

St Mary's Princes Risborough
Communion Policy

The paragraphs below set out the approach to communion across the services held by St Mary's Princes Risborough. This has been prepared considering the current position within the church and reflects a desire to build on and develop our practice as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus, listening to the call of God's Spirit.

Currently there is a diversity of practice and approach to communion. This has evolved as different services have sought to respond to the needs of those attending, and as different ways to be open and attractive to those returning to faith and those exploring faith for the first time have been considered. Different styles, different liturgy and different names have emerged. This diversity is welcomed and will continue.

However, it is helpful to clarify the unity that holds the different practices together. To this end, we affirm that:

1. The practice and approach of St Mary's is rooted in the traditions of the Church of England.
2. Baptism is the sign of our identification with Jesus in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). It is the mark of a new beginning and a changed lifestyle (Romans 6: 5-7). Baptism is also the sign and symbol of our entry into the life of the church. In line with the Church of England, and the wider ecumenical community, we recognise baptism as complete initiation into the body of Christ.
3. Holy Communion enables all who seek to be disciples of Jesus to deepen their love for and commitment to Jesus and their own expression of that love. In celebrating communion we recognise that we are a community which incorporates the diversity of God's creation, such as gender, ethnicity, culture, background and age. We remember that Jesus died for our sins and that he has given us a new life in relationship through Him.
4. Confirmation remains an important sign and symbol of committed discipleship. We encourage all people, or any age, who have been baptised to consider prayerfully whether to be confirmed as a re-affirmation of their baptism vows and as a public commitment to Christian discipleship in the church and the world.

We recognise that it is in and through our actions that this framework will provide unity for the diversity that we wish to encourage.

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To this end we will be intentional about providing opportunities to:

- encourage baptism and confirmation for all ages, for example through sermon and teaching series, baptism/confirmation sessions, and other courses that introduce the Christian faith.
- nurture the faith of our children and young people through exploring the place of baptism, communion and confirmation.
- develop our understanding of the place of baptism, communion and confirmation through discipleship activities (life groups, study series etc).
- minister to those exploring faith clearly but with pastoral sensitivity, recognising that people may be at different stages of the 'belong, behave, believe' journey of faith.
- ensure our worship services support and embody the approach to communion, for example through use of appropriate prayers, songs and times of response.

Approved at PCC,
22nd March 2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David G Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Revd David G Williams,
Area Dean & Team Rector