



# CHRISTUS REX

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Anglican Church of Southern Africa

**July 2021**

**We are called to love, worship and obey God; to put His love into practice in the power of the Holy Spirit through our witness and service, that all may know Christ our King**

## **Covid-19 and Church Life**

Virtually all aspects of life as we knew it in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been affected by the 21<sup>st</sup> century restrictions to contain the spread of the SARS-COV-2 virus. Adapting to the restrictions imposed on coming together for worship, and on aspects of traditional liturgical practice, have been particularly hard for many church goers. Some of the changes that churches have had to make will be the focus of this and subsequent issues of *Christus Rex*. Reader's observations and comments on the topics discussed will be welcomed as a means of coming to terms with the need for both practical and liturgical changes.

One of the restrictions that has had a noticeable effect and caused considerable unhappiness is that church goers were initially prevented from having regular weekly communion, and after they could return, were not receiving bread and wine when they did receive the sacrament.

### **Receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion**

The role of the Eucharist or Holy Communion in Anglican worship, and how communion rituals have been affected by the pandemic is the topic in this issue.

Anglican rites are centred upon the worship of God and the receipt of God's grace or blessing. The two *great sacraments* of Baptism and Holy Communion (also called the 'Eucharist' or 'Lord's Supper') are primary. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Baptism and Holy Communion are the 'great' sacraments because they were founded by Jesus Christ.

The practice of Holy Communion was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. The Southern African *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989* summarizes the Last Supper in these words:

Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who on the night he was handed over to suffering and death, took bread and gave thanks saying, "Take, and eat: this is my body, which is broken for you." In the same way he took the cup, saying, "This is my blood which is shed for you. When you do this, you do it in memory of me."

Communion is usually received at the regular weekly worship service by a baptised and confirmed Anglican believer. Most churches celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday, some less frequently, and many also have one or more mid-week communion services. In Holy

Communion, Anglican worshippers normally receive a wafer, or a small portion of bread, together with a sip of wine from a chalice (grape juice in some churches).

The significance of the bread and wine is debated within Anglicanism, with a variety of Reformed views being most common. Some Anglicans view the elements as being simply bread and wine, they see significance in the Eucharistic ceremony as a memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, or as an action during which the spiritual presence of Christ is experienced by the faithful. Others view the elements of bread and wine as instruments through which the spiritual presence of Christ is received. While some see the elements as bearing the real but intangible body and blood of Christ.

Irrespective of individual understanding of Holy Communion the central Anglican ceremony is the weekly (generally Sunday) communion service, which is structured with twin focal points, word, and sacrament. This is to stress the importance of joining the proclamation of God's word (meaning the Bible and its message) with the administration of a sacrament.

The first portion of the communion service is the proclamation of the word (Synaxis). It contains set prayers, invocations, and praise, some said by a minister and some by all worshippers. The core of the service of the word involves reading from passages of scripture and a sermon or homily, with a proclamation of faith (usually the Nicene or Apostles' Creed) serving as a corporate response to the word read and preached.

The second portion is the service of the sacrament (*The Anaphora*), referring to the Eucharist. This portion of the service includes brief recitations of salvation history (creation, fall, redemption) and of the Last Supper. There is also an invocation of the Holy Spirit by an ordained priest to consecrate the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine. Following this the Lord's Prayer is said. Then the elements are distributed to the worshippers, individual wafers or portions of bread being placed in the hands or mouth of the recipient, and sips of wine being taken from a common cup. After cleansing of holy vessels and concluding prayers, the service ends. There are variations on this pattern, but this is a representative summary.

As the restrictions imposed to limit the spread of Covid-19 infection have caused modifications to these traditional communion practices, some worshippers have queried the legitimacy and efficacy of the modified Eucharistic rite. Many have wrestled with the dilemma of whether their personal fear of infection or receiving weekly communion should have priority. Others, although attending church services, have questioned whether they are truly receiving the sacrament as only consecrated bread or wafer is received but not wine. And some participating in virtual services have felt unease participating in 'spiritual communion' which requires no administration of bread or wine, or when they have been asked to prepare their own bread and wine at home and their offering is consecrated remotely by a priest viewed on a TV or computer screen. These are not new dilemmas and the principles involved have been debated over the centuries.

The frequency with which Christians should receive communion has changed greatly over time. The apostolic community communicated daily (Acts 2:46) but in later days attendance at a liturgical service became common and receiving Holy Communion became infrequent. The Lateran Council of 1215 provided that all Christians should communicate at least once a year, and this became the practice that lasted for over 400 years. Both Catholic and Protestant religious revivals in the 17<sup>th</sup> century fixed the minimum frequency for communion as three times per year, with cathedral churches celebrating communion monthly. The Anglican Oxford Movement of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pressed for regular weekly communion, and this became the norm for Anglicans. It was not until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the Roman Catholic church

adopted weekly observance of Communion (Mass). Anglicans have done so since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The custom of receiving Holy Communion as both bread and wine was general until about the 12<sup>th</sup> century but in the 13<sup>th</sup> the practice of communicating with wine had virtually disappeared in Western churches. The 1281 Synod of Lambeth restricted the use of consecrated wine to the celebrant. Whether or not laity should receive both bread and wine remained controversial, becoming acute in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Reformers insisted that only Communion in both kinds was scriptural, but the Council of Trent (1545-63) ruled that the Body and Blood of Christ are present in each of the consecrated elements. This implies that the fullness of Communion is to be had by receiving either element alone. This justification was used, especially by Roman Catholics up until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council (1962-65), to justify withholding the chalice from laity. The South African *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989* (page 510) makes allowance and provision for communicating the sick outside the Eucharist: "Outside the Eucharist (they) may receive the consecrated bread and wine either in both kinds separately, or by intinction, or in one kind only." There is also provision (page 516) for Spiritual Communion: "One who is unable to receive the Sacrament physically may make a spiritual communion and be certain that Christ comes to *him* in this way as surely as he does in the Sacrament."

The current Covid-19 South African Anglican practice of the celebrant taking Communion as both bread and wine but congregations receiving bread only is not a reversion to pre-Reformation practice but purely to limit the risk of contagion. The fullness of Communion through receipt of either bread or wine is recognised as is the spiritual communion of those unable to be physically present but who participate virtually.

The Covid-19 Anglican practice of Communion with bread alone will almost certainly disappear once the pandemic is brought under control. Whether or not communicants will revert to weekly attendance at Holy Communion is less certain as new forms of virtual worship, made possible by modern technology, have enabled many worshippers to experience and gain spiritual sustenance without leaving home.

[Sources: *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, and *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*]

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## Social Skills for Returning to Church

Social skills are like muscles: you use them, or you lose them. That's why as more people get vaccinated and churches start to reopen, some parishioners say that they feel socially rusty, anxious, awkward, and even socially hungover.

The good news is that since social skills atrophy like a muscle, they can also be developed, stretched, and toned like one. It is just a matter of intentional practice. TalentSmartEQ have researched and refined for over twenty years training in social skills. Their data also shows that people who practice Emotional Quotient (EQ) strategies can improve their emotional intelligence quickly and start to enjoy the benefits.

To help people adjust after Covid-19 isolation TalentSmartEQ suggest seven strategies to help dust off social cobwebs and make a smooth transition back to church.

1. **Be curious.** Showing interest in others is a simple strategy that makes the people around you feel good. Instead of trying to plot out what you are going to say next, listen to the person who's speaking, and seek to learn more with curious questions. Don't be surprised when you chuckle over the fact that everyone has been doing the same things

for this past year—watching tv, cooking, and finally seeing their family. You'll be surprised how much you learn this way and how much people will appreciate you for your genuine interest.

2. **Plan for social interaction.** It might sound a bit forced to plan ahead, but it actually helps you to be more relaxed – because you'll feel prepared instead of anxious. Next time you are dreading an upcoming social event, write out some questions (upcoming travel plans?), topics (new hobbies?), and thoughts, these will serve as icebreakers in your conversations. Writing out this list will help you manage your anxiety and channel it in a constructive way.
3. **Greet people by name.** When people hear their name, it literally lights up a different part of their brain and feels as good as a compliment. Using people's names to start a conversation sends the message that you see them as an individual and are not just going through the motions of pleasantries.
4. **Practice the art of listening.** Harvard researchers found that when people talk about themselves, it feels as rewarding as food or money. So, spend more time being a good listener. Listen for feeling, meaning, and anything going on below the surface. Show engaged body language and ask good questions. If an interesting thought or question comes to you after the fact, follow up later or even another day.
5. **Remember the little things that pack a punch.** Just like greeting people by name, connecting with others does not have to be a long conversation. One small comment, question, or gesture that shows you care can be just as impactful, if not more. Remembering to ask your friend about their trip over the weekend or their children's sports can go a long way to show you care and make them feel it.
6. **Use positive body language.** So much of how you make someone feel is about how you come across, not what you say. According to research, our emotions are contagious. They literally spread from person to person. By paying close attention to your body language and keeping it positive, you can spread positivity to the people around you. Upright posture, facing the people to who you are speaking, uncrossing your arms, and speaking with an upbeat tone of voice will all help you spread positivity and connect you with the people around you.
7. **Use touch to connect.** Using touch in an appropriate and well-timed way releases oxytocin and makes people feel good. Normally something as simple as a handshake or a high five is connective and personal. (Covid times may require elbow bumps!)

**From Insights to Action.** One of the most challenging things about returning to church or work after lockdown is that mixing with others causes anxiety. To minimize feeling overwhelmed, use one of the above strategies at a time. Practice, and check your progress daily, by asking yourself how your interactions went and what you'll do next time. One strategy carefully applied for a week or two and monitored will take you a lot further than attempting to apply all seven at once.

[TalentSmartEQ [https://www.talentsmarteq.com/contact/.](https://www.talentsmarteq.com/contact/)]

### **Thoughts to ponder.**

We do not go to Holy Communion because we are good; we go to become good.

John Bosco

Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to heaven.

Pope Pius X

Holy communion is to feel one with the One in all beings and creations.

Shankarananda

The day that I can no longer receive Our Lord in Holy Communion,  
Our Lord Himself will come to take me.

Mary Potter

## **Coping with Covid-19: A Mental Health Toolbox**

(An article by Freddie van Rensburg  
Maverick Life, 26 June 2021)

Preparation for a possible third wave, or a continuation of the Covid-19 crisis as we enter year two of the pandemic, needs to entail psychosocial work on ourselves; this requires scrutinising the interplay of our individual thoughts and behaviours in relation to the social factors influencing our lives.

The essence of our survival of the third wave is perfectly encapsulated by Michael Nulty, author of *Getting Beyond What Is*: "Regardless of the situation we find ourselves in, we can choose how we respond to it. Even if we cannot change the situation itself, we can choose to change how we look at it and how we respond to it. And in our response lies our growth and our freedom."

### **The knowledge that comes from hindsight**

The first tool to put in our toolbox is the ability, instead of merely reacting to it in a knee-jerk fashion, to choose how we are going to respond to this wave.

The advantage we take into the third wave is that we have the lessons of inappropriate reactions to the first two waves. With the knowledge of hindsight, we are much better equipped to choose our response. One of life's fundamental truths is that we always have a choice – even if that choice is only to choose not to react to a situation, but to choose an appropriate response instead.

One of the first choices we have when it comes to Covid-19 is acceptance. We can either spend our days fighting everything related to the virus, or we can accept that the virus exists and that we are powerless over the effect it has in our lives. We live in hope that the authorities are doing their best to keep us safe, and one of those measures is giving us the choice to be vaccinated.

The other choice we have is to accept that there are protocols we need to follow to ensure our safety. That acceptance entails keeping our physical distance, washing our hands regularly, wearing our masks in public and sanitising our hands often.

### **The power of mindfulness and gratitude**

Another tool, and one of the best choices we can make for ourselves daily, is to choose to stay in this moment, to be mindful, to practise mindfulness today.

The fact is that guilt, shame, and regret lie in the past, while fear relates to the future. In this moment, in the here and now, everything is as it should be. When it comes to the virus, we must choose not to project into the future, or we run the risk of being debilitated by fear.

We cannot spend our days and nights worrying about getting sick and the safety of our families. All we can do is take the necessary precautions to stay safe and keep on telling ourselves that everything is okay, in the here and now.

A third tool, which will stand us in good stead during the third wave, is the g-word: gratitude. When we live in fear and uncertainty we tend to focus on the negative; what we do not have, instead of what we do have. It will not do us any good to put our energies and attention on the virus and the limbo that it causes in our lives.

Practising gratitude for what we have, daily, keeps us more positive and in the moment. Gratitude is the opposite of self-pity and helps us to deal effectively with adversity, assists us in building strong relationships and even contributes to enhanced health.

### **Togetherness**

While on the topic of relationships, our next tool, and one of the most fundamental ways to survive the third wave and protect our mental wellness, is to work on our relationships. Do not isolate. Whatever you do, stay in touch with loved ones and people you care for and who care for you.

Connection is the antidote to many forms of mental illness and has proven successful in helping people with depression and anxiety. Despite wanting to isolate as our mental health deteriorates, staying connected is counterintuitive, but the right thing to do for our mental health.

Make a point of reaching out to at least three people a day via Zoom, SMS, WhatsApp, Signal, Skype, or any of the Google connection platforms. We can stay in touch if we want to, and the thing is, during a pandemic we need to.

When we feel low, worried or under pressure in our quest to survive, we tend to get a bit self-absorbed. One of the best strategies to follow when we struggle, is to get out of ourselves and do something for someone else. By being of service to others we are helping ourselves to feel better about ourselves and our situation. This also links with our strategy to stay connected. Nothing works better for our mood and even our self-esteem than to do esteemed things.

### **It is okay not to be okay.**

It is imperative to come to learn, and accept, that it is okay not to be okay. We are living in strange, interesting, and scary times. If we constantly feel different than we normally do, anxious and afraid, it is important to acknowledge these emotions and accept that we are not currently living the norm.

It will help us mentally if we can come to be kind to ourselves and take extra care of ourselves while things are so topsy-turvy. We should take the time to take extra care of ourselves. Despite the fact that now, with the line between work and home being blurred, we need to work even harder to ensure a healthy work-life balance and not neglect our overall wellness.

We should ensure that we eat correctly and absorb all the nutrients we need to stay healthy. We can contribute to our overall health by getting sufficient exercise or at least working 20 minutes of movement into our already full days. **In addition, our spiritual health cannot and may not be neglected.**

**If we believe in God or some form of higher power, spending time praying and meditating and building a strong connection with that entity might help to give us strength and guide us through this difficult time. Remember, to pray is to talk to our higher powers, while by meditating, we listen. It is important that we listen. We cannot keep on asking and not listening for guidance and answers. Meditation is an imperative mental health tool.** If you struggle to meditate, watch YouTube videos on meditation or download one of many free meditation apps on your phone and get cracking.

It will also help us to not judge our emotions. Accept it when you are feeling sad, tense, or anxious. Also indulge in happiness when it is there. Do not keep on questioning your emotions and judging them as good or bad. Just accept them for what they are. All emotions will eventually pass; keep on telling yourself that this too shall pass.

Negative self-talk is terrible for our mental wellbeing. Try to change the narrative in your head from negative to positive; we have the ability to change what happens in our head – use that power to your advantage.

### **Reframe the negative**

Reframe the negative into positive. Consider something like: “I cannot handle the children for one more minute.” Reframe it to: “Despite the fact that the children are really difficult, it is only two more hours before their bedtime.” Now we see a way out; in our negative state we are locking the problem, while the reframe brings the solution/positive to the fore.

Also be aware when your sadness becomes depression and ask for help if you believe you need it. It is worth repeating: Do not isolate. Stay in contact with your support system and use them to direct you to the appropriate help. Be patient with yourself and your loved ones when you, or they, go through difficult periods. It will stand you and your support system in good stead if you can make yourself vulnerable and ask for help. It will make it easier for them to ask for help when they need it.

It helps a lot when we understand that vulnerability is not a weakness; nobody is perfect, absolutely nobody. You are not perfect and will never be perfect. Put that in your toolbox, accept it today and move on. We were all born perfectly imperfect. It is our imperfections that make humans pack animals. If we were perfect, we would not need other people in our lives.

Thus, you should not try to be a model citizen, who does not get affected by these uncertain times. Let go of the guilt and shame of not being perfect and indulge your inner vulnerable being. When experiencing feelings of victimhood or self-pity, sit down with a pen and paper and write a list of at least 20 things to be grateful for. By the time the list is complete, you will feel better already.

Do your friendship circle and colleagues a favour and start a gratitude group, where you can share your gratitude lists and help each other in this way.

Last but not least: overthinking and analysis paralysis are real. It helps mentally to get out of our heads and into our hearts. Stop trying to think yourself better — do things that make you feel better. We cannot do things that make us feel miserable and expect to feel better.

Constantly following the latest death statistics will not help us to feel better. If the stats make you feel anxious, sad, or bad, stop reading them. Knowing or not knowing the full details is not going to make a difference to your life.

Following these few simple suggestions can help you and those around you get through the third, fourth and any Covid wave, as well as life, with more ease. Remember that life is going to happen, whether we like or agree with it or not. We might as well accept what we cannot change, sit back and enjoy the ride. We may even walk out after this storm as better people and better equipped for life than before.

[Freddie van Rensburg is a Specialist Wellness and Addiction Counsellor in Cape Town. He is the writer of two books; his second book is, *Life Anon: A 12-step guide to life for non-addicts.*]

### **More thoughts to ponder**

Be happy in the moment, that's enough. Each moment is all we need, not more.

- Mother Teresa

Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.

Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future,  
concentrate the mind on the present moment.

- Buddha

## **We'll Get Through This**

***By Joanna Fuchs***

Lord, our troubles are so great,  
We don't know what to do;  
The price for our iniquity  
Is finally coming due.

The world is crumbling all about;  
No safe place can be found.  
Right is wrong, wrong is right;  
The change is quite profound.

Lord, we need your guiding light  
To lead us out of here;  
We'll focus on Your word, and prayer,  
To take away our fear.

Temptations of this dying world  
We'll rule out, and let go;  
Give our burdens all to you,  
Shed all worldly woe.

That's how we'll get through this, Lord,  
Fixed on heaven above,  
Assured of your protection, help,  
And everlasting love.

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## **The Weaver**

***Author unknown***

My life is but a weaving  
Between my Lord and me,  
I cannot choose the colours  
He worketh steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow  
And I in foolish pride  
Forget He sees the upper  
And I, the underside.

Not till the loom is silent  
And the shuttles cease to fly  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful  
In the Weaver's skillful hand  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern He has planned.

## July Quiz

### Items used at the Eucharist

Match the item named to its use at the Eucharist.

| ITEM             | USE  |
|------------------|--|
| 1 Aumbry         | A To set apart as holy   |
| 2 Burse          | B Consecrated wafers are dispensed from                          |
| 3 Chalice        | C Holds elements before consecration                             |
| 4 Ciborium       | D Used for ritual washing of hands                               |
| 5 Consecrate     | E Place for storing reserved sacrament                           |
| 6 Corporal       | F The breaking of the consecrated bread                          |
| 7 Credence table | G Act of placing drop of wine on wafer                           |
| 8 Fraction       | H Folder in which the corporal is stored                         |
| 9 Intinction     | I White cloth for wiping chalice                                 |
| 10 Lavabo        | J Drapes chalice on altar  |
| 11 Offertory     | K Plate that holds consecrated bread                             |
| 12 Paten         | L Container used when consecrated elements are taken from church |
| 13 Purificator   | M From which consecrated wine is drunk                           |
| 14 Pyx           | N Taking bread and wine to the altar                             |
| 15 Veil          | O Square of white cloth placed on altar                          |

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### CHRISTUS REX.

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