

An Order of
Holy Communion
for Informal Occasions

An Order of Holy Communion for Informal Occasions

Preparation

Leader: Jesus said, "Where two or three come together in my name, I am with them." On the night before he died, Jesus had a meal with his friends. While they were eating, he took bread, gave thanks to God, broke it and said, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me." After supper he took the cup and said, "This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do it in memory of me." We meet together as friends of Jesus, who has invited us to share this meal. We remember that the faith has been passed on to us by those in every generation who dared to follow Jesus. We remember too that we belong to a world-wide family of Christians of every kind.

Let us greet one another as sisters and brothers in God's family. May the peace of God be with you.

People: And God's peace be with you also.

There may be a time of informal greeting, followed by a hymn, song of praise, poem or psalm.

Leader: As we think of God's greatness, love and goodness to us, we become aware that we do not always behave like members of God's family. Often we have not cared about God or about other people or about the world we live in. Let us look at ourselves honestly and ask God to forgive us.

Prayers of confession appropriate to the occasion may be said followed by a period of quietness.

Leader: Loving God, even now we do not know how far we have turned away from you; bring us back. Send your Spirit like a strong wind into our lives; disturb our complacency, expose our faults, drive out our pride and selfishness.

All: **Help us to put right the things we have done wrong.**
Make us willing to forgive those who have wronged or hurt us.
Clear away our grudges and bitterness.
Demolish the walls we have built between us.
Freshen our lives with your presence.
Help us to live in love with all people.

Pause for reflection.

Leader: God forgives us. Each of us is set free to make a new beginning.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Ministry of the Word

Leader: The Bible is our book. It tells the story of God's people.
Through it God speaks to us.

The Bible is read and there may be a brief exposition or discussion of the reading(s). An affirmation of faith may be said or sung.

Ministry of the Sacrament

Leader: When Jesus took bread and wine, he gave new meaning to commonplace things. In the same way, God can use and transform the everyday lives of ordinary people. Let us offer ourselves and our gifts to be part of God's purposes for the world.

The people make their offering: bread and grape juice are brought to the table, together with money and other gifts.

All: **Lord, receive these gifts, harvest of
the earth and product of human hands.
We humbly ask you to accept us,
with our strengths and our weaknesses.
May all be used to serve and honour you.**

Leader: Almighty God, your love is greater than we can ever imagine or deserve. You loved us long before we knew or loved you. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ you showed us that nothing can destroy your love or separate us from it. You welcome us as Jesus welcomed all who came to him: children and old people, the lowly and the powerful, saints and sinners, strangers and outcasts, the sick and the healthy, those who search for truth.

People: **With all our hearts we thank you, Lord. Help us to recognise your presence and grow in your love. By your Spirit, may this bread and wine unite us with Christ and give us life and wholeness.**

After a pause the bread is broken.

Leader: The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The grape juice is poured.

Leader: The cup which we pour is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

Pause

Leader: Jesus Christ welcomes all to this table.

Come - everything is now ready.

The people are served or may serve each other. The following words of administration may be used:

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the bread of life.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true vine.

Intercessions

Leader: In the communion, God binds us together
as members of one family.

Let us remember to care for one another
as God cares for us.

Let us remember too our responsibility
to care for all people
and for the whole world which God created.

We pray for this nation and community...

for peace and justice...

for the church...

for those who suffer for their faith...

for the sick...

for those in sorrow or need...

for homes and families...

for this congregation...

for ourselves...

All: Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come;
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

or

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.**

(Jim Cotter)

A song or hymn may be sung.

Leader: Go into the world in peace, renewed and strengthened by God's Spirit.

People: We go to serve in the name of Christ.

All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all. Amen.

© 1987, 2000 *Faith and Order Committee*
Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa
P O Box 931, Christchurch, NZ