

Holy Communion in Special Circumstances

This service of Holy Communion is intended for use in such places as the homes of the sick or homebound, health-care institutions, or prisons. An ordained minister presides at this service.

Gathering

The minister greets those present with these or similar words.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

[And also with you.]

The minister may continue with confession and forgiveness or with a prayer of preparation. If neither of these forms is used, the minister continues with the prayer of the day.

Confession and Forgiveness

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence may be kept for reflection.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

OR

Gracious God, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. Forgive us and give us strength to turn from sin and to serve you in newness of life. Amen.

The minister announces God's forgiveness.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

OR

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

OR

Prayer of Preparation

If confession and forgiveness is not used, the following or another prayer of preparation may be said.

Merciful God, we do not presume to come to your table trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat and drink the body and blood of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, that we may live in him and he in us, now and forever.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

The prayer of the day or another appropriate prayer may be said.

Word

The gospel for the day or another appropriate gospel passage is read. Another scripture reading may precede the gospel. Brief comment or conversation related to the reading may follow.

A hymn may be sung or spoken.

The minister may offer prayers of intercession from the assembly's prayers, from the resources in this volume, or in other suitable words.

The minister and the participant/s may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

Meal

The minister sets the table.

The great thanksgiving may begin with the dialogue and preface.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. With all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name.

"Holy, holy, holy" may be sung or spoken.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The minister continues, using one of the following forms or another appropriate form.

A

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.
In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.
Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

OR

B

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

All join in the Lord's Prayer. The leader may introduce the prayer with these or similar words.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

OR

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

The leader may say:

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

The leader then gives the bread and wine, saying:

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and the communicant may respond, "Amen."

Silence for reflection may follow.

One of the following or a similar prayer after communion may be said.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you provide the true bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that we who have received the sacrament of his body and blood may abide in him and he in us, that we may be filled with the power of his endless life, now and forever.

Amen.

OR

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Sending

One of the following or a similar blessing is said.

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

OR

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

The leader may conclude the service with these or similar words.

Be at peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

This service retains the essential pattern and central elements of holy communion—greeting and prayer of the day, gospel reading (and comment on it), great thanksgiving, communion, and blessing. Because it is often added, confession and forgiveness is included as an option. In some situations singing may be possible; options include a hymn within the word service and “Holy, holy, holy” within the great thanksgiving.

This order provides a pattern that is suitable for many circumstances. Pastors may, however, encounter circumstances that call for modifying or abbreviating the order. When the circumstances require a shorter visit, the order might consist of greeting and brief prayer, scripture verse, a simple form of the thanksgiving that includes the words of institution and Lord’s Prayer, sharing of the bread and wine, and blessing.

At regular intervals, especially during the Christmas and Easter cycles of the year, those who cannot attend public worship may benefit greatly from participating in a communion service with others from the congregation present. A fuller form of the service, including such elements as a sermon and singing, may then be possible.

In this service, the customary responses are provided for the participant/s, such as **And also with you** and **Amen**. Circumstances may suggest that the minister speak the responses with or on behalf of the participant/s, except that **And also with you** is best omitted if the participant/s do not respond. When a person visited is not able to pray aloud the confession or the Lord’s Prayer, or to recite the texts by repeating short phrases after the minister, the minister may pray the prayer on the person’s behalf.

Gathering

A greeting such as one of those provided marks a transition from conversation to the service of Holy Communion. Other forms may be used, such as “Peace to this house and to all who dwell in it.”

Confession and forgiveness may be included. The assurance of God’s forgiveness is often particularly welcomed by those who live with illness and confinement. Individual Confession and Forgiveness may be used with a person if desired.

The prayer of preparation provided or a similar prayer may be used in place of the confession and forgiveness.

Word

The gospel reading may be the gospel for the preceding or the following Sunday, one of the gospel readings for the week in the daily lectionary, the gospel reading for a lesser festival or commemoration occurring on the day, or another appropriate gospel reading. The reading/s may be abbreviated as appropriate.

Prayer concerns may be requested from those present and included in the intercessions. The prayers that are provided for a variety of circumstances in other sections of this volume may be helpful resources in leading these prayers of intercession.

The physical setting may suggest that the greeting of peace be shared at the end of the visit rather than at its customary place in the service.

In some contexts, laying on of hands and anointing may be included following the prayers of intercession. See the Brief Order for Healing for guidance on incorporating this action into this service.

Meal

If those present are not able to participate in the responses, the dialogue is best omitted. The minister may then begin the thanksgiving with the preface (“It is indeed right . . .”).

Another brief thanksgiving at the table may be used instead of one of the forms given here.

The shared nature of the meal is more evident when others who are present also commune. It is appropriate for the minister to share in the bread and the wine.

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