

THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as a celebration of our redemption.

The Lord's Supper, also known as Communion, was instituted by Jesus on the evening preceding the crucifixion, during the Passover Feast (Luke 22:11 -15). The Passover celebration commemorated the redemption of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. "It was a night of watching by the Lord, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the Lord by all the people of Israel throughout their generations" (Exodus 12:42 RSV). For the Christian, the Lord's Supper commemorates the redemptive act of Christ in establishing the new covenant. "You must remove the old yeast of sin so that you will be entirely pure. Then you will be like a new batch of dough without any yeast, as indeed I know you actually are. For our Passover Festival is ready, now that Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7 TEV).

We believe this ordinance is intended to remind us of Christ's atoning death.

The Lord's Supper is recorded in three gospels (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20). These passages reveal that the broken bread represents the body of Christ as it was broken in the crucifixion.

The cup passed among the disciples symbolized the blood Jesus shed for the sins of mankind. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews 9:22 RSV).

In receiving the bread and the cup, Christians remember that because Christ died they receive forgiveness for sin. Communion is also an act of obedience. "This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ... This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me!" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25 KJV).

As Christians live in constant expectation of Christ's return, they pre-prepare the way for him by continuing to proclaim his death through Communion. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26 RSV).

We believe the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of hope.

Christians believe that Christ will return for his followers, the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16 -18). In receiving the bread and the cup of Communion, the people of God testify that they "wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior,

Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:13-14 NIV).

We believe the Lord's Supper is open to all Christians.

To participate in this ordinance one must have personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Anyone who confesses Jesus as Savior and Lord is eligible and invited to participate in this ordinance. The Lord's Supper should always be observed decently and in good order. It must never be taken lightly or practiced irreverently.

The Bible clearly counsels that participation in the Lord's Supper should come only after serious self-examination. "So then, everyone should examine himself first, and then eat the bread, and drink from the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28 TEV). The concerns of self-examination include being truly committed to Jesus Christ, being conscious of what he did on the Cross, and having a loving regard for his body (1 Corinthians 11:17-32).

Communion is not merely a ritual. It is fellowship and involvement in the life of Christ and his body, the Church. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16 -17 KJV).