

Ad Clerum 3c.3

Admission to Holy Communion of members of other Christian Churches

The primary teaching of the Church of England on this matter is presented by Canon B 15A, which provides that 'There shall be admitted to Holy Communion...baptised persons who are communicant members of other Churches which subscribe to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and who are in good standing in their own Church.'

The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity (House of Bishops, 2001) re-affirmed this practice of extending an invitation to share in Eucharistic fellowship to baptised communicants of other Christian churches as a 'proper pastoral anticipation of the eschatological summons to the marriage supper of the Lamb and as a foretaste of full visible unity' (para. 14). The Eucharist is celebrated as one of God's greatest gifts to the Church for building up the Body of Christ (para. 35).

Our celebration of Eucharistic worship in the parishes of the diocese should reflect this theological emphasis on the offering of Eucharistic hospitality to the communicant members of other Christian Churches. In some areas the only surviving Church is the parish church, and people who are members of other Churches regularly worship there. The aim will be to make them feel at home in their local Anglican church, and to feel that they belong to the Christian community.

Sometimes it will be appropriate to act upon a further paragraph of Canon B 15A, which states that 'If any person...regularly receives communion over a long period which appears likely to continue indefinitely, the minister shall set before him the normal requirements of the Church of England for communicant status in that Church.' Clergy need to be aware of Canon B15.

It may be right for an Anglican Church which is the only Church in a locality to make 'A Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment'. Such a Declaration recognises a continuing presence of communicant and non-communicant members of other Christian Churches and provides a means for including their insights and gifts in the worship, mission and decision-making of the local Church. Advice about this should be sought from the Ecumenical Officers.

We are in a covenant relationship with the Methodist Church and the fourth commitment of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant is: 'We commit ourselves to encourage forms of Eucharistic sharing, including Eucharistic hospitality, in accordance with the rules of our respective churches.' We, therefore, encourage clergy and Parochial Church Councils to build upon our new covenanted relationship with the Methodist Church and, where it is possible and appropriate, to use the provisions of Canon B 43 in developing occasional or regular patterns of local Eucharistic fellowship.

Revised April 2015.