

Children and Communion Announcement

In September 2016 the Bench of Bishops made the following ruling: "Baptism alone should be seen as the gateway into participation in the life of the church including admission to the Sacrament of Holy Communion." From Advent Sunday 2016 all the baptised were given permission to receive communion, whatever their age. Parishes have been given until Advent Sunday 2017 to implement this.

It would be fair to say that the ruling came as a surprise and that the wider implications had not really been thought through. We invited Bishop David to speak to us at Deanery Conference in November and much of what he said was then overturned at our clergy training day in January. However, the archbishop was very clear: this is not something we can opt out of as a parish, though individuals and the parents of children can choose whether they wish to receive communion or not.

At its heart, the theological position that Baptism confers full membership into the visible church is a very Biblical one. Confirmation was something which grew up as the church expanded and came about for practical, rather than theological reasons. However, in our protestant tradition, having a personal faith and understanding what is being remembered and celebrated at the eucharist is of profound importance. That is why we have run courses in the past for children to be prepared for receiving communion, and why we do confirmation classes.

These courses will still be offered, and they will be adapted to the age of the children who require them.

Children need their parents' permission to receive communion (and children under 5 are not allowed by law to receive the wine). At the end of the service, if you have children who haven't already been admitted to communion, you will receive a form with various options on it. I'd be very grateful to receive these back asap as we have to keep a record. You can request a new form at any time and change your response as your child grows in faith and understanding.

If you are an adult who is baptised but not confirmed you will be very welcome to receive communion - just put out your hands to receive the bread. You can also go on the electoral roll and serve on the PCC now. Do ask for an electoral roll form if this is you. If you want a course of preparation, you are welcome to join a Confirmation class, with no obligation to be confirmed at the end of it.

I'll be happy to have a chat with anyone about it, and the documents from the Bishops can be found on the Church in Wales website.