to talk about the meaning of Communion and provide time for your child to talk about his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Explanation of Communion and Elements:**

Your children should be able to understand what the bread and wine represent in order to fully comprehend the spiritual nourishment given. Because children by 8-10 years old are usually able to think abstractly, to understand metaphors and symbolism in their mental development, they may be able to comprehend that:

The bread represents Christ's own body broken on the cross for our salvation. The wine (juice) represents Christ's blood, shed for us.

Embracing these precious elements is the recognition of:

- Jesus' forgiveness and cleansing of our sins
- God's acceptance of us because Jesus takes our imperfect record and exchanges it for His perfect one
- Jesus' power given by the Holy Spirit to renew our motivation to live as Jesus directs

As each Communion Sunday approaches, parents may review with their children that it is through the Lord's Supper we can give thanks to God, remember Jesus, celebrate Jesus giving His life for us, and celebrate our togetherness as a church family. Faith is the key to fruitfully receiving the Lord's Supper. Faith means opening your heart and mind to God and prayerfully inviting the Holy Spirit to enter and become a part of you. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit – with it you may truly experience the gift of God's love at the Lord's Supper.

Gathered around the Lord's Table, we receive the power of Christ – the ability to give ourselves completely to God and to our neighbors. Having received the sacrament, it is up to us to carry out this love into the world so that others may benefit from the gifts that God gave us.

*I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:35*