



Holy Communion Policy

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TYPE	Policy
SUBJECT	Holy Communion
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SCOPE

The Holy Communion Policy document sets out the Holy Communion policy of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of the Northern Territory. It applies to all licensed clergy and lay people licensed to assist the minister at Holy Communion in the Diocese, including visiting clergy. It covers :

- the **materials** that can be used for Holy Communion;
- the **restrictions** around who may receive Holy Communion; and
- the **restrictions** around who may preside at a service of Holy Communion.

This policy is designed for use by ministers of the Diocese and to inform others, where necessary, of our approach to Holy Communion.

MATERIALS FOR COMMUNION

Bread and wine should be used as the elements at communion. Communion is normally to be received in both kinds. Bread is here defined as any type of grain staple, and whilst it is usually bread made from wheat-flour, it may also be made with grains such as maize, corn, rice and traditional Aboriginal staples. Wine here is held to be any drink made from grapes, including fortified and unfortified wines, de-alcoholised wine and grape juice.

Only fortified wine is to be administered from a common cup. If table wine, de-alcoholised wine or grape juice are to be used, they should be administered by small individual serve cups to minimise the possibility of the transmission of infections.

Communion in only one kind may be administered in exceptional circumstances such as communion for a sick person, but it is not the normal practice of the Diocese.

WHO MAY RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

It is expected that Holy Communion will be received only by baptised Christians. In the normal course of events, people who have been baptised as infants and who have reached the age of discretion should be confirmed. Children who have been instructed to understand the meaning and significance of Holy Communion should be registered under the provisions of the Canon for the Admission of Children to Holy Communion in order to receive. Usually it will be the responsibility of these children's parents to bring them to Holy Communion.

Christians who are communicant members of other denominations are welcome to the Lord's Table under the provisions of the Admission to Holy Communion canon. In some cases, a person may come from a non-sacramental church (such as the Salvation Army) and not be baptised. If such a person conforms to the requirements set out in the prayer book for receiving, that is, trusting Christ for salvation, confessing their sins and intending to lead a new life following the commandments of God, not being baptised should not prevent them from receiving. Grave sin without repentance is a barrier to receiving communion (see General Synod Holy Communion Canon 2001).

People who regularly attend Anglican services and who profess Christian faith and who are not baptised should be encouraged to undergo baptism.

WHO MAY PRESIDE AT A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Only people in the holy orders of priest/presbyter or bishop may preside at Holy Communion. Deacons and authorised lay ministry assistants may assist the presider in parts of the service apart from the absolution, Great Thanksgiving, and the blessing. [As a matter of liturgical order, it is noted that the rubrics of A Prayer Book for Australia indicate that the second part of the Greeting of Peace in the Second and Third Order for Holy Communion is to be led by a priest/presbyter. Although not required, it is also appropriate for the presider to give any exhortation in preparation for the Holy Communion (such as at #17 in First Order or #22 in Second Order of APBA), to lead the whole Greeting of Peace and the post-communion prayer(s).]

Those who assist the priest/presbyter in distributing the communion must be authorised by the bishop and conform to safe ministry requirements.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the presiding priest to ensure that the administration of Holy Communion is in keeping with this policy.

BACKGROUND

Under the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia, the authorised standard of worship and doctrine is described as the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, together with the Thirty-Nine Articles. Although subsequent prayer book revisions have occurred, these must be interpreted through the lens of the authorised standards.

Within the context of the Constitution, the General Synod passed the Holy Communion Canon 2001 (amending an earlier canon), which was adopted by the Diocese of the Northern Territory through the Canons of General Synod Ordinance 2002. The General Synod also passed the Canon for the Admission of Children to Holy Communion 1981 (adopted by the Northern Territory in 1986), and the Admission to Holy Communion Canon 1973 (adopted by the Northern Territory in 1974) which regulates non-Anglican participation in Holy Communion. A further relevant law is the General Synod Authorised Lay Ministry Canon 1992 (adopted in the Northern Territory in 1993).

The Northern Territory diocesan synod in 2015 established a select committee to consider the nature of bread and wine for the Holy Communion and report back to the 2017 synod. Similar investigations were held in other Australian dioceses, including Brisbane, and through the international Anglican Consultative Council. The Northern Territory select committee recommendations were adopted by the synod. This policy sets out those adopted recommendations, among other things.

CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

From time to time it may be necessary to make changes to this policy. The body that is responsible for making changes is the Diocesan Council of the Synod of the Diocese of the Northern Territory. Further, the Synod of the Diocese supersedes the Diocesan Council in so far as resolutions of the synod concerning Holy Communion are passed.

The diocesan synod in 2019 established a select committee to investigate reasonable options to address the situation of parishes that have no licensed priest and are thus unable to participate regularly in a service of Holy Communion. Until the synod processes the select committee's report, the current arrangements remain in place; this includes the prayer book rubric requiring that left-over consecrated bread and wine be consumed during or immediately after the service and not carried out of the church.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any further questions about this policy, please contact the diocesan Registrar.

registrar@ntanglican.org.au

For completion when document supersedes an existing policy, procedure or protocol.

VERSION NUMBER OF THIS DOCUMENT	DATE OF PREVIOUS DOCUMENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	REASON FOR CHANGE