

Preparation for Holy Communion



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

a congregation of

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

the LCMS U Chapter at Stanford University

1295 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, CA 94301-3347

www.trinitylutheranpaloalto.com

Friends,

This pamphlet is offered to you in Christian love for assistance in attending the Lord's Supper. May this be a spiritual aid as you come for this Holy and Blessed Sacrament.

If you are not a member of Trinity and desire to receive holy communion, you should visit with pastor before worship; closed communion is practiced at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.

If you desire more information on this congregation's confession and practice of the Lord's Supper or if you would like more information on our congregation's ministry and service to this community, please contact the Pastor.

Preparation for Holy Communion

If you were invited to a banquet by a dignitary, would you not make careful preparation before going? Surely you would give much thought and attention to your attitude and appearance, conduct and conversation. How important, then is your preparation for the banquet of our Lord, His Holy Communion!

For the pastoral care of those who commune, congregations urge individuals who desire to receive Holy Communion to announce this desire in person to the pastor. This commendable practice allows the pastor occasion to speak to members and visitors concerning their spiritual needs. At the same time this time of announcement affords members of the Church an excellent opportunity to speak confidentially with the pastor regarding any spiritual matters that may be troubling them.

Inward Preparation | Self-examination

How would a thoughtful Christian approach the Lord's Supper? St. Paul urges personal examination: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Corinthians 11:28,29).

Begin your self-examination thus:

In the name of the Father, and of + the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then pray:

O Father in heaven, help me to search my heart that I may see my sins clearly: the evil I have done and the good I failed to do. Grant me true repentance and the firm resolve to do better through Jesus Christ, Your Son and my Lord. Amen.

Questions prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament

Christians may ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

2. How do you know this?

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

You may make a careful examination of your life since you last went to Holy Communion. Base your examination on the Ten Commandments (Romans 3:20, "By the law is the knowledge of sin"). Think of the good you neglected to do and the sins you have committed in thought, word, and deed.

The following questions may prove helpful in bringing to light your many sins.

Commandment

1

You shall have no other gods before Me.

2

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

3

Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy.

Questions of Self-Examination

THOUGHT—Do I fear, love or trust anyone or anything more than God?

WORD—Have I neglected my prayers, morning, night, at mealtime?

DEED—Have I always placed God first and my own work and pleasures second?

THOUGHT—Have I wished evil upon another for the wrong he has done me?

WORD—Has my conversation been mingled with profanity?

DEED—Have I consulted a fortuneteller, spiritualist, or divine healer?

THOUGHT—Have I thought lightly of God's Word and His Sacraments?

4

Honor your father and our mother.

WORD—Have I spoken unkindly of my church, pastor, or teachers?

DEED—Have I permitted sleep, work, or pleasure to interfere with my attendance at church services?

THOUGHT—Have I despised or thought evil toward my parents?

WORD—Have I purposely said things to anger parents, neighbors or employers?

DEED—Have I in any way been disobedient or disrespectful to parents or lawful superiors?

5

You shall not murder.

THOUGHT—Do I secretly or openly hate someone?

WORD—Am I continually quarreling, nagging, or teasing?

DEED—Am I guilty of drunkenness, gluttony, or other

excesses? Am I doing all I can to save and to sustain the life of those less fortunate than I?

6

You shall not commit adultery.

THOUGHT—Have I indulged immoral thoughts and lustful desires?

WORD—Do I delight in hearing or telling obscene stories and jokes?

DEED—Have I committed an unclean deed with another or alone?

7

You shall not steal.

THOUGHT—Have I schemed or plotted to gain another's possessions for myself?

WORD—Have I misrepresented goods in selling or trading?

DEED—Have I contributed regularly and generously to my church? Do I rob God?

8

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

THOUGHT—Am I holding any grudges?

WORD—Is there anyone to whom I am not speaking?

DEED—Have I listened to or spread gossip about someone?

9

You shall not cover your neighbor's house.

THOUGHT—Am I jealous or envious of others?

WORD—Do I continually complain and grumble?

DEED—Have I tricked or cheated another out of his property or possession?

10

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

THOUGHT—Am I bored with family or friends?

WORD—Have I urged someone to be careless or unfaithful?

DEED—Have I tried to coax others from my neighbor to myself?

Now, having brought your sins to light, kneel reverently and make the following or a similar confession:

O Father in heaven: Be merciful to me, for I have grievously sinned against You and my fellow man in thought, word, and deed. Forgive me for Jesus' sake and grant that His absolution, which the pastor declares, may apply to me, and that my sins are forgiven before You. Amen.

Having finished your self-examination, you may continue a self-examination with the rest of the Christian Questions from the Small Catechism.

3. Are you sorry for your sins?

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Romans 6:21, 23.

5. Do you hope to be saved?

Yes, that is my hope.

6. In whom then do you trust?

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Who is Christ?

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. How many Gods are there?

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Did the Father also die for you?

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.

11. How do you know this?

From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. What are the words of institution?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe this?

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5. Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

Note: These questions and answers are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."

You will recall the great love which Christ manifested in dying for you and all sinners and remind yourself of the fact that He gives you His own body and blood in the Sacrament as a sign and seal of that great love. You will further remember that thereby He unites Himself with you, that He is in you and you in Him, that as a result of this union you are a purified and sanctified child of God who must ever live as such before men. Thus you will remember His death until He comes again.