

Intincting at Holy Communion – policy for 8.00 service at St Michael's Church

The custom of the Church of England at Holy Communion is that the wine, representing the Blood of Christ, is received via the “common cup”, i.e. a chalice that all drink from. The use of a silver chalice and fortified wine, together with the practice of wiping the rim of the chalice after each communicant has drunk from it, means that, in medical opinion, the risk of infection being transmitted from one communicant to another is minimal.

Nonetheless, it is considered good practice for anyone who has a cold, or a cold sore on their lip, to refrain from receiving wine. The doctrine of the Church of England is that the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood is fully received even if the communicant receives only the bread/wafer or only the wine (known as receiving “in one kind”).

One other officially accepted way of receiving both bread and wine is for the *priest* to intinct the bread or wafer before administering it to the communicant. This practice was used universally during the swine ‘flu epidemic a few years ago.

A few individuals at St Michael's have indicated that due to concerns about the spread of infection they do not wish to drink from the chalice. The most recent guidance from the Diocese is as follows:

If, for reasons of health or for fear of spreading disease, a communicant does not wish to receive from the chalice, they can either simply receive in one kind, or ask the minister to intinct the consecrated bread for them; but they should not intinct the bread themselves.

Those who wish to receive a wafer intincted by the priest are therefore requested to come up to the altar rail first to receive. Those kneeling (or standing) at the rail on the right hand side of the altar at the beginning of the administration of communion will receive a wafer intincted by the priest. Thereafter, a wafer and the chalice will be offered to each communicant, and communicants will not be permitted to intinct their wafer in the chalice.