

Receiving Holy Communion

The latest version of the Church of England Covid-19 Guidance (3rd May 2022) has updated its guidance on the administration of Holy Communion to clarify that, unless there are clear and objective reasons not to, Holy Communion should be offered in both kinds to communicants.

For some time there have been no restrictions to shared vessels being used in public worship, and many churches have returned to the use of a common cup to administer the consecrated wine. Others, like us, began with offering just the bread, with the priest receiving the wine on behalf of all, moving over time to communicants receiving both through intinction (the priest dipping the wafer in the wine immediately prior to receiving).

Ministers have always been asked to keep their practice under active review. The guidance states:

'Since bread and wine are always offered to communicants unless there is a clear and objective reason (a 'necessity') to do otherwise, churches need to be certain that such a reason exists for the normal practice of administration in both kinds to be disrupted. For some of the last two years, the existence of Covid-19 in the general population coupled with low levels of immunity and high numbers of serious cases was that persuasive reason. With vaccination rates high and serious cases low, ministers need to consider whether that reason still exists, bearing in mind local infection rates and factors influencing transmission in the local population.'

Whilst Covid will undoubtedly remain with us for years to come, given the significant reduction in the rate per 100,000 population, and the high level on immunity against serious illness, the argument for returning to the normal practice of administration in both kinds has gained much support in recent months, with several churches in the Northstowe Deanery returning to the use of the common cup. After much deliberation and discussion, I would like to offer the common cup to those communicants *who wish to receive it* from Sun 17th June. Our current practice of receiving the bread and wine through priestly intinction will continue, and I expect this to be the dominant choice for some time to come. However, the common cup will be available for those who prefer this method of receiving, and will be offered from the communion rail closest to the organ.

As has always been the case, there is no pressure on anyone to receive the sacrament if they feel unable to do so, or to receive from the common cup if they wish to continue receiving an intincted wafer. To be absolutely clear, the options are as follows:

- To not receive the sacrament at all (people are always welcome to come forward for a blessing)
- To receive both the bread and the wine through the priest intincting the wafer. (Communicants are not permitted to intinct their own wafer.)
- To receive the bread and then the wine from the common cup.

It is for each communicant to decide which they prefer.

Other practices such as the priest sanitising their hands prior to consecrating and then administering the elements will continue.

Do feel free to discuss this with me if you would like further clarification.

Revd Lynda Davies
Rector of All Saints, Cottenham and Rampton

11th June 2022