

Welcome

You are very welcome to join us in worship each Lord's Day! You will notice that six times a year we celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We want to briefly explain to you our belief regarding the Lord's Supper and our practice regarding who may partake of this sacrament at the Canadian Reformed Church of Yarrow.

About the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the visible gospel. It is not a mere symbol of a Savior who is not really there, but a sign and seal of God's promise of salvation in Christ, and the means through which Christ imparts his very flesh and very blood to us through the Spirit.

The sacrament is not merely a reminder that Jesus died for us – it is the real, life giving communion with him, in his flesh and blood given to us by the Holy Spirit. In the Lord's Supper, we do remember his sacrifice for us, but we also receive his grace through the spiritual sharing in the body and blood of Christ.

In the administration of the bread and wine, God more fully declares, assures, and seals to us the promise of the Gospel: that He grants us out of free grace the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross. To all those who are united to Christ through faith, he is truly, objectively, really, and spiritually present in the elements of bread and wine.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is:

1. A Holy sign and seal of the gospel (cf. Ex. 12:13; John 6:53-58; Matt 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:17–20; 1 Cor 11:23-26)
2. A spiritual sharing in the very body and blood of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 10:3, 4; 16; 11:27)
3. Administered every Lord's Day (cf. Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor 11:33)

The Lord's Supper is not about our own effort to remember him and seek him in the depths of our souls. Rather, it is God's act of sealing his promises and imparting Christ's very presence to us by the Holy Spirit who unites us to him through faith. It is not about what we do, but about what the Trinity does to us.

In the Lord's Supper, Christ assures us that, as certainly as his body was offered and broken on the cross for us, and his blood shed for us, he himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life. Through faith, in the Supper we are united more and more to Christ's sacred body by the Holy Spirit who dwells both in Christ and in us. Although He is in heaven, and we on the earth, we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones, and we live and are governed for ever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, questions 75-82).

Who Can Partake of the Lord's Supper?

The Word of God teaches us who may partake of the Lord's Supper with the Words of 1 Corinthians 11:23-29. It is clear from this passage that there is a personal responsibility. There must be an examination of oneself so that the eating and drinking does not bring judgement. Yet it is also clear that

this is not the only thing that determines who can partake of the Lord's Supper. The elders of the Church also have a responsibility. This is made clear in 1 Pet. 5:2 and 1 Cor. 11:27-32.

This basic principle is that the elders as representatives of Jesus Christ who have been given the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:17-19), as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1; cf. art. 30, 31 B.C.) must be the ones who exercise final judgment on who shall be admitted to the Lord's supper. The elders are obliged to guard the sanctity of the table (Form for the Ordination of Elders). Further, the Lord has given this sacrament to the local congregation. The sacrament is a visible expression of the unity and fellowship of the local congregation, which is the church, the ingathering of God's people at that time and place. Christ calls the elders to watch that the sacraments are not profaned in that local church. And so it cannot be the guest who exercises final judgment concerning his participation, but the elders.

Based on the above the following guidelines will be used to determine if guests will be able to join in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in Yarrow:

- *An attestation is expected from members of Canadian/American Reformed Churches. This attestation can be a hard copy or an electronic copy.*
- *Guests from sister churches may attend without an attestation after an interview with 2 office bearers where the guest makes clear that they are a member in good standing in their own local congregation*
- *Guests from federations that we do not have sister church relations with are not able to attend the Lord's Table*
- *At this time guests from the sister churches in Holland (GKv) also need to undergo an interview process. This is in line with a decision of the Canadian Reformed Synod held in Dunville ON in 2016 where the exchange of ministers and intercommunion was suspended with the GKv.*

With these guidelines we are making no judgment on your personal faith or relationship with Christ. We understand that our process is somewhat unusual in the broader Christian context, yet we believe that it is biblical and what is biblical is best for our congregation. Moreover, we may be assured that by hearing the Word and watching the celebration of this sacrament, you will still be edified through the working of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus gave the sacraments as visible signs and seals for the strengthening of our faith as we focus our faith on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation. May its observance direct you to seek your life outside of yourself in Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins and everlasting life. May the Lord bless your attendance at our service!

If you have any questions about this policy, please speak to one of our elders or our minister.