

GUIDE FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Version 1	10/07/2020	Simplification of previous guidance; links to other Connexional guidance
Version 2	10/8/2020	Added information about face coverings

1. Introduction

This Guide is part of STEP 5: Safety First in the process for reopening and managing your church building. It provides specific guidance for Holy Communion, but should be read in conjunction with the **Guide to Using Your Worship Space**.

The Faith and Order Committee have produced a detailed document to support the [Act of Holy Communion](#) and this practical guide should be read in conjunction with this.

2. Specific Considerations for Holy Communion

- The elements essential to the celebration of communion are allowed, namely bread and grape juice.
- Careful thought needs to be given to the form of the elements and to how they will be distributed. Wafers are preferable, and can easily be sourced online.
- It is important, also, to remember that communion received in ‘one kind’ (i.e. bread only) is perfectly valid in our tradition and that of our ecumenical partners. This may be considered as an option if there are concerns over safely distributing of grape juice as outlined in more detail below.
- Those handling any specific items related to the celebration of communion should wash their hands thoroughly before and after, or alternatively wear gloves. It is advisable to keep hand sanitiser available during the service to allow for frequent cleansing of hands, for instance just before, and if necessary during, distribution.
- Face coverings should be worn during the handling and distributing of any specific items related to the celebration of communion.
- Care should be taken in the preparation of the sacraments to ensure that individuals do not come into contact with the elements. It is recommended that shared receptacles are not used (i.e. no common cup and a common plate only if great care is taken, as described below), and if possible items which involve minimal preparation should be used.
- If there is to be an act of passing the peace, it should occur only verbally and at a proper distance.
- Speaking over the sacrament is not allowed unless it is securely covered. The prayer of thanksgiving should therefore happen over covered elements, or be offered at an appropriate distance from them when uncovered. The breaking of the bread and lifting of the cup should happen in silence.
- The distribution of the sacrament should be undertaken with a view to maintaining current social distancing measures. Any persons distributing and receiving communion should ensure that they can do this in such a way as to avoid contact between each other, or alternatively to wear gloves. If contact is made then both parties should immediately wash their hands.
- It is preferable to use wafers, and either distribute them at arm’s length, ensuring that there is no physical contact between minister and communicant, or to allow communicants to take their own wafer from a common plate, on which the wafers have been spaced apart. If a larger loaf is used in the consecration, it should not be distributed, except for the minister’s consumption, unless there is absolute scrupulousness about hand-cleansing, keeping an arm’s

length away from communicants, and ensuring that hands do not touch when placing the bread in their palms.

- Similarly, if wine is to be distributed, individual cups should be used and offered to communicants to take from the tray themselves.
- If individuals are distributing the elements, they should do so in silence, so as to avoid increasing the possibility of infection.
- All items used in the celebration of communion should be disposed of safely or thoroughly washed after use, ensuring that those handling them wear gloves to avoid transfer of the virus.
- Clear guidance should be given to the congregation before the service begins about how it will proceed and the arrangements for receiving the elements.