

# **FPCL At-Home Communion Ministry**

## Vision for At-Home Communion

Graciously extend the church’s relationships, prayer, and Communion to those who are unable to attend worship.

## Goals for At-Home Communion

- Be the smiling face of the church for those who are at home
- Deepen or create relationships by visiting the same people each month
- Offer prayer and record/share any prayer requests from the recipient
- Serve Communion
- Communicate any joys, concerns, prayer requests, and special notes for Deacons/Pastor

## At-Home Communion Ministry Summary

- Deacons maintain a list of current at-home Communion recipients
- Two people form an At-Home Communion Team (“Team”)
  - Session annually approves the list of Communion servers and substitutes (which can include anyone from the church – not limited to Elders, Deacons, or Pastors)
  - Everyone who will be part of a regular Team or substitute should be trained in-person or online prior to serving
- Teams drive to about 2 homes on the first Sunday of the month to offer relationship, prayer, and Communion
  - In general, you should have the same homes each month so your Team can develop a relationship with the recipient
  - If you are unable to serve Communion a particular month, follow the process to find a substitute

## **Table of Contents**

Current FPCL At-Home Communion Servers.....	3
Current At-Home Communion Recipients.....	4
Training #1: Vision and Goals for At-Home Communion Teams.....	5
Training #2: Theology of the Lord’s Supper.....	6
Training #3: At-Home Communion System.....	7
Training #4: The Visit.....	8

## **Training #1: Vision and Goals for At-Home Communion Teams**

### Vision for At-Home Communion

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### Goals

- Be the smiling face of the church for those who are at home
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## Training #2: Theology of the Lord's Supper

### Theology of the Lord's Supper (from Directory for Worship W-3.0409)

The Lord's Supper (or Eucharist) is the sign and seal of our communion with the crucified and risen Lord. Jesus shared meals with his followers throughout his earthly life and ministry—common suppers, miraculous feasts, and the covenant commemorations of the people of God. Jesus spoke of himself as the bread of life, and the true vine, in whom we are branches. On the night before his death, Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples.

He spoke of the bread and wine as his body and blood, signs of the new covenant and told the disciples to remember him by keeping this feast. On the day of his resurrection, Jesus made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of the bread. The disciples continued to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, prayers, and the common meal. As Paul wrote, when we share the bread and cup in Jesus' name, "we who are many are one body" (1 Cor. 10:17).

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper offers an abundant feast of theological meaning, including: thanksgiving to God the Father; remembrance of Jesus Christ; invocation of the Holy Spirit; communion in the body of Christ; and a meal of the realm of God. The Reformed tradition understands the Lord's Supper to be a sign of God's covenant. The bread of the Lord's Supper is linked with the bread of Passover and the gift of manna in the wilderness. The Lord's Supper thus connects us with God's saving power and providential care from generation to generation. Like the offering of sacrifices, a sign of Israel's thanksgiving for God's faithfulness, the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice of praise and a sign of our gratitude for God's steadfast love. The Lord's Supper represents God's gracious invitation to an everlasting covenant. The Lord's Supper also reflects our calling to feed others as we have been fed, and offers a foretaste of that heavenly banquet when God will wipe away every tear and swallow up death forever.

**The Lord's Supper enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God's sustaining grace offered to all people. The Lord's Supper is at once God's gift of grace, God's means of grace, and God's call to respond to that grace. Through the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ nourishes us in righteousness, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit renews the Church in its identity and sends the Church to mission in the world.**

**When we gather at the Lord's Supper the Spirit draws us into Christ's presence and unites with the Church in every time and place. We join with all the faithful in heaven and on earth in offering thanksgiving to the triune God. We reaffirm the promises of our baptism and recommit ourselves to love and serve God, one another, and our neighbors in the world.**

**The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding.** If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended.

Worshippers prepare themselves to celebrate the Lord's Supper by putting their trust in Christ, confessing their sin, and seeking reconciliation with God and one another. Even those who doubt may come to the table in order to be assured of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.

## Training #3: At-Home Communion System

Presbyterian Process for At-Home Communion (from Directory for Worship W-3.0414)

**As soon as possible after the service (ordinarily on the same day), the bread and cup may be shared with absent, homebound, or hospitalized members by two or more persons in ordered ministry. Those who carry out this extended service of communion shall be authorized by the session; equipped with the necessary theological, pastoral, and liturgical gifts and resources; and instructed to maintain the unity of Word and Sacrament through the reading of Scripture and offering of prayers.**

### Managing List of At-Home Communion Recipients

- Deacons and pastoral staff (i.e. Pastor, Parish Associate) maintain the list of at-home Communion recipients
- Generally includes those who are physically unable to attend worship and who are in an area that is accessible to our Communion Teams. Deacons and Pastor will consider any exceptions or special circumstances

### Managing List of Communion Server Teams and Substitutes

- Deacons and pastoral staff maintain the list of Communion Teams and Substitutes
- Two people form an At-Home Communion Team (“Team”)
- Session approves the list of Communion servers annually (not limited to Elders/Deacons/Pastors)
- Everyone who will serve Communion should complete the training for this ministry prior to serving
  - Training can be in-person or online by recorded video

### Expectations and Commitments for Communion Teams

- Drive to about 2 homes on the first Sunday of the month to celebrate at-home Communion
  - In general, you should have the same homes each month so your Team can develop a relationship with the at-home person
  - If you already have a special connection with someone, feel free to request that house for your Team
- Spend a few minutes conversing with and praying for the recipient
- Serve Communion using the provided travel kit
- Communicate back any joys, concerns, prayer requests, and special notes for Deacons/Pastor
  - You should be given the current instructions for sending your notes before your first visit
- If you will be unable to serve Communion a particular month, follow the process to get a substitute server. We don’t want the recipient wondering where the church is!
  - You should be given the current instructions for finding a substitute before your first visit
- After visiting the homes, designate one person on the Team to empty the elements, clean the juice container, and return it to the church within the next week

## Training #4: The Visit

### Preparation

- If you will be unable to serve Communion a particular month, follow the process to get a substitute server. We don't want the recipient wondering where the church is!
- Fill your kit with juice and bread
- All Teams pray together before leaving the church
- Remind yourself of the goals: relationships, prayer, and Communion
- Decide how much time/flexibility you have today if there are any special requests/needs
  - STORY: Nana's smoke detectors needing to be replaced
  - It's OK to say, "Sorry, I can't' do that today"
  - You aren't a social worker
  - It's OK if they want a neighbor/friend/family member to join in Communion as well (if you're OK with it)

### Sample Visit

- Pray as a Team before going in
- Introduction
  - Knock and introduce yourselves. Ask if you can come in to serve Communion
  - Spend a few minutes talking with them and being the smiling face of the church
- Prayer
  - Start by asking if they have any joys or prayer requests to share (write these down)
  - Offer to pray for them right then before Communion
- Scripture = Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
  - 23For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- Communion
  - Bread: "This is the body of Christ, broken for you."
  - Cup: "This is the blood of Christ, poured out for you and for the forgiveness of sins."
- Goodbye
  - Share when your team will be back
- Communicate with Church
  - Report back joys, concerns, prayer requests, special notes for Deacons/Pastor
  - The church can't help and pray for what we don't know about – please keep the congregational care system in the loop!
  - NOTE: everyone is the master of their own domain, so don't judge cleanliness or clutter
  - BUT if you are concerned for someone's physical safety, please pass it along for a Pastoral visit

### Sample "In the Loop" Email

We served Communion to Jane Doe on April 3, 2022.

Joys: She is able to walk around a little better this month

Concerns/Prayer Requests: Pray for her neighbor down the hall who has worsening dementia

Special Notes: Mentioned she's thinking about what she wants in her memorial service some day, so a pastoral visit to help plan that would be nice