

Communion at Milwaukee Mennonite Church

Worship leaders:

- Words of invitation to be used are something like "committed to following Jesus" or "have chosen to follow Jesus." This includes those baptized as babies, as children, as teens, and as adults, and those who are committed to following Jesus.
- In using the wording like "those who are committed to following Jesus," we want to invite people to consider the blessing of publicly declaring his/her commitment through baptism.
- Worship planners may feel free to plan communion with different moods and styles according to the particular service's purpose.

Regular attenders and visitors:

- Before entering into the Lord's supper, we should consider how we might need to be reconciled with God and with our neighbors.
- We do not need to achieve moral perfection before participating in communion.
- All who are followers of Jesus, regardless of denomination or church membership, are welcome to participate in communion.

Children:

- Children are welcomed to take communion after they are baptized. The congregation is fine having the worship team decide if during communion, children are offered a grape or a blessing or if they remain seated.

Servers of communion:

- If the worship leader is a taker of communion, he or she is welcome to be a server of communion.

The elements:

- Variations of bread are fine and can be decided by the worship leader. A gluten free choice is needed for any communion.
- Wine is fine as long as there is a grape juice option also.

Frequency:

- We have communion about six times a year. It is announced at least a week in advance.

Adopted: April 12, 2008

Addendum to the above statement on communion

During the 2016-2017 school year, MMC spent considerable time on the topic of communion. We participated in a quarter-long Christian Education discussion of communion, including traditional Mennonite teachings on communion, differing communion practices, and sharing of our faith backgrounds. We emphasized the Mennonite linking of believer's baptism—one of the core tenants of the denomination—with communion as a reminder of one's baptismal vows; this is why traditionally children are not baptized in the Mennonite church (believer's baptism, of adults who choose to be baptized) and why traditionally children do not take communion (only those who are baptized take communion).

The church desired to move to create a clearer statement on communion. However, in that process we realized that the members of MMC have different understandings of the purpose of and symbolism surrounding communion. Our members come from many different church backgrounds and faith traditions, and some have come to the Mennonite faith as adults. Some see communion as a step towards baptism and full participation in church life.

In recognition of and gratitude toward our diversity of belief, we do not feel that we can come to consensus now on another statement about communion, and our current statement (as listed above) will continue to stand. We recognize the traditional teaching of the Mennonite church and will continue to use Christian Education to teach believer's baptism and why Mennonites believe differently about baptism and communion than other Christian denominations.

We also understand that our members have various beliefs about communion; however, all believe communion to be a central symbol of our faith. For some families, children don't participate in communion until they are baptized as teenagers or adults; for other families, children choose to participate earlier as a step towards baptism. We desire to create a "culture of baptism," keeping at the center of our life together the celebration of God's love and the challenge of Jesus' way of peace and reconciliation. We desire the table to be a welcoming one, as Jesus calls us into fellowship with him. We recognize these differences in our current membership, name the tension that we have seen among our members as we discussed communion, and hold both views as equally faithful.

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