

Please do not under any circumstances dip or intinct the wafer in the wine. You have far more germs on our fingers than in your mouth and you increase the risk for everyone else when you do so, furthermore, if the person or persons before you have intincted, you are at greater risk. For more information on this you can go to the National Church website and follow the links.

Just remember that for centuries Anglican priests have consumed the remaining wine at the end of the service, after everyone else's lips have been on the cup, and there has never been an epidemic of clergy deaths as a result of this practice. If you have a cold or a sore on your lip then yes, please do refrain from taking the cup but otherwise be assured that the practice is safe.

If there ever is any danger of transmitting an illness via the common cup then the National Church will order the withdrawal of the cup, which is to say that the wine will not be administered to the congregations, until the crisis is over as happened with the SARS outbreak.

You will notice that some people cross themselves before or after receiving and that some will bow or genuflect as they approach or leave the rail. Such actions are matters of personal piety and are not required of anyone.

Now that you know the etiquette around receiving communion in an Anglican church I hope you will feel as comfortable doing it as you would feel whilst dining out at a friend's home. After all, the altar is really the dinner table of the entire family of God of which you are a part.



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**"To Know Christ and to Make Christ Known"**



# What to do when Receiving Communion in an Anglican Church!

# What to do when Receiving Communion in an Anglican church!

What to do when it is time to receive communion can be confusing to someone not familiar with Anglican worship so here are some pointers.

First, if you are a baptized person ( baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and you have been immersed in water or had it poured over your head) then you are every bit as much a Christian as we are (it doesn't have to have been in an Anglican church) and you are welcome at Christ's table – the Altar.

Anglicans receive in both kinds. That is to say we receive both the bread ( usually in the form of a round wafer ) and the wine ( a small sip from the common cup or Chalice ). If, for any reason, you do not want to receive the wine you don't have to. You can either rise and leave the rail after receiving the bread, or cross your arms in front of your chest to indicate to the Chalice Bearer that you do not want to receive the wine. The Chalice Bearer will simply pass you by.

Anglicans have historically come to the Altar Rail and knelt there, with their hands extended, right hand over the left hand, to receive the bread. Please hold your hands in such a way that they are level (horizontal) so that the wafer does not slip off your hand and onto the floor when the priest places it there. You then lift your hands to your mouth and take the wafer into your mouth.

The wafers generally dissolve very quickly on your tongue.

We then remain at the rail until the Chalice Bearer (priest or lay person) comes by with the Chalice. As the communion sentence is said the Chalice Bearer will hold the Chalice out to you. Please guide the cup to your lips with one hand on the bowl and the other lightly touching the base. This will help us avoid spills and chipped teeth! The Chalice Bearer will tip the cup so that you can get a small sip of wine. When you have received the wine just push the chalice gently toward the Chalice Bearer as a signal that you have received the wine and he/she will pull it away and proceed to the next person. We ask that you remain kneeling until the second person on your left has received the wine and then stand up and move back to your seat. If you stand up earlier you risk stumbling into another communicant and causing them to spill the wine.

**But what if I cannot kneel?** Then simply stand, with your hands held out, and you will receive communion. No one will take offence and we know that Jesus would not want you deprived of communion because you have creaky knees, arthritis or balance problems....they come to us all!

**But what if I cannot mount the stairs?** Simply indicate to the Sidesperson (the people backing slowly down the aisle to control the flow of worshippers to the Communion Rail)

that you need the sacrament brought to you in your seat. Please do not be embarrassed by this. Jesus came all the way from heaven to give us the sacrament, if we have to take a few more steps to get it to you that is no problem, and it is as important to us that you receive as it is to receive the sacrament ourselves. When everyone else has received at the rail the priest and chalice bear will come down to where you are sitting and give you communion. Do not feel that you have to rise or kneel, you can remain seated.

**What do I say when I receive the Sacrament?** It is customary to say "Amen" after the Priest or Chalice Bearer has said the communion sentence i.e., "The Body of Christ, the Bread of Heaven" or "The Blood of Christ, the Cup of Salvation" and then receive the wafer or wine. It is not appropriate to say thank you to either the Priest or the Chalice Bearer after receiving communion. It is our privilege and duty as Christians, Lay-Person or Priest, to administer the sacrament and we are doing it at God's behest. We are joyfully doing God's bidding and you are in no way beholden to us.

**What if I am concerned about the transmission of germs via the Common Cup?** If so you can receive the bread only and that is considered full communion.