

MORAVIAN MOMENT #28...
Moravian belief...Holy Communion

Holy Communion is celebrated in commemoration of the last supper Jesus had with his disciples. In that simple but significant experience, he broke bread with his Disciples and drank from a common cup, indicating that his body was broken and his blood was shed for our redemption. Then Jesus said to them, for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim my death until I come. The Moravian Church maintains that the Bread and Wine are symbolic Christ body broken and his blood shed for us. We do not believe as some other Churches do, that the Bread and Wine actually become or are transformed in a mystical way into the body and blood of Christ.

The Moravian Church maintains an OPEN TABLE, welcoming members of other Christian Churches to share in the service. The words of Institution are said whilst the congregation is standing, a practice going back to the old Unity emphasizing that the Bread and Wine are not being worshipped. The elements are then distributed to members in their pews, and the congregation partakes together, thus illustrating the fellowship nature of the service. This is a special service because we believe that here more than anywhere else we find the presence of Christ, but no attempt is made to define that presence. At the end of the service the right hand of fellowship is given during the singing of a covenant hymn, signifying that through words and action, we renew our covenant with each other and our Lord.

Where permitted by the local Province, baptized children, on request of parents and after instruction by the Church as to the meaning and value of the Holy Communion, may be admitted to Holy Communion.

While the Lord's Supper itself stresses the Unity and Fellowship which believers have with Christ and each other, no matter what form may be followed in its observance, Moravian traditions emphasize this aspect of the Sacrament and have thereby brought blessing to many through the years. In this service also, the believers express thanksgiving for the blessings of the New Covenant and look forward to the consummation of all things at the second coming of Christ in Glory.

Who then is worthy to sit at the Lord's Table? Moravians believe that we are all sinners saved by the grace of God, and that only the blood of Jesus can make us whole. The Communion Litany forces us at all times to examine ourselves and to recognize who we are when we sit at the Lord's Table. The Litany declares: "we do not presume to come to this thy table, O Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold mercies." We come every time, humbling ourselves before a mighty God. Communion therefore, is for sinners, for you see, we come not because we are holy, but, we come for Christ to make us holy. It ought to cleanse us and make us whole.

22nd July, 2007