

Can I use Roots Bread & Wine?

A summary of denominational approaches to ordering Holy Communion

In the context of Holy Communion, practices and rules governing them across the denominations are quite different. The purpose here is to show how, within the resources offered, there are options to meet the needs of churches across the traditions and denominations of Roots users, and which conform to the rules those denominations may have for ordering worship.

The Methodist Church

The Methodist Worship Book (MWB) offers six complete orders of Holy Communion for major festivals and seasons and three for Ordinary Time, plus some alternative eucharistic prayers for specific occasions (e.g. a marriage service). It also provides 'Guidance for ordering a service of Holy Communion' (pp.221-2) when those full liturgies are not used. In the nine orders, the basic elements are marked by an * – others may be omitted. The full version of these instructions, together with the orders for Communion in Word format, are available online [WEB](#).

The preface to the MWB (quoting its 1975 predecessor, *The Methodist Service Book*) states of the orders of service it contains: 'These forms are not intended to curb creative freedom, but rather to provide norms for its guidance.' The 2003 Conference report, *Holy Communion in the Methodist Church* explores this in a more detail (para. 66-67), and also notes traditions of 'informal' and 'extempore' observance of Holy Communion.

Roots Bread & Wine offers alternatives for some sections of the Communion service as described in the MWB, themed to work with the rest of the creative resources in a given issue of Roots Adult & All Age. These may be used 'as is' or work as inspiration for those who prefer to fashion their own words, formal or informal, or indeed 'extempore'.

The United Reformed Church (URC)

Worship: from the United Reformed Church (2003) offers four orders of Holy Communion, stating that 'the orders found here are not prescribed... Yet we believe most of these services reflect the ethos of our Church and of its inherited traditions.' *Worship* is available online [WEB](#).

With that in mind, the orders help to evaluate words and prayers such as those offered in Roots Bread & Wine. Some of the notes in the 'Introduction to Communion Orders' are also helpful. Of the first order, it says (without providing detail) that the service may be used as is or 'shortened by the omission of some of the suggested items.' In relation to the second, it speaks of worship suitable for all ages, that is less formal, with simpler and more direct language, with congregational participation and response. The third order offers a Thanksgiving prayer with two different structures, reflecting two different traditions. And of the fourth, it describes how the first section of the Thanksgiving prayer can be varied, according to the seasons or theme.

Roots Bread & Wine responds to all of these opportunities, offering alternatives for certain sections of the Communion service, themed to work with the rest of the creative resources in a given issue of Roots Adult & All Age. And, as always, these may be used 'as is' or work as inspiration for those who prefer to fashion their own words.

Church of Scotland/ Presbyterian/Baptist

The book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland includes five orders for Holy Communion which, its preface says, may be followed verbatim, but there is no compulsion to do so. One follows the classic pattern found in most denominations. Another reflects the Celtic tradition. A third, is a much shortened version (e.g. for use as a second service), and the fourth is intended 'for use when children communicate'. (The fifth is intended for home or hospital use.) These orders illustrate the ethos of Holy Communion in the Church of Scotland, and are typical of other Presbyterian and 'free church' traditions too.

Roots Bread & Wine provides resources consistent with that ethos, but which are also themed to work with the rest of the creative resources in a given issue of Roots Adult & All Age. These also may be used 'as is' or work as inspiration for those who prefer to craft their own words or extemporise.



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Anglican Churches

In general, worship in Anglican Churches needs to use material that is authorised (by Synods, Governing Bodies, or Bishops – the mechanisms vary from province to province) or falls within the permitted discretions allowed by the rules. In the Church of England, for example, in addition to worship that is formally authorised, Canon B5 and the rubrics and notes in authorised forms of worship, allow for some variation. In the Church in Wales, it is Canon 37. In the Church of Ireland, it is Canons, Part 1, 5.1 & 5.2. These are available online [WEB](#).

The Church of England Canon B5 allows the minister in his/her discretion, 'to make and use variations which are not of substantial importance in any form of service authorized by Canon B1 according to particular circumstances' with the caveat that all such variations: 'shall be neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter'. In addition, rubrics and notes in authorised services will sometimes say 'may' or 'other' or 'suitable words', indicating that alternatives are permitted – even encouraged (some notes explicitly suggest alternatives).

Further reading

Holy Communion in Messy Church (BRF, 2017) offers helpful principles and guidelines, particularly for an Anglican context. [WEB](#)

Together at the Table (Church of Scotland, 2020) explores policies and practice 'for all-age Communion in the Church of Scotland, but has wider application. [WEB](#)

In the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland, the wording and intent of the Canons is similar, although there are some differences which may need to be taken into account. For example, in the Church in Wales, the Canon explicitly states that this does not allow variations to any authorised Communion service 'From the Sursum Corda ('Lift up your hearts') until the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion' without the commendation of the Governing Body or the appropriate Bishop(s). While the Church of Ireland Canon 6 also allows the use of any prayers 'not containing substantial variations from the practice of, nor contrary to the doctrine of, the Church, as the officiating member of the clergy may consider to be required by current circumstances.'

Roots Bread & Wine offers alternatives to some of the authorised provision of the Anglican churches (as indeed do the churches themselves – for example, the Church of England's *Common Worship: Additional Collects*, or occasional resources such as *Liturgical Resources for Racial Justice Sunday* [WEB](#)), with the aim that a subset of what is offered will always be within the various rules and discretions referred to above.

“ The sacrament of Holy Communion is a key opportunity to connect the diverse members of the church to God and to each other. Children and young people are equal members of this body, so it's vital that the form of liturgy used is one they, as well as adults, can feel part of. The Roots team is championing this concept of inclusivity and offers valuable suggestions for appropriate liturgical language so that all ages can worship together in church or school. ”

Lucy Moore, Head of the Growing Faith Foundation, Founder of Messy Church

“ I am very impressed with the material. In my setting we use a mixture of printed booklets for Eucharist, and powerpoint slides, depending on the service. Those weeks where we use powerpoint, this material will definitely be used, as they will save a lot of time putting a service together. This is exactly the sort of material which will help to make a service seem 'fresh', whilst maintaining a sense of liturgical reverence. ”

SJ, a subscriber