

Dear Salem Disciples,

There has been some discussion about whether we can have virtual or digital Holy Communion as part of our online worship experience. It is a great question! Your pastors share your sense of loss in not receiving Holy Communion every week. The question of virtual or digital Holy Communion packs a lot of theological punch. Does virtual communion impart grace? Is God not present in the virtual world? Can this “fleshy meal”, the very body and blood of Jesus, which we share together in person, be shared virtually?

The ECLA has provided guidance. The document, *Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns COVID 19-Coronavirus* can be found at

: https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Worship_in_Times_of_Public_Health_Concerns.pdf?_ga=2.19511544.1735373660.1585323257-2025289056.1557504087

Here is the recommendation of the ELCA included in this document:

“Fasting from Holy Communion for a time might be a good discipline. This absence makes God’s presence more profound. During this limited fast we might become more aware of God’s presence around us and in creation in ways that we have never noticed before. Even in times when a community cannot gather to share the sacrament, Jesus shows up, and we are still part of the body of Christ. “The Use of the Means of Grace” reminds us that Holy Communion takes place in the assembly (Principle 39). We recommend that we do not urge people to employ virtual communion, that deacons, pastors, and bishops use this time as a teaching moment about the Lutheran understanding of the Word of God, and that we make use of the Service of the Word and Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Night Prayer and Responsive Prayer. Let us spend time in scripture study, pray for each other, and contact others regularly by phone, email or social media.”

For the time being we choose to follow this guidance. As the pandemic unfolds let’s wait and see when we are once again back together again at our beloved Salem.

Please stay safe.

God’s Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Dave
Pastor Sarah