

Practical approaches to the celebration of Holy Communion

These questions may seem very practical and you may be wondering why we begin here. But practice reveals theology and is a useful place to begin our discussion. Just record what you do, even if you don't fully understand the reasons why.

1. Which local church in Oadby are you describing?

St Peter's

2. What do you call the service at which communion is shared and how often is it celebrated?

Holy Communion

3. Who leads the worship, or presides, at the celebration of communion? Who assists them? How are they authorised to do this?

An ordained priest presides at communion. A deacon, server or chalice assistant may assist. To be ordained, a person must apply and be selected by a national selection conference to be trained for two or three years full or part time training. After this they are ordained as deacon and take up a first training post (curacy) and serve as a deacon for the first year therefore not able to preside at communion but can assist. After the first year, they are ordained as priest and can take up the full duties of a priest. A Reader may be a deacon and assist at communion. A server assists with preparing the elements and is selected through arrangement in the local church, through recommendation by the St Peter's staff teams – ordained and lay. The same is true for chalice assistants.

4. In what forms are the bread and wine (e.g. wafers, loaf, alcoholic, non-alcoholic, one cup, many cups etc.)

The bread is bread rolls for the main 10:00 Sunday service but at all other times it is wafers. The wine is alcoholic but provision is made for any that do not wish to take alcoholic wine. It is taken from one cup.

5. Who is allowed or encouraged to receive communion?

Generally, those who have been confirmed and are full members of the church but anyone who is a full member of any other Christian denomination may receive communion. Confirmation usually happens around the ages of 12 or 13 but it depends on when the person is ready. There is debate and practice in the Church of England about the admission of the baptised (i.e. children younger than 12 or 13 since the Anglican church baptises infants. It does not apply to adults who have been baptised as they may receive communion without being confirmed at the discretion of the Minister) to communion but St Peter's has not approved this as their practice.

6. How does the church respond to children or visitors at communion?

Visitors are encouraged to receive communion if this is their normal practice in their local church. Everyone - children, visitors and anyone else is encouraged to come forward for a blessing if they are not able to receive communion.

7. What happens to any remaining consecrated elements? (Is it consumed, disposed of, reserved, used in Benediction or Home Communion etc?)

Usually, it is consumed by the priest or server after communion, either at the table or in the vestry, but a portion of wine and consecrated wafers are kept to be used for home communions.

8. Is there anything else that you want to say?