

Lord's Supper: Form 3

RCNZ

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In this service our Lord Jesus Christ offers us the opportunity of coming to his table to declare his death.

First hear, however, what is written in the gospels concerning the institution of the holy supper. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."¹ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."²

The Lord's Supper was given to us by Jesus Christ himself, and is to be observed until he comes again. It is a remembrance of his sacrifice, once for all, in his death. The bread and the wine represent the crucified body and the shed blood of the Saviour; they are received by true believers as signs and seals of all the benefits of his sacrifice on the cross. Those benefits include the forgiveness of sins, our nourishment and growth in faith, and communion with Christ and with all who believe in him. Furthermore, as signs and seals of the covenant of grace, they guarantee that God is faithful and will fulfil all his promises. They also summon us to deeper gratitude for our salvation, to renewed dedication to Christ, and to more faithful obedience.

Those who do not trust in Jesus for their salvation and have not repented of their sin, but live in disobedience to the Lord, are warned not to take part in the Lord's Supper, lest they eat and drink judgment on themselves.³

Nevertheless, this warning is not designed to keep the humble and contrite from the table of the Lord, as if the supper were for those who are free from sin. On the contrary, we come as guilty sinners. We

confess that we are dependent for pardon on the sacrifice of Christ and base our hope of eternal life on his perfect obedience and righteousness. We come resolved to deny ourselves, crucify our old nature, and follow Christ as is fitting for those who bear his name.

So that we may partake to the glory of God and grow in the grace of Christ, let us set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.⁴

Prayer

So let us pray:

Merciful God and Father, work in our hearts by your Holy Spirit as we celebrate this supper, so that, more and more, in true faith, we may give ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ. Feed our contrite hearts with him, our only heavenly bread. Strengthen our faith. Gracious Father, care for us, your children and heirs. Supply all our needs, in both body and soul. Grant us your grace to turn from our sin; to live in him, as he lives in us. Help us to take up our cross, deny ourselves and follow the Lord Jesus. While living in a broken world, we long for his return when all will be put right and made new. We pray, heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus, who was delivered up for our transgressions and raised for our justification, knowing that he is always praying for us in your presence. Amen.

Now lift up your hearts to heaven where Jesus Christ is, at the right hand of the Father. Believe that you shall be fed and refreshed with his body and blood by the working of the Holy Spirit, as you receive the bread and the wine in remembrance of him.

At this point the minister should indicate who may partake of the sacraments according to synodical regulations and local practice.

Communion

The bread which we break is a communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

The cup of blessing for which we give thanks is a communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

Let us now together pray the Lord's Prayer:

Version A

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is
in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who
trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.

Version B

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will
be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin
against us.
And lead us not into
temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.

¹ Matthew 26:26.

² Matthew 26:27–29.

³ 1 Corinthians 11:27–32.

⁴ Colossians 3:1.