

## June 2025

Last month, I briefly explained one of the reasons we practice “closed communion,” which is the biblical practice of not communing just anyone who presents themselves at the rail. The Lord’s Supper - the body and blood of Jesus - is a kind of medicine which needs to be taken properly in order to not cause harm (see 1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

Another reason is that to commune at an altar, is to publicly state that you agree with what is believed, taught, and confessed in that place. It is to say that you are in fellowship with the doctrine (teaching) of that church. So, while we may not presume to judge the faith of another, the Bible does call on us to judge between varying confessions of the faith (Romans 16:17), because without agreement in doctrine and all its articles, there is no fellowship, no oneness, in the holy things. For example, if someone has joined their confession to a different church that doesn’t hold to biblical teaching concerning the Lord’s Supper (the body and blood of Jesus are really present in the bread and wine) or another article of faith (i.e. how a person is saved, the inerrancy of the Scriptures, original sin, God’s design for man and woman, the nature of Baptism, the list goes on...), then that person, by means of their differing church membership, declares that they are not in agreement with what is taught at our altar. Fellowship in the Lord’s Supper is a proclamation of faith which the apostle instructs us “with one mind and mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:6). We may not come together in the Lord’s Supper with differing minds and mouths. That means that what we are doing is simply taking a person at their word that they disagree with us on what the Bible teaches according to the church where they have joined their confession of the faith.

Again, this is not to condemn those whom we do not commune. Not at all. I did not commune my children for years and years - not until they put their “amen” to what is believed, taught, and confessed at our altar. We don’t create unity in the church, the Lord Jesus does by His Word. Unfortunately, there isn’t total agreement in His Word by all Christians and therefore there are divisions. That’s why we pray in the Divine Service “for the well- being of the Church of God, and the unity of all.” But where there is no unity in the Word, there can be no unity in the Sacrament. It would be a façade.

I think we all have had a time when we’ve admired someone for holding to their convictions. They took it seriously. We do too. I appreciate when someone from another denomination recognizes they shouldn’t go against their own church’s confession and commune at our altar. We, likewise, wouldn’t want to compromise our confession in front of others and commune at a place we are not in unity with. We both are being honest and not trying to cover up points of dissension which can lead to a fruitful discussion: “Let’s open God’s Word and talk about it.”

I hope these past two little articles on the Lord’s Supper and closed communion have been helpful to bring back to mind that which you once have heard but perhaps needed a small refresher!

In Christ,  
Pastor Suggitt

## LIFE QUOTE

You have a higher purpose than living for yourself. Your work is His. You live for the one who died and rose for you. You share the good news about Him. That's how God grows His family, adding branches to His tree. You get to be part of this family—a family with a rich past and a glorious future.

*A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)*

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