



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Table and font: Who is welcome?

An invitation to join the conversation about Baptism and Communion

Examples of communion invitations among ELCA congregations

Baptism required or, at least, expected:

United in our shared baptism, our communion table is open to all Christians.

Participation in Holy Communion is open to baptized members of this and other Christian congregations.

Some emphasize faith or beliefs:

We invite everyone who believes in the saving power of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to share with us today the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ's table.

Some include a description of benefits received in the sacrament:

All who believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table.

Some emphasize instruction or preparation:

All baptized believers who have been instructed in the Christian faith are welcomed to receive Christ's body and blood in this meal.

All baptized Christians who have been instructed in the sacrament and believe Christ is present for the forgiveness of sins are invited to commune.

Some emphasize desire or need:

All who hunger to know the love of God are welcome to commune with us.

The table of our Lord is now set for all those who need grace, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom for ministry and mission to the world.

Some have completely open invitations:

This is the Lord's table. He is the host. We are his guests. He welcomes everyone to come and eat and be nourished, fed and forgiven. Come and eat and live!

The only people excluded from our communion table are those that Jesus himself would exclude and that is nobody. All are welcome.

“Open table” and “eucharistic hospitality” mean differing things to different congregations:

Our table is an open table. This is to say that all baptized Christians, trusting that Christ is present in with and under the bread and wine, are welcome to receive.

We believe this meal is for all. We practice open communion. Please know this is God's meal for all people. Please come as you desire.

Some subtle discrepancies between what is printed/projected and what is spoken:

Printed: All are welcome to join us at the altar to receive the body and blood of our risen Lord.

Verbal: All baptized Christians are welcome to receive our Lord's Body and Blood. If you are not baptized, please come up for a blessing.

Sometimes a subtle discrepancy is evident within a single invitation.

All are invited to the Lord's Table. Baptized persons, who believe Jesus is revealed in bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins are invited to receive the sacrament.

The lack of clarity on this matter has led some congregations to be knowingly inconsistent.

Some congregations say nothing at all.