



Children and Communion

16th September 2007

Dear St Matthew's,

As you may know, over the past year we have been exploring the admission of children and young people to communion prior to confirmation, in line with the advice given in the Bishop's Guidelines of 1996. The process at St Matthew's began in November 2006 and the PCC has had much discussion at our meetings and with the wider congregation. After much thought, prayer and consultation, and with the Bishop's approval we decided at the PCC meeting on September 3rd to admit baptised children and young people to communion prior to confirmation and after preparation.

Admitting children to communion means that they can express their full membership of the church of Christ into which they have been baptised. A growing number of Church of England congregations admit children to communion. The Parishes of Bishopston and Horfield and Bristol Cathedral are amongst them.

Before admission to communion the children and young people will undergo age-appropriate teaching about the sacrament of communion alongside their normal

teaching. This will be done through a specially written course undertaken in family groups for the younger children and in the church groups for those who are over 11. The family course will be available for those wishing to prepare their children, on Sunday 23rd of September. It is anticipated that the first communion for those who have undergone the preparation will be Sunday December 2nd. The decision about whether a baptised child is to receive communion will be the joint responsibility of the parents and myself as Priest-in-charge. The Church of England expects each child or young person to have undergone some preparation.

Confirmation still remains an important rite in the church's life. It continues to be a personal and public affirmation of faith, in which people confirm for themselves the faith in Christ expressed on their behalf at their baptism. It also marks an important rite of passage into full adult ministry.

If you have any questions, then please do speak to or write to Mat or a member of the PCC. We believe that this decision will enrich the life of the church and bring more young people to a strong faith in Christ.

Yours in Christ

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