



HOLY
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St John the Baptist
COOKHAM DEAN

An invitation to once again share our Lord's chalice. By Fr Stephen

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Christian tradition of sharing the common cup during the Eucharist was disrupted. The temporary measure of intinction, or dipping the bread into the wine, became a standard practice in our benefice to mitigate the risk of infection. As we navigate towards normalcy, it is essential to reintroduce this practice, recognising its profound significance in fostering unity and spiritual connection among believers. The ritual of the Eucharist, deeply rooted in the Last Supper, symbolises unity as Christ himself commanded, "Drink from it, all of you." This directive underpins a long-standing tradition within Christianity, particularly emphasised during the Reformation when the Anglican Church sought to restore communal participation in both elements of the Eucharist. The shared cup is not merely a tradition but a profound expression of our collective faith and fellowship.

At the heart of the Eucharist is the cup of wine, symbolising the new covenant made through Christ's blood, offering forgiveness and eternal hope to all participants. Sharing this cup transcends traditional observance; it reinforces our communal bonds, shared faith, and collective commitment to embody Christ's teachings of love and service. The pandemic prompted re-evaluation of communal practices to ensure public health. With improved conditions and guidance from health authorities, there is an opportunity to cautiously reintroduce the shared cup. This approach must be sensitive to individual comfort and safety, ensuring that all congregants feel secure in their worship environment.

Recognising diverse health needs and preferences, it is vital to affirm that receiving communion in one kind (bread alone) still provides full participation in the sacrament. This inclusive practice ensures that every member of the community feels valued and respected in their method of worship. The reintroduction of the shared cup is a step towards healing and revitalising our communal worship experience. It symbolises a broader commitment to rekindle communal ties and embrace our faith's core values of love, unity, and mutual support. As we progress, our focus should remain on inclusivity and adapting traditions to meet contemporary needs while upholding the essence of our beliefs.

Reinstating the shared chalice is more than resuming a tradition; it is a reaffirmation of our community's resilience and unity. As we continue to adapt and grow, this practice will serve as a beacon of our faith's enduring principles, demonstrating to the world the strength and love that characterises our congregation. In embracing the shared cup, we renew our commitment to live out the gospel, fostering a vibrant, supportive community bound by faith, hope, and love.

From Pentecost Sunday, I invite you to participate in the sharing of the sacred chalice with renewed enthusiasm and trust. This beautiful tradition is a powerful symbol of our unity and common faith. Let's come together once again, to share this sacred tradition, strengthening our bonds and affirming our commitment to one another in faith and fellowship.

Fr Stephen Mills