

Thank you for being a **COMMUNION SERVER** at **RALPH CONNOR** revised Feb 2024

There are three main tasks: PREPARATION, SERVING and CLEAN-UP

Note: Since the amalgamation of the Banff and Canmore congregations, we have been using the “coming forward in tables” mode of communion service. In previous years, both Banff also used intinction, and Canmore would alternate between intinction at the front, and pew service. These instructions assume coming forward in tables. When coming forward in tables, and pew service, only TWO servers are needed; for intinction, THREE servers plus the Minister, who acts as a fourth server, are needed.

PREPARATION

This can be done on Saturday if the Church is open and Gordon Hall is available (please check the website calendar to confirm availability), or come early Sunday morning around 9:00 AM. In Banff it is easiest to do this on Sunday morning, in the kitchenette.

Communion supplies are kept in the tall cupboard in Gordon Hall; for Banff Sundays these typically need to be transported. These supplies include pottery plates and pitcher, small bowls, small white cloths and embossed tablecloths, silver plates, chalice and pitcher, juice dispenser, 4 trays with 36 communion glasses each, and... a copy of these instructions!

SERVERS PROVIDE

- 1 sandwich-size loaf of bread (whole wheat or white, no seeds)
- 1 small symbolic loaf of bread, gluten free rice crackers or small rice cakes
- Grape juice

PREPARING THE BREAD

- Remove the crusts from sandwich-size loaf of bread and cut into about 80 bite-size pieces for regular Sundays (not too small). Prepare and cut additional pieces for special services (Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving). It saves time to do this at home, then bring the pieces to church in a container or bag.
- Make a “starter cut” in the symbolic loaf to make it easier to split.

PREPARING THE TABLE – use pottery or silver elements

- Place a small bowl in the centre of a plate to hold the gluten-free crackers or rice cakes (broken into smaller pieces if possible).
- Spread the bread cubes on a plate around the small bowl
- Fill two trays of glasses with grape juice using the juice dispenser
- Pour 1 or 2 cups of grape juice into the pitcher, and have an empty chalice beside it
- Spread a small white cloth on a separate plate and place the ceremonial bread on top
- Drape a large white tablecloth (72”x72”) on the communion table
- Place the communion elements on the communion table
- Cover the elements with smaller white tablecloth (52”x52”)
 - In Banff, the communion table is a bit small to hold all the elements. Locate the low coffee table (usually found in Lonsdale Lounge) and place behind the minister at the back of the dais, which can be used to hold additional communion elements.
- Place a small plastic tub or basket in the front pew beside the aisle, so that worshipers have a place to put their communion glasses after receiving the sacrament.

SERVING

All are welcome for communion – members, adherents, visitors, and this explicitly includes children.

Come to the table at the appointed time (the minister will usually ask you to approach the communion table) and stand on either side of the minister. Bring your bulletin with you for responsive readings. As the minister is speaking the “Invitation to Communion”, remove the small cover tablecloth, fold it, and place on chair. Once the “Great Thanksgiving Prayer” has been spoken one server will receive a plate of bread, and the other server will receive a tray of glasses.

Working from the front backward, the greeters/ushers will guide about 8-12 people from the congregation to come and stand at the front of the sanctuary. The musician(s) joins the first group. Bread is served to each person, followed immediately by the glass of juice. Words of service (see below) may be quietly spoken as the elements are served. The minister gives an audible signal for the elements to be consumed and once the group has done so, the minister “dismisses the table” with a blessing. Another group comes forward, and the process is repeated. Please keep an eye out for anyone who finds it difficult to come forward – they may be served in the pew once others have been served. Once all congregants have been served, the minister and communion servers take communion, serving one another.

** Words of service – sample wording includes,

- Bread for the journey/the wine of arrival
- Jesus Christ, the bread of life/Jesus Christ, the true vine
- The bread of life/the cup of blessing
- The bread of life/the cup of love
- The bread of freedom/the cup of solidarity
- The bread of tomorrow/the cup of new life
- The bread of heaven/the cup of life
- The body of Christ, broken (given) for you/the Blood of Christ, shed (poured out) for you

CLEANUP

- Remove elements and tablecloths from the communion table
- Walk through the sanctuary and gather up used juice glasses that didn’t make it into the plastic tub
- Wash the silver and/or pottery dishes and little glasses by hand, DO NOT put them in the dishwasher
- Return supplies to their proper place
- Linens might need to be laundered; otherwise, fold and return them to the cupboard

For ALTERNATE MODES OF COMMUNION – see page three

FOR SERVICE IN THE PEWS – using either pottery or silver elements at the table

- the instructions are substantially the same as detailed above, except (1) there are TWO plates of bread cubes with TWO little bowls of gluten-free crackers (2) the two communion servers are each given a plate of bread/crackers, which gets distributed first, serving from the front to the back of the sanctuary. The communion servers return to the front, serve each other and the Minister, and worshipers consume the bread on the Minister's signal. (3) After the bread has been served and consumed, the two communion servers are each given a tray of juice in communion glasses, which get distributed as before. Again, the communion servers return to the front and serve each other and the Minister, and then the juice is consumed on the Minister's signal.
- There are small pew racks for the empty glasses; after worship, the communion servers need to go around and collect the glasses.

FOR SERVICE BY INTINCTION, if we return to that practice at some point in the future (it has not been done since March 2020 when the pandemic was declared) – use pottery elements

- the preparation of bread is the same, though the bread should be a bit bigger so it doesn't fall apart when dipped in the juice; the juice does not get poured into the little glasses. Instead, there will be TWO pottery chalices on the communion table along with the pitcher containing two cups of grape juice, and two plates of bread cubes with small bowls of gluten-free crackers/rice cakes.
- After the Great Thanksgiving Prayer, two servers – one with bread/crackers, one with a juice chalice, go to the far end of the aisle and two servers (including the Minister) stay at the front, one with bread, one with a juice chalice. Worshipers are directed to go to the closest station; the musician(s) should be in the first group at the front. They take a piece of bread (with a spoken blessing) and dip it in the chalice (again with a spoken blessing) then return to their seat.

One final note: In Canmore the practice was to alternate between pew service and intinction. When doing pew service we used single-serve disposable cups, as there was no remaining glass communion ware (all of that has come from Banff). As part of our commitment to discontinuing the use of single-serve items, we gradually ran ourselves out of the disposable cups and discontinued pew service... and then the pandemic came. When we returned to in-person worship, we did communion with communion glasses containing a bit of cracker and a grape, which were distributed to worshipers when they arrived as passing worship items around (communion, offering plates, even clipboards) was not allowed. The cracker & grape option was quite well-received.

- Banff's long-standing practice was to have intinction, and to have worshipers come forward in tables. The individual glasses sat in a storage cupboard for *years*.