

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Policy

To ensure that the Communion servers and supplies are in place for the Sacrament of Communion service, an act of worship in which the Metropolitan United Church Minister offers the congregation small pieces of bread and a taste of wine or juice at the Lord's Table to remind everyone of Jesus' last supper with his followers and of God's enduring love.

Servers and Helpers

1. About one month before each scheduled Communion service, the Organizer sends potential servers and helpers an e-mail notice stating the date and time of the Communion service and requests their assistance. One or two named individuals are asked to supply the bread. Servers are requested to come together in the Parlour one-half hour before the 11 a.m. worship service. Everyone is asked to respond to the Organizer's e-mail notice at least one week before the service so the Organizer has time to recruit others if necessary. If the list of potential servers is less than 25 members, the Organizer starts verbally recruiting right away.
2. One person is asked to assist at the table in the Narthex when the plates and trays are left there. This person will fill two trays and two plates, in addition to stacking and covering the other trays and plates. The filled trays and plates will be given to the "Platform Party" to serve the servers. The remaining trays and plates will be covered with a cloth.
3. Communion preparation is done a few days before the service (Thursday or Friday, depending on availability). This entails putting communion cups into the trays and pouring juice into the cups. This is done in the Parlour Kitchen. The Church Office should be notified in case someone else needs the space. The filled trays are set in the kitchen refrigerator and covered with tea towels.
4. Two helpers are asked to be available to help with Communion preparations: Putting the cups into the wine trays and pouring juice into the cups. The preparation takes place in the Parlour kitchen on Saturday morning – the day before the service. The church office must be notified so that the church will be open. The filled trays are set on the table in the Guest Conference Room and covered with tea towels.
5. For each Sacrament of Communion, the Organizer prepares a master server sheet and individual instruction sheets for servers to read before the worship service begins. Each sheet specifies who each individual is paired with and where they are to serve Communion in the Sanctuary. All distributed instruction sheets have names on them and are placed in an appropriate order (and hope no one moves them!) for individuals to locate on chair seats in the Parlour.
6. The Organizer helps servers find and understand their positions for serving Communion in the Sanctuary. The procedures are explained to the group and questions are addressed in the 10 minutes prior to entering the Sanctuary for the start of the 11 a.m. worship service. The Organizer announces the names of the Platform Party (four servers), where the servers sit in the Sanctuary, when they stand as a group and come forward to be handed the elements, when they turn and go to their assigned positions, and offers any other points they may need to know (i.e., when to serve the Choir). Lastly, the Organizer requests help gathering the empty cups after the service.
7. See 'Instructions for Serving Communion' below.
8. A few minutes before the worship service begins, the Organizer leads two streams of servers from the Parlour into the Sanctuary from both sides of the Great Room. It is desirable that both streams, entering from opposite sides, take their places in the Sanctuary and sit in unison.

The Organizer's Verbal Instructions for Serving Communion

1. Thank you, everyone, for being here.
2. You should now have read your individual instruction sheet. Note whether you are serving Bread or Wine, or if you are a Replenisher. The server name and position number, as well as your partner's name and position number are written on your instruction sheet in the upper right corner.
3. The Platform Party comprises positions 1, 10, 15 and 22. During the singing of the hymn immediately before the breaking of bread, and after the clergy have taken their places at the Communion table, the four servers (Platform Party) will walk as one group to the sides of the table. Positions 1 and 15 will uncover the elements.
4. Your signal to rise from your pews to receive the elements: the clergy will bless the elements and give them to each of the four members of the Platform Party. When this is done, all rise from your pews. The Platform Party then steps forward to distribute the elements.
5. Step forward to the edge of the platform in your group in succession. Group 1: 2 – 6/6b and 16 – 20/21 ... servers in the gallery. Group 2: 8 – 14 and 23 – 28 ... servers on the main floor. Numbers 14 and 28 are in the broken aisles and do not have elements. Group 3: Replenishers who all take wine.
6. Accept only the element designated for your position: B – bread; W – wine. Take nothing if nothing is indicated (#14 and #28.) Those serving the choir receive both bread and wine. The Platform Party doesn't know what you are to receive. To solve this problem, women take bread and men take wine.
7. Only after everyone in the group has received the elements do you turn and move away. Groups 1 and 3 leave by the centre aisle. Group 2 servers turn and move to the aisles indicated in the instruction sheets. As one group moves away and individual servers go to their assigned stations, the next group moves forward to the centre area in front of the platform to receive the elements before turning and leaving for their assigned positions.
8. Work quietly, quickly, and reverently. Watch your partner. Keep the bread about five people ahead of the wine. Take care of broken aisles. Be sure there is enough wine on the tray for the row. Replenishers are asked to be alert. There is extra wine on the centre table in the Narthex and on the corner tables in the balcony. Do your best and don't be overly anxious about mistakes – no one else will notice.
9. After serving, leave your trays on the table in the Narthex, and re-assemble in reverse order to return to your pews. Don't try to assist the helpers in the Narthex. No talking in the Narthex.
10. The Platform Party should take back into the Sanctuary full trays of bread and wine as assigned.
11. Return to the Sanctuary in reverse order when given the signal by those monitoring the centre aisle doors.
12. Remain standing at your pews until the Platform Party reaches the front of the Sanctuary. Then be seated to receive your personal communion.
13. Finally, anyone who can help, please help pick up the empty cups from pews after the service.

Elements and Supplies

1. The Organizer checks the supplies at the Church and purchases more if needed. The United Church Resource store and Creation Bookstore are local suppliers of cups. When given sufficient notice, the Office Administrator places an order for the cups. Grape juice (Newman's Own) is purchased locally at Costco.
2. The Organizer asks someone to supply the bread for Communion services. If the choice is to use wafers, the Organizer asks the Office Administrator to order a supply. If bread is used, the person providing the bread removes all crusts and cuts the slices into cubes ... 25 per slice of bread. The cubes are stored in a plastic bag and placed in the kitchen on the morning of the day Communion is served. A 'loaf' shaped bun is also required.

3. The day before the Communion service, the Organizer determines the number of juice trays needed for the number of helpers. Trays, along with the cups and two small silver pots (creamer size) used to pour the juice into the cups, are stored in the lower cupboard in the Great Room kitchen. Each tray holds 40 cups. One tray is needed for each pew section; two trays are needed for the choir.
4. From the office closet, the Organizer retrieves the Communion silver stored in a box that contains silver plates, goblets and a white table cloth for the Narthex Table. Some juice is put into a goblet for the Communion Table.
5. The Organizer irons the Communion linen which is stored in the table in the west chapel area. If possible and if using, the table cloth should be placed onto the table after it is ironed. The small white square cloth covers are ironed and left on the conference room table until needed on the Sunday morning. A special ironing board has been made to make this task easier, and it is stored in the cupboard off the Great Room. The Communion Linen consists of a table cloth on a roll, and square altar cloths in a folder. There are four large squares for the stacks of trays and a large number of smaller squares for the bread trays and the cup and loaf.
6. After the worship service, leftover elements are taken to the kitchen off the Great Room. Full cups of wine are amalgamated into trays and counted. This number of cups is subtracted from the initial total number of full cups to elicit a number congruous with the number of people served. This number is entered into the record book which the Organizer keeps.
7. Leftovers are dumped, the plates and silver items are washed and everything put away.
8. The linens are stored away until the next service. If required, the Organizer washes them and returns them to storage.

Set-up for Communion Service

1. During the hour before the worship service begins, the Organizer (or the Custodian) ensures the Communion table is moved forward and that two chairs are placed behind it with sufficient room for the clergy to stand. The Organizer (or the Custodian) obtains a small table which is positioned in front of the pulpit on which to place the small linen covers after they are removed from the trays on the Communion table.
2. The Organizer sets up the Communion Table with the large white linen cloth and the wine and bread trays, and covers the elements with the appropriate small linen cloths. Since using the older dark table which is smaller than the lighter wood Communion Table, the large white table cloth has been omitted and the elements set on the bare dark table. The smaller cloths then cover the elements.
3. The Organizer (or the Custodian) opens up the table in the Narthex. The Organizer sets replenishing wine trays on it and covers the trays with the second white table cloth. Someone is appointed by the Organizer to hand out the replenishing wine trays, if necessary, during the Communion service, and to take bread and wine trays from the servers after the congregation has received the elements. This individual prepares and hands two bread trays and two full wine trays to two of the Platform Party to take back into the Sanctuary. The rest of the trays are stacked on the Narthex table and covered with the white table cloth. The person doing this work can be served communion in the Narthex or return with the group of servers to be served by the Platform Party in the Sanctuary.

Related Documents/External Resources

- Instruction sheets; Master List sheet; Record book
- [United Church of Canada](#) website
- Annually, this Sacrament of Communion policy and related documents are reviewed. If changes are made, the Sacrament of Communion policy is sent to the Board of Elders for approval.

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

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Group/Committee Responsible:	Sacrament of Communion Organizer and Senior Minister