



First Communion Classes at Prince of Peace

Beginning March 6, 2022 at 10:10 am

Communion is a gift of grace – God’s activity, and our acceptance of the gift. Like baptism, communion is all about what God is up to, and what God has to offer to you and me. Because it is a gift of grace, when should a child be welcomed to the table?

A little history might be helpful. Previous to 1970 most Lutheran congregations did not communion children until after they were confirmed around age 14. Then many started moving first communion to about age 10, which was the ELCA accepted practice in 1989. After years of study and conversation, in 1997 the ELCA issued a new First Communion guideline as part of a larger document on the centrality of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion in the life of faith. This document lifts a biblically based Lutheran understanding of the Sacraments intended to help us avoid a “legalistic” and “mechanical” approach to how parents, pastors, and congregations raise up our children in the Christian faith. Regarding Holy Communion the statement recognizes that:

- “Baptized children may begin to commune on a regular basis at a time determined through mutual conversation that includes the pastor, the child, and the parents or sponsors involved, within the accepted practices of the congregation.”
- “Ordinarily this beginning will occur only when children can eat and drink and can start to respond to the gift of Christ in the Supper.”
- “In all cases, participation in Holy Communion is accompanied by instruction appropriate to the age of the communicant.”

“There is no command from our Lord regarding the age at which people should be baptized or first communed. Our practice is defined by Christ’s command (“Do this”), Christ’s twin promises of his presence for us and for our need, and the importance of

good order in the Church. In all communion practices congregations strive to avoid both reducing the Lord's Supper to an act effective by its mere performance without faith and narrowing faith to intellectual understanding of Christ's presence and gifts." (The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament, Augsburg Fortress, 1997, page 43)

At Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, we have offered instruction for children at age 10 or 3rd grade. Beginning this year, we will make communion instruction available for all ages, with the parents playing the major role in discerning the readiness of their children. Parents can also play a guiding role in preparing their children to come to the table.

The following questions can help you determine the readiness of you and your child to receive her or his first Holy Communion:

- Has your child been baptized?
- Is your child comfortable in various locations around the church, including the Altar?
- Is your child asking questions about Holy Communion?
- Does your child extend his or her hands for the bread, when at the altar for a blessing?
- Are you prepared to continue to fulfill the promises you made at your child's baptism to bring him or her regularly to the Lord's Table?

If you believe your child is ready, then I encourage you to sign your child up for First Communion classes. The Education Committee and Pastor Charlie are making arrangements for classes for all ages, based on those who sign up. We ask that a parent be present with their child for each of these classes.

For children grades 3 thru 6, classes will begin Sunday, March 6 during the Sunday School time and continue through April 3.

For children PreK to Grade 2, classes will begin on March 20 during the Sunday School time and continue through April 3.

CONTACT BEVERLY BRAUN if you are interested. Her email is christianeducation.pop@gmail.com

Later in Lent (date to be determined) we will offer a program for ALL called "What Can We Learn from the Seder Meal?" The Seder is the Passover meal that is shared in the Jewish community that is at the foundation of our Holy Communion services. Please watch the newsletter for further information.

First Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, April 24 at the service they usually attend. If the child cannot be present on that day, we will celebrate their first communion at a later date when they can be present.

PreK – Grade 2 Classes (During Sunday School unless listed otherwise)

March 20th

March 27th (10:10 – 1:00)

- Tour with Altar Guild and Make Communion Bread

April 3rd

- Looking forward to First Communion
- Wafer and Wine Tasting with Pastor Charlie

Grade 3 – Grade 6 (and above) (During Sunday School unless listed otherwise)

March 6th

March 13th

March 20th

March 27th (10:10 – 1:00)

- Tour with Alter Guild and Make Communion Bread

April 3rd

- Looking forward to First Communion
- Wafer and Wine Tasting with Pastor Charlie

Seder Meal – Date to be determined

First Communion – April 24th – Specific service to be selected by family.