



# ***what we believe***

*by Pastor Skip*

We've talked about Baptism the past two columns; now we turn to our other Sacrament: the Lord's Supper. Where the administration of Baptism is fairly similar from church to church, the Lord's Supper can differ markedly from one church to another.

In some churches the Lord's Supper is a meal that is an act of remembrance: "Do this in remembrance of me". In other churches the theological belief is that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. Both approaches are biblically grounded.

In the Presbyterian Church we do not believe the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ; rather, we believe that the bread and wine are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit from ordinary food to spiritual food, to feed and nourish us spiritually.

When Jesus and his disciples gathered in the Upper Room they ate ordinary bread and drank ordinary wine, so we too use ordinary bread and juice. We use juice rather than wine for two reasons: first, because children may come to the Lord's Table and participate in the meal, and second, in response to those who do not drink alcohol.

In the Presbyterian Church the invitation to the Lord's Table comes from Christ himself, so anyone who has been baptized is welcome - you don't have to be a member of MPC, or even Presbyterian to participate, and there is no age restriction. We encourage parents to teach their children about the

Lord's Supper so they understand why we have bread and juice in worship.

You may have wondered why we alternate between passing trays among the congregation and coming forward to a single cup and loaf. When we pass the plates we are reminded that we are sharing a communal meal, all of us figuratively seated at the Lord's Table together. We wait until everyone is served the bread before we eat, and we wait again until everyone has been served the cup before we drink. The Elders and Deacons serve the congregation, and then I serve the officers, a reminder that we are called to serve one another.

Intinction, which means "dipping", is the other way we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Through Intinction we are reminded that on Jesus' last night he and his disciples shared a common loaf and a common cup as we share one loaf and one cup.

The Session determines how frequently we celebrate Communion. Our practice is to share the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month, but we can celebrate the meal more or less frequently. Because the nature of the meal is communal, we all celebrate the meal together, even though we have two services. Elders, Deacons, and I try to take Communion to those members of our congregation who are unable to attend worship so that they too can be part of the community gathered at the Table.

The Lord's Supper, Communion, Eucharist: it doesn't matter what we call it; it is an opportunity for us to gather at the Lord's Table in the presence of Christ himself, to be fed and nourished through a meal that feeds us as no other meal can, for at the Lord's Table we find the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation.