

Lord's Supper Invitation
Maranatha Church Procedures
2007

Intent:

It is the intent of the Maranatha to permit **all baptized members** to partake in Communion, in keeping with the decision of Synod 2006 (Art.71).

Background:

Previously Maranatha extended the invitation to partake of the Lord's Supper to its full-members only. Full membership is achieved by a Public Profession of Faith, which presumably was preceded by education and/or instruction complete with examination by the Consistory.

As well, Maranatha CRC practices an 'open' communion table where an invitation is given prior to the sacrament that all who profess Jesus Christ as their Savior are welcomed to participate. No regulatory actions are taken by the elders to ensure that all who participate have indeed 'publicly' professed their faith.

Matters on Hand:

Synod 2006 has adopted the stance to allow **all members (baptized and professing)** to participate in the Lord's Table. The premise for this is to be inclusive of all covenant members. See excerpt below.

Recommendations of the minority report: (Acts of Synod 2006, page 730)

1. That synod allow for the admission of all baptized members to the Lord's Supper on the basis of their full membership in the covenant community.

Grounds:

- a. The five grounds of Overture 16 along with the Report B of 1995 show that there are valid theological reasons to consider membership in the covenant as the basis for participation in communion just as membership in the old covenant was the basis for participation in the Passover.
- b. Opening communion to all baptized members is not a denial of the need of an expression of faith (i.e., age-appropriate profession) but is a healthier understanding that such faith is expressed in many ways and at many levels within and through the covenant community and not only through a verbal affirmation of beliefs.
- c. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, like preaching and the sacrament of baptism, is a means of grace to all members of God's covenant.

The essential question is: What is evidence of faith in a covenant member?

The very act of hearing the "invitation" to communion and responding in faith by participating is an age-appropriate expression of knowing that communion is about being part of a community that receives the gift of life from the Jesus who said, "Let the little children come to me."

—Adopted

Adopted Procedure:

Beginning on Easter Sunday, 2007 Maranatha will extend the invitation to partake of the Lord's Supper to all; baptized and professing members, as well as to other guests who profess Jesus as their Savior.

Recognizing that not all baptized members will be desirous of partaking now just because they can, all parents are encouraged to speak with their children about faith in Christ.

It is also recognized that any potential partaker may be doing so for the first time, whether baptized member or visiting guest. Therefore we will enable **all** to publicly profess their faith prior to participation. This shall take various means including but limited to reciting the Apostle's Creed in unison, joining in a litany designed to profess faith in Christ, a song, reading or prayer.

Future Aspects:

This open table policy does not provide all covenant members with full voting privileges, nor does it preclude that education of our faith tenets be discontinued. Rather, education via catechism and pre-profession classes will continue, and public profession of faith is still the manner in which to engage fully with the body as a full member.