

A GUIDE TO RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

For our visitors each month who may not be familiar with our customs regarding receiving Holy Communion we hope this guide will make you more comfortable. These are not rules—just customs. Additionally, we are especially concerned this season to minimize the spread of the flu virus; therefore, we want you to know only the clergy will be handling the elements, and only after the ritual of hand cleansing.

- We receive communion by intinction. If able, come forward to the front where the minister will offer you bread, which is received in the open hand. Place your right hand, palm up, in your left hand, palm up. The minister will place the bread in your palm with words such as, "The Body of Christ. The bread of heaven." The customary response is "Amen."
- Then proceed to the next minister who will offer you the chalice in which you will dip your bread. The minister will say words such as, "The Blood of Christ. The cup of salvation." The customary response is, "Amen."
- It is customary to wait until the person in front of you is served both the bread and the cup before you step forward to receive communion. Then return to your seat. Anyone who wishes to receive communion but needs to remain seated will be ministered to following those who come forward.
- If you do not wish to receive the bread or the cup, we hope you will come forward and receive a blessing. Simply cross your arms over your chest, and the minister will know that you are there to receive a blessing.
- If you desire a gluten-free wafer, simply ask the minister for one when you come forward.

We hope these guidelines are helpful, but please remember they are only customs, not rules. Our concern is not with *how* you receive the sacrament, but that you know you are most welcome.

A WORD ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF HEALING AT RIVER ROAD CHURCH

Jesus was known for many things in the first century. He was considered a social prophet and a rabbi. He was known as a teacher of wisdom and the leader of a new movement. And he was known far and wide as a healer. As one New Testament scholar has pointed out, "More healing stories are told about Jesus than about any other figure in the Jewish tradition" (Marcus Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*). Jesus also sent his disciples out to heal others, and he promised that they would do greater things than he had done. The ministry of healing has been a part of the Christian experience from the very beginning.

As a part of our Celtic Evensong service, we offer the ministry of healing prayer for any who desire it. The clergy are available in the right transept (by the lecturn) during the lighting of votives. If you would like to receive healing prayer and the laying on of hands, either for yourself or for someone you love, we invite you to come forward during this time in the service. If the healing ministers are praying for someone already, we invite you to wait by the front rail of the chapel, and come forward when they are available.

During this time, the healing ministers will anoint you with oil (as instructed in James 5:13-14) and lay hands on you, joining with you in silently opening ourselves and presenting the concern to God. This is not a ministry of magical incantations. Instead, this healing ministry is simply about fellow pilgrims opening ourselves more completely to the healing love of God. Although God is always with every one of us, there are times in all of our lives when we need help in becoming more fully present to God. Much as a group of friends once brought a paralytic to Jesus so that Jesus might heal him, so we sometimes benefit from the loving care of others who bring us more fully into the presence of God.

Whether or not you choose to present yourself for healing prayer on any given night, we always welcome your personal prayers, that our Sunday evening gatherings may be filled with compassion, and that everyone who worships here may know the healing love of God in their lives.