

The Welcome Eucharist

The Eucharist is central to our life and worship at St Mary's. Here are some of the reasons why:

- The Eucharist is a sacrament of God's grace: a sign to us that he blesses us, forgives us our shortcomings, wants us to be joyful and gives us the strength to deal with the challenges of life.
- The Eucharist draws us into a relationship with Jesus through prayer and hearing the words of scripture.
- The Eucharist reminds us that Jesus died on the cross and rose again for us, an act which took place two thousand years ago but has a real benefit for us today.
- The Eucharist is the place where we acknowledge that Jesus himself is still present with us.
- The Eucharist brings us together as a community, equal in God's sight, so that we can support and encourage one another in all aspects of our life.
- The Eucharist helps us to mark the different times and seasons of the church year, which teach us about Jesus from his birth to his death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement in glory.
- The Eucharist encourages us to see thanksgiving as the most appropriate response to God's blessing.

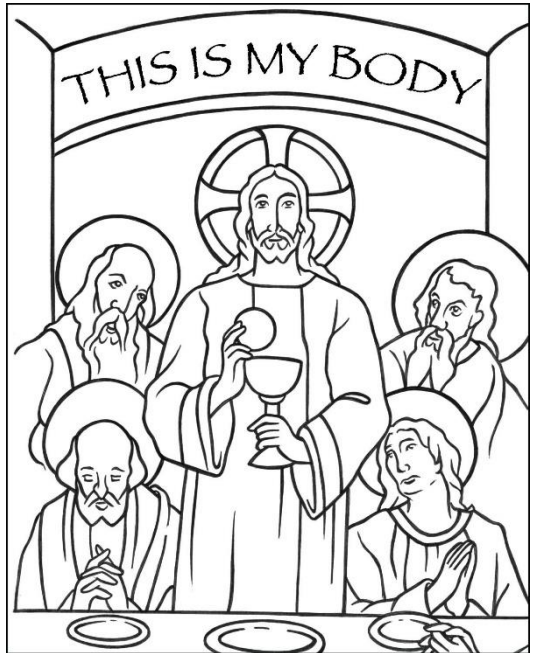
*Many of us are familiar with the Eucharist and all that it means for us. But there are many more people we want to welcome to share in this great blessing, who are not so familiar with this service. That is why we are introducing the **Welcome Eucharist** on the first Sunday of the month.*

Some things will be familiar to those who regularly attend the Eucharist at St Mary's:

- The shape of the service will still include the usual pattern of gathering, hearing and exploring God's word, offering the Eucharist and receiving communion, and being sent out.
- The texts used in the service will all be authorised for public worship in the Church of England.
- We will still use the readings provided by the lectionary, meaning we read the same stories as other Anglican churches and churches of other Christian denominations.
- We will still acknowledge the different seasons of the church year and vary some of the texts of the service according to the season.
- The service will still be able to contain important events in the life of the church or the world, and be a place we can come with different attitudes and emotions.
- The music will still use familiar structures with four-part choral harmony.
- The service will still use a range of movements and gestures to engage people, including wearing vestments, an entrance procession with processional cross, and ringing bells.
- Communion will be offered to all those who are baptised and who are adults or who have been admitted to communion as children.
- We will serve refreshments after the service in the community area.

Some things might feel a little different to those who attend the Eucharist at St Mary's on other Sundays:

- Some of the texts will be different, making our intentions during the service explicit and including more opportunity for response.
- We will use a different bible translation, the New Living Translation, a scholarly translation published by Tyndale House in Cambridge.
- The address will be more interactive and use different ways of engaging people and exploring God's word.
- Some of the hymns will use new words to familiar tunes, or use repeated refrains that are easier to join in with.
 - We will use different music for the sung parts of the service, including the gloria, from [the St Helen service](#) by RSCM composer Joanna Forbes-L'Estrange.
- We will encourage people to engage in music in different ways that feel most appropriate for them.



Above all, we want everyone to feel welcome at this Eucharist, whether you are a regular worshipper or it is your first time, whether you have a deeply rooted faith or you are not sure why you are in church. We hope that this is a service you feel able to invite friends and family to, who might not have much experience of church.

Although this is not explicitly a service for children and families, it has been proposed by the steering group looking at our ministry and mission amongst young people, and designed as part of our wider scheme of services and activities. It is anticipated that we can invite those who come for baptism or to Messy Church to this service as a next-step in their journey of faith and discipleship. In any case, all our services should be suitable for people of all ages, and we will continue to review our regular practice to ensure that they are.

Everyone should be comfortable that this is a service for them – so if you have any concerns, please do speak to one of the clergy or ministry team. Also take the time to familiarise yourself with some of the key changes, such as listening to the new music for the service or attending the workshop we are running; or read some of your favourite bible passages in the New Living Translation and note some of the similarities and some of the differences.

And please do pray for this initiative, giving thanks for those who have conceived and offered it to the church, and praying for guidance for those involved in its planning and delivery. We will keep this service under review and respond to any feedback sensitively and constructively.

Every blessing to you from the ministry team at St Mary's.