

Holy Communion
Ordinary Time

Common

The Parishes of Eaton St Andrew's and Christ Church

Worship

Christ Church

Welcome and Introduction

We are delighted that you are here to join us in our communion service and liturgy. “Liturgy” means “the work of the people.” It is the worship we do together in public. We celebrate Holy Communion as the people of God, gathered for worship. We share together in the words and actions of the service, encouraging and building one another up in love for God and his world.

The person who leads the service is called the President, who helps unify and connect the different parts of the service so that we are all united in our common worship and service together.

Our service has four main sections: -

1. **The Gathering**, where we greet and welcome one another, confess our sins and receive forgiveness;
2. **The Liturgy of the Word**, where we hear and receive the word of God and pray for his Church and world;
3. **The Liturgy of the Sacrament**, where we gratefully remember, celebrate and share in God’s salvation, supremely in Jesus’ giving himself for us, and
4. **The Sending Out** (also called the Dismissal), where we are sent out into the world to love and serve the Lord.

It follows the order of some of the earliest known services in the Church and is common to almost every recent service order in both Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. This booklet offers optional explanation and commentary on the left-hand page, and the words of the liturgy on the right-hand page. You can dip into the left-hand material as much or as little as you find helpful.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

As we gather, we prepare our hearts to worship God.

The church warden is a leading member of the congregation holding an ancient office in the church, serving the Bishop and cooperating with the Vicar.

Our Greeting echoes the Bible. St Paul writes to Timothy “Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 1.2). Other New Testament letters also use “Grace”, “mercy” and “peace” by way of greeting and blessing.

The Prayer of Preparation is a centuries-old prayer, inspired by the prayers of the ancient Jewish Synagogue. It reminds us that God knows all our secret thoughts and feelings. It asks God to inspire our worship, love and praise of him, and make it pure, sincere and worthy.

*According to context, **Amen** means: “This is true” or “so be it.” 2 Corinthians 1:20 says: “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so, through Him, the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.” Amen is the characteristic acclamation of heavenly liturgy (Revelation 3:14; 5:14, 7:11-12; 19:4).*

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

The Gathering

There may be welcome, notices and announcements by a church warden.

A hymn may be sung.

The Welcome

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you

All and also with you.

Further words of welcome or introduction may follow.

Prayer of Preparation

All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

Several times in the Gospels, Jesus summarises the whole of the Old Testament Law of Moses and the Prophets in these two commandments of Love.

We recognise that we do not always keep these commandments and so we pray for mercy.

God gave Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for our sins (John 3:16; Hebrews 9:12). Jesus, our great high priest, has entered heaven, the presence of God (Hebrews 4:14-16), where he is our advocate (1 John 2:1), praying for us so that we might receive mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16) and have everlasting life with God (John 3:16; 14:6).

Sin means not keeping God's commandments. When we confess our sins in **penitence** it means that we regret our sins and do not want to continue in them. **Faith** means trusting God knows what is best for us and will forgive us according to his promises and help us to live a new life.

Prayers of Confession

This Summary of God's Law may be used.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

We are encouraged to confess our sins

God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ
to save us from our sins,
to be our advocate in heaven,
and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

The words of confession show that we sin in our mind, our speech and our behaviour.

The words reflect Jesus' summary of the law mentioned above, and our desire for change and improvement with God's guidance and direction.

Our confession finishes reflecting the teaching of the Old Testament prophet Micah 6:8: "what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

*A priest is authorised to proclaim God's forgiveness. The proclamation of forgiveness is called **absolution**. The absolution encourages us really to repent and regret our sins. It reminds us that God has all power and might, that he is merciful and gives us what we cannot earn. **Pardon** means we are freed from the punishment of our sins, while **deliver** means we are rescued and set free from our sins. Confirming and strengthening in all goodness means God gives us power and support in our commitment to what is valuable and morally desirable. **Life eternal** is everlasting life, knowing and in fellowship with God. All this is through Jesus.*

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

All Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.

The minister leading the service proclaims God's forgiveness

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

Gloria in Excelsis is Latin for **glory in the highest**. The hymn echoes the angels' song at Christ's birth in Luke 2 and was used in communion services as early as the fourth century.

The Gloria is a call to worship and thanksgiving. We acknowledge God's greatness and offer our thanks for his blessings of peace. Giving glory to God praises his unlimited excellence, power, majesty, mercy, and role as the source of all goodness.

We praise Jesus as God's unique Son, the sacrificial, Passover Lamb who takes away sin (John 1.29, 36) and who is at the Father's right hand, the place of authority and honour. We pray for Christ's mercy and that he will receive our prayer.

As Persons of the Holy Trinity, Jesus and the Holy Spirit uniquely share in the Father's being and most high, perfect holiness, Lordship, honour, and glory.

Having humbled himself to be born a human being, Jesus as man now shares in the divine glory of God the Father: "Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began." (John 17:5)

In the silence we prepare ourselves to hear God speak to us in the readings.

The Collect is a special prayer for the day or week, which 'collects' together all our prayers in one.

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

Gloria in Excelsis

We respond to God and his grace in praise and worship with this ancient Christian hymn.

All Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

The Collect

The leader invites silent prayer and then prays the collect.

All respond

All Amen.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

Our Lord God speaks to us through the human authors of the Bible. Jesus calls the commandment “the word of God” in Mark 7.13. The New Testament describes all scripture as “inspired” or “God breathed” (1 Timothy 3.16). Hebrews 3.7 quotes Scripture as the Holy Spirit speaking.

The hymn before the Gospel is called the “gradual” hymn (from gradus, the Latin for step since it was sung on the step of the place from which the Gospel was read). It prepares us to hear the Gospel, the climax of the readings.

It is traditional to stand to hear the Holy Gospel as a sign of honour to Jesus Christ.

The choir may lead the singing of the responses.

The Bible has four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They are different but overlapping works, written for different audiences and emphasising distinctive themes. Together they give complementary accounts of Jesus and his significance.

Sermon comes from the Latin for **speech** or conversation. *It is an opportunity for us to hear teaching, application, and encouragement from God’s word.*

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

Two readings from Scripture normally precede the Gospel reading.

At the end of each the reader says:

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

A hymn may be sung

Gospel Reading

Immediately before reading, the gospel reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to N.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Please sit after the preacher has prayed or when told.

Sermon

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

A **creed** is a formal summary and definition of what the Church believes in, amidst controversy and disagreement. This is the “Nicene” Creed, after the First Council of Nicaea which met in 325 AD. Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and most Protestant churches affirm it. The Church of England teaches that it can be proved from the Bible. The East symbolises Christ, the risen Son.

Belief **in** something means trusting it and relying on it, rather than merely believing that it is true.

John 1.14 speaks of the “only begotten from the Father.” Being **begotten** means to come from a father. Jesus, God the Son, is **eternally begotten**, so there was never a time when he did not exist. The Son is truly God: “we are in Him who is true—in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God” (1 John 5.20).

John 1:3: “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

To say he was **incarnate** is to say he was enfleshed. God the Son took on human flesh in the womb of Mary. He became truly human as well as truly God and was born as Jesus, “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,” (Colossians 2:9)

Jesus’ resurrection was **in accordance with the Scriptures** (1 Corinthians 15.4).

“He has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him” (1 Peter 3.22). The **right hand** place signifies honour, favour, authority and power.

“Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead” (2 Timothy 4:1)

“He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1.33)

The Creed

We join Christians around the world in declaring our faith and trust in God. We use words agreed by the early Church, which are traditionally said standing, facing East.

All We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

“The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3.17).

John 15.26 says Jesus sends the Spirit, who “proceeds from the Father.”

Proceeding refers to the mysterious relationship of the Spirit to the Father and Son within God’s substance and being.

Being God, the Spirit receives worship and glory, which only God should receive (Exodus 34.14).

Catholic means **whole** and **universal**, rather than Roman Catholic.

“Preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4.3-5)

Intercession is specifically prayer for others, as opposed to confessing sins, giving thanks, praise or adoration, which we do in other parts of the service.

The Bible talks of God “hearing” prayers, but this should not be taken too literally. God knows every intent of our thoughts (1 Chronicles 28.9).

The New Testament teaches that we should pray in Jesus’ “name” (John 14.13-14) which means according to his authority. He hears and grants prayers according to His will (1 John 5.14)

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

We are led in prayers for others, the Church and the world.

This response may be used

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

The prayers may finish with the following

Merciful Father,

All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

Following St Augustine, a **sacrament** is a visible sign of God's invisible grace and gift to us. As we share in the bread and the wine, we share in Christ's gracious gift and sacrifice of himself.

The peace emphasises the importance of being at peace with one another before we share in the Sacrament. Jesus taught the need to be reconciled with our brother or sister before offering gifts at the altar (Matthew 5:23-24) and prayed that believers would be united in love (John 15.12) and all be one (John 17.21). St Paul warned against eating and drinking selfishly, without concern for God's church (1 Corinthians 11.21-22).

Ephesians 2.14 says that Christ is our Peace. Colossians 1.20 says through Christ God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

The placing of the gifts on the Holy Table or Altar is called the Offertory. The hymn sung at this time is the **offertory hymn**. It prepares us to celebrate communion and to offer ourselves, our thanks and our praise to God.

King David speaks these words in 1 Chronicles 29.11-14 as he gives thanks and praise for the gifts of the people, freely given for building the Temple in Jerusalem. Christians are called God's temple in 1 Corinthians 3.16, Ephesians 2.19-22 and 1 Peter 2.5.

In Judaism the "barakah" prayer starts with the word "baruch" (blessed or praised). Jesus took the loaves at the feeding of the 5000 and blessed them (Matthew 14.19). At the Last Supper Jesus took bread and gave thanks (Matthew 26.26) and blessed it (Mark 14.22). Blessing and praising God is linked to being thankful for his gifts. In the Passover meal, the "barakah" blessing spoken over the bread was: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth." Jesus says, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35).

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Christ is our peace.
He has reconciled us to God
in one body by the cross.
We meet in his name and share his peace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you
All and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

A hymn may be sung

The Preparation of the Table

During the hymn, gifts of money, bread and wine may be taken to place on the Holy Table, symbolising our offering of ourselves and our possessions to God.

We say some words of King David:

**All Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty:
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.
All things come from you
and of your own do we give you.**

The minister takes the bread and wine and gives thanks for them.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

All Blessed be God for ever.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

The Passover “barakah” blessing over the wine included: “Blessed are You, Lord our God, who has created the fruit of the vine.”

Eucharist means **thanksgiving**. *The Communion prayer gives thanks for all God has done for us.*

Communion is a time of fellowship with God and each other. The greeting reaffirms this. The leader prays for Lord’s presence with the congregation, and they respond, praying for His presence with the leader.

*The leader calls on the congregation to offer up our **hearts**, the centre of our self, our mind and will and emotion, to the Lord.*

We give thanks and praise to God. This is right and fitting for he gives every good gift (James 1.17). He is worthy of praise since he is creator of all (Revelation 4.11) and there is no limit to his greatness (Psalm 145.3).

The prayer praises God for his mighty acts in creation and salvation. An extended preface is used for special days like Trinity Sunday.

*We join with the heavenly host of saints and angels in worship in the **Sanctus**, Latin for **Holy**, affirming God’s superlative holiness, echoing Isaiah 6.3 and Revelation 4.8. We then echo the crowds welcoming Jesus on Palm Sunday, in words from Psalm 118.25.*

Hosanna means Save us! *We welcome Jesus as our saviour in communion. In the Sanctus we praise the most holy God, recognise his universal glory, and welcome his saving presence with us.*

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All Blessed be God for ever.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Here follows an Extended Preface for the day, or the following

Father, you made the world and love your creation.

You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.

His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.

And so we gladly thank you,

with saints and angels praising you, and *singing*:

We join in praise, singing or saying

All 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.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

The prayer consecrates, makes holy, the bread and wine. It calls on the Holy Spirit to act so that the consecrated bread and wine is for us the body and blood of Christ, to be received spiritually by faith, with thanksgiving.

The prayer continues, recalling the Last Supper. Breaking the bread is an act of sharing. By eating we share in Christ's sacrifice of himself for us.

The Last Supper was a Passover meal, remembering God's rescue of his people from Egypt. Jesus commanded us to remember him. He rescues us from sin and death.

*Jesus told us to **drink** the wine as well as eat the bread.*

In the Old Testament God promised and made covenants, commitments sealed with sacrificial blood. In Genesis 15 God made a covenant with Abraham. In Exodus 24:1–8, Moses sprinkled blood on the people and the tabernacle. Jeremiah 31.31 looked forward to a new covenant. Our communion remembers and proclaims the ultimate covenant, sealed by the sacrificial blood of Christ. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:19–22) Hebrews 4.16 says “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy.” Hebrews 10.10 says “we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Christ, once for all.”

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

One or other of the Acclamations are said or sung.

The first summarises the core of Christian faith and hope.

*The second acclamation reflects that Christ said, “I am **the bread of life**” John 6.35, and that 1 Corinthians 11.26 says “when you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”*

Lord of all life: Acts 17:24-25 says that God gives life to everything.

The prayer echoes the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:10: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Deuteronomy 33:27 says, “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” In Isaiah 40:11 God is a shepherd who gathers the lambs in His arms.

[N and] all the saints. *On saint’s days, we remember them by name.*

Feast at your table in heaven *refers to the heavenly banquet, a biblical image of eternal life with God. Isaiah 25:6 speaks of a feast prepared by the Lord for all people, Luke 14:15 mentions the blessedness of those who eat bread in the kingdom of God, and Revelation 19:9 speaks of the wedding feast of the Lamb.*

Through Christ: *Jesus says, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).*

With Christ: *We are spiritually united with Jesus. In Romans 6:8, St. Paul writes, “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.”*

In Christ: *This is one of St. Paul’s favourite ways to say that we are members of Christ’s body and share in His status as crucified and risen to new life.*

The Holy Spirit is linked with unity in Ephesians 4:3-4: “Maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit.”

*The Eucharistic Prayer concludes with a **doxology**, from Greek doxa, meaning glory.*

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

to which we respond with one of the following acclamations:

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

(or)

Christ is the bread of life:

All When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with [N and] all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

all respond boldly

All Amen.

Please sit or kneel to pray.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

Jesus taught his disciples to pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6.9-13).

*We say "our", affirming our shared place in God's family together. Jesus Himself used "Abba" in prayer (Mark 14:36). "Abba" is a familiar Aramaic word for **Father** emphasizing deep personal connection. We call God "Abba" through the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15), signifying our status as God's children and heirs (Galatians 4:6). Saying he is "in heaven" reminds us of his heavenly, divine, perfect fatherhood, beyond all mere human parenting.*

*The first thing we pray is **hallowed be your name**. To **hallow** means to treat as holy and set apart, with reverence, religious awe and respect. One's **name** is one's reputation and authority. We are praying that God's reputation and authority will be holy and treated with reverence, awe and respect.*

*This hallowing of God's name aligns with God's **Kingdom** coming, when God reigns, his authority is revered and respected and his will is done perfectly on earth, just as it is in heaven.*

*God provides **bread**, our staple food for the coming day. He miraculously provided manna, the bread of heaven, in the wilderness with Moses (Exodus 16). Jesus says that he is the true bread of life who comes down from heaven (John 6).*

Since we have not always obeyed God, we pray for our sins and trespasses against God to be forgiven. Jesus teaches us to forgive others just as God has forgiven us.

We seek God's guidance to avoid temptations to sin. God does not himself tempt or entice us to sin, but he oversees all things, and these may test us, as Jesus was tested in the wilderness.

Deliverance from evil means rescue from evil things and the Devil, the Evil One. Prayer is a principal part of our spiritual battle against the forces of evil (Ephesians 6.12).

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. *This doxology is not included in all the early manuscripts of the Gospels. It resonates with 1 Chronicles 29:11-13, where David praises God's eternal rule and majesty and reminds us that God has the power to grant our prayer.*

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All 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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

(or)

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All 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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

Having remembered in the eucharistic prayer Jesus breaking bread at the Last Supper (Luke 22.19), the leader breaks the bread, preparing to share it with the congregation.

In 1 Corinthians 10:17, St Paul wrote, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.”

Jesus calls the bread His body during the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26). St Paul describes the Church as Christ's body, emphasizing unity among believers (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Sharing in the bread, we share in Christ's body, symbolizing and reinforcing our unity in Christ's body the Church, the community of all believers.

*The **Agnus Dei**, Latin for **Lamb of God**, is an ancient hymn to Christ, based on John the Baptist's declaration in John 1.29, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” This reflects that Jesus fulfils the Passover Lamb and sacrificial lamb in his death on the cross, saving those who have faith and taking away their sin. We pray for his mercy and for his “peace that surpasses understanding” (Philippians 4.7).*

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.

We sing or say the Agnus Dei.

All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

Jesus calls the bread and wine his body and his blood (Luke 22.19-20). St Paul writes, “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?” By faithful eating and drinking in thankful remembrance we receive, share, and are spiritually nourished by Christ’s sacrifice and giving of himself.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

This references John 1:29, where John the Baptist recognizes Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb who saves us from sin.

Blessed are those who are called to his supper. *This echoes Revelation 19:9, which speaks of the blessedness of those invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.*

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed. *This echoes the centurion’s words in Matthew 8:8, acknowledging Jesus’ authority and power to save and heal.*

All are warmly invited to come forward for a blessing. If you have been baptised and are allowed to take communion in a church that believes in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit then you are warmly invited to receive communion with us.

Please let us know if you would like to be prepared to receive communion in the Church of England.

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

Giving of Communion

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink

in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

(or)

Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

The president, choir and people receive communion or a blessing.

Authorized words are used and the recipient replies

Amen.

Optional commentary on the service to help us understand it

We thank God for sharing in Christ's sacrifice by faith through receiving communion.

Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. *This echoes Romans 12:1, which urges believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, as their true and proper worship.*

Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory *reminds us of Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit, who empowers believers for service and witness (Acts 1:8). God sends us out into the world to be his representatives and ambassadors.*

*The usual blessing, **The peace of God, which passes all understanding**, is based on Philippians 4:7, where St Paul writes: "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus". The peace given by God is beyond human comprehension and protects our inner life and relationship with Christ in love and knowledge. The blessing explicitly names the distinctively Christian understanding of Almighty God as the three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as defined in the Nicene Creed, which we said together earlier.*

Blessed by God, we are sent out. In the Bible, people are often sent out "in peace".

Loving and serving the Lord is central to the Old and New Testaments. In Deuteronomy 6:5, the Israelites are commanded to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength. The New Testament echoes this in passages like Matthew 22:37, where Jesus states that loving God is the greatest commandment.

In the name of Christ: *Acting in the name of Christ the Lord is a New Testament principle. It reflects our identity as Christians and his authority over us. Colossians 3:17 says, "whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

The words of the service and instructions in red for us to follow

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept.

A special Post Communion prayer for the day may be said, followed by this prayer we say together:

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.

The Sending Out

A hymn may be sung.

This or another prayer of blessing may be used

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

We stay standing until the choir and minsters have finished leaving.

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Here for Christ – here for you