



A Less Formal Communion Service

created for Church in Bethesda

A Welcome...

Welcome to our time of communion. This time in our worship is something special we celebrate on a weekly basis here at Church in Bethesda, as is the habit of many churches around the world.

Communion is exactly that, a time of communing, both with God and with one another. It draws its historical roots all the way back many thousands of years ago in Egypt when the Hebrew people gathered at a table. That table became the center point for an annual feast in the nation of Israel, and later on a powerful moment in the life of Jesus Christ.

It was gathered at that feast table that Jesus placed the bread and cup in the hands of his followers; he placed the bread and cup in their hands and in ours. It was in that bread that Jesus made a connection with his own body, a body that would soon be taken to a cross of pain and death. He also made a connection between that cup of wine and his own blood; his own blood would soon be poured out for the world. But far beyond letting those coming events dictate a tone of sorrow and defeat, he opens our eyes to the life he represents; he points us towards a life that is shared in the bread and in the cup, in his own presence with us.

Even as Christ died, he was buried; even as he was buried, he rose from death to new life; and even as we remember his death and great sacrifice at this table, we are called to celebrate the life that we have in the grace of God.

Here is the point of connection... here is the spiritual food that is so needed by our souls, the very presence and meaning of Christ: that anyone would hardly choose to die for even the innocent person who loved them, but not so with Christ. Christ would die for all, all of us from the most appreciative to the least caring, from the evil to the apathetic, from the marginally ok to the mostly righteous.

An Invitation...

(While lifting the bread and cup)

The connection has been established, and you are welcome one and all. Come and tear away a piece of the bread, dip it in the cup and share the feast. These are the gifts of God for all who would receive them.



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A Welcome & Prayers...

We come to God's table every week because we know that God is our source of life, hope, peace and joy. This morning we share as recipients, with Christians of two thousand years ago in the city of Ephesus, the prayer of the Apostle Paul in his letter to them, Ephesians 3:12, 14-21:

"Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence... When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.

Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen."

(While lifting the bread)

Today we raise the bread as Christ raised it and we proclaim, "This is his body." And we pray, "Crucified Christ, help us to live as your agents of love and peace. Help us understand your giving and sacrificial Spirit, so we too can be your body. Amen."

(While lifting the cup)

Today we raise the cup as Christ raised it, and we proclaim, "This is his blood." And we pray, "Living Christ, let your blood replace our blood. Let it animate and move us in our following of your path of peace and Way of life. Amen."

An Invitation...

You are all welcome to come and tear away a piece of the bread, dip it in the cup and eat. These things are a mystery to us, and they are a reminder of who we are, who calls us, who moves us and who saves us. These are the gifts of God for all who would receive them.