



The Eucharist

Do this in remembrance of me

[scroll down](#)

The Eucharist is at the heart of Christian worship. It is celebrated by Christians around the world as a memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus, in response to his words at the final meal he shared with his disciples, ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the Eucharist, God invites us to his table as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet which he has prepared for people of all nations and cultures.

Outwardly, the Eucharist takes the form of a shared meal of bread and wine, recalling the fact that, at the Last Supper, Jesus associated the breaking of bread and sharing of wine with his own imminent death, giving them special significance.

After his resurrection, the disciples recognised Jesus as he broke bread to share with them. Each time we share the meal Jesus shared with his friends, we remember his offering of himself on the cross, we rejoice in his resurrection from the dead, and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom.

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

(Matthew 26: 26-28)



The Eucharist (also known as Holy Communion, the Mass, or the Lord's Supper), can take many different forms across the Church of England, and it may be understood by Christians in different ways, but at the heart of the celebration there is always a special prayer of thanksgiving, or 'Eucharistic Prayer' (*eucharistein* means 'to give thanks' in Greek). This is offered by the priest who presides at the service in the name of all who are gathered, giving thanks for all that God has given us in Christ.

At a celebration of the Eucharist, the community gathers, asks God's forgiveness for its sins, listens to readings from the Bible including a reading from one of the Gospels. A sermon may be preached and the community prays together. Bread and wine are brought to the holy table (also called 'the altar'), the priest prays the Eucharistic Prayer, and everyone says the Lord's Prayer together. The community then receives the consecrated bread and wine. At the end of the service, the community is sent out into the world as a 'living sacrifice' to live and work to God's

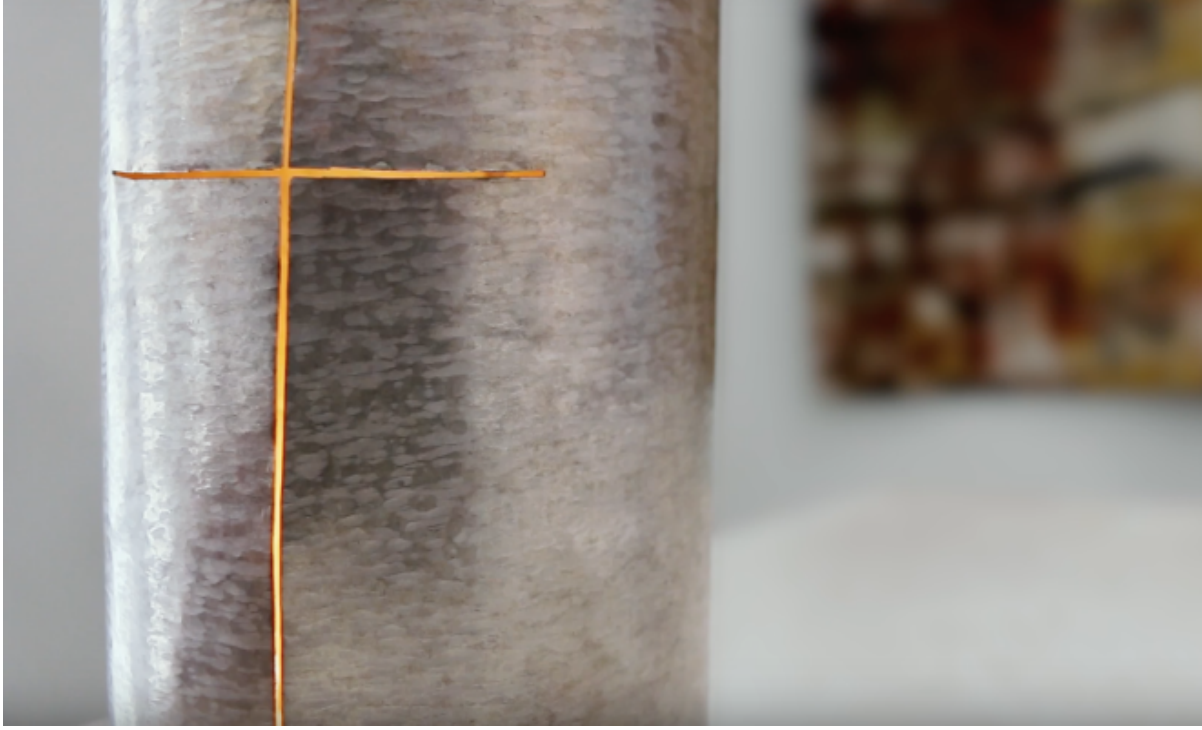


Jim Cox

What happens at church?

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What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a pledge of God's love and a gift of God's life. God takes earthly things, water, bread and wine, and invests them with grace.

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

What are the sacraments in the Church of England?

The two chief sacraments of the Church are Baptism and the Eucharist. They're called 'dominical' sacraments because they are associated with the Lord himself. Baptism is the first step in a lifelong journey of discipleship, following Jesus day by day. The Eucharist is food for the journey and takes us closer to God.

There are five other sacramental ministries of grace that are also seen as channels of God's presence and action:

- Confirmation
- Reconciliation
- Anointing of the sick
- Marriage
- Ordination

Consecration

The act of setting apart land, buildings, food, drink or other things for sacred uses

Sacrament

A ceremony or ritual by which divine grace is conveyed; a term used in the Church of England especially with respect to Baptism and the Eucharist.

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