

Frequently Asked Questions
On Eucharistic Practices
Greater Milwaukee Synod

1. Why can only ordained pastors preside at Holy Communion? *Since the eucharist belongs not to any one congregation but to the entire Church, those who are ordained best represent the interconnections we have to the Church Universal.*
2. If a pastor is going to be absent for a given worship service, why can't they just consecrate the bread and wine in advance or use the remaining elements from the previous service? *While some Christian traditions have an understanding of a reserved sacrament, often held in a tabernacle for future consumption, Lutherans refrain from such an understanding. The general advice is that any bread and wine left over after a eucharistic service is to be consumed or disposed of immediately.*
3. What about bringing communion to the homebound? *Congregations often extend their weekly table by bringing the communion elements to those who are ill or homebound, and this distribution is often done by trained laypeople. This practice does not apply to holding over the elements for next Sunday's regular service.*
4. Why can't interns or other seminarians preside at the table? *There have been situations in which an intern is serving as the primary pastoral leader for an extended period of time and they have been granted status as a Synodically Authorized Minister. In general, however, interns are not yet authorized by the church to be ministers of Word and Sacrament. This occurs when they have completed their preparation, been approved for ordination, and have received and accepted a regular call.*
5. If a layperson can't preside at the table, why can they preach from the pulpit? *While some laypeople are invited to preach the sermon during Sunday worship and at other times, we would encourage all pastors to exercise care in their oversight of the preaching ministry in the congregation, helping to prepare and support any lay leaders invited to proclaim the Gospel.*