

Q. I'm not always sure about etiquette and expectations when I receive Communion bread and wine. Help me to feel more comfortable participating!

Don't worry, even long-time Anglicans are sometimes unsure of what is expected when they are sharing in the bread and wine, particularly as customs have changed over the decades and can vary from church to church. The most important thing to know is that there is nobody judging your 'manners' at God's table, there are no particular faux-pas that are going to offend others by your lack of altar know-how. When we come forward to receive Communion, we do so leaving our differences behind, as well as our more everyday worries about how others are, or are not, measuring up to our expectations. At every meal that we share in our worship service, we remember that *this is the table at which God is host and all are welcome guests*. That reminder over-rides any awkwardness or uncertainty around whether or not we are doing the 'right' thing. That being said, here are a few guidelines that might help any number of St. George's members or guests to feel more comfortable:

Language A worship service in which we share in the Communion of bread and wine is sometimes referred to as "The Mass," or simply "Communion." Our favourite Anglican term is *Eucharist*, which means 'thanksgiving.'

All are Welcome Regardless of your religious background, you are welcome at God's table. If you would like to participate, but don't feel ready yet to share the bread and wine, you may come forward at the time of Communion, crossing your arms across your chest to receive a blessing. If you are intrigued by the practice and meaning of the bread and wine and would like to know more before participating, PLEASE speak to one of our priests. We LOVE to engage in these kinds of conversations!

Make Yourself at Home This is God's table and God wants you to feel welcome and comfortable. If you wish to kneel to receive, you may. If kneeling is hard on you, you can stand. If you find it difficult to swallow the bread, slow down and take your time.

No Dipping Because of concerns around passing germs through the common cup, some have chosen to dip their bread in the wine, rather than sipping from the cup. This is actually less sanitary and poses a greater health risk. We ask that if you are concerned about passing along a flu or cold bug, skip on the wine today.

Allergies If you are celiac, or have an intolerance to wheat, let us know that we can include a gluten-free alternative. If you have an allergy or intolerance to wine, the Anglican tradition understands that we receive the fullness of the Eucharist when we receive in one kind. Cross your arms after receiving the bread in order to indicate that you do not wish to receive wine.

Hands-On – While at one time it was considered disrespectful to touch the chalice containing the wine because the vessel was too holy for ordinary hands, our Communion Ministers nowadays are very grateful for your help in guiding the chalice to your mouth.

Amen The traditional response to receiving bread or wine at God's table is 'Amen.' It is an ancient word that means 'truly.'