

Eucharist & Mission

- 1) **The Eucharist forms/nurtures the church** through the love of God poured out in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit; we encounter this is word, sacrament, and community
- 2) **The Eucharist celebrates what the church is**: the sacrament of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, **BUT also reminds us what the church is not**: we are not God; this means that Eucharist highlights our need for conversion, for greater authenticity as ‘pilgrims’
- 3) **The ‘holy friendship’ with Jesus central to the Eucharist makes us disciples**; discipleship is a life-long process that the Eucharist fuels through the Holy Spirit
- 4) **The Eucharist identifies the church as primarily a community of receivers**; all that comes from God is a gift, rather than a right or reward
- 5) Since Eucharist is a gift, **the Eucharist promotes the expectation that it is a gift for everyone**: this has implications for who’s included/excluded, including for Christian unity
- 6) **The Eucharist models and enables the church’s mission**: nurtured by the Spirit for deeper trust in God, we are to follow Jesus in self-emptying; we do so through being agents of God’s mercy, committed to justice, compassion, and forgiveness
- 7) **The blessing of the Eucharist is paradoxical**: we experience its comfort in the willingness to ‘lose our life’, through ever-deeper trust in God’s Spirit who leads us to live in the world as disciples of Christ on the pilgrimage of faith
- 8) **The Eucharist, as high point and source of the church’s life, promotes critical questioning**: Do all aspects of the church’s life bear witness to our relationship to Christ and the Spirit? To our discipleship? Do we reflect what the Eucharist embodies?
- 9) **Ongoing reform and renewal in the church are linked to the Eucharist**; both are necessary so that the church reveals, rather than obscures, Christ
- 10) Since the Eucharist is a celebration of the whole church, so too must reform be a work of the whole church—**the Eucharist thus reinforces the importance of ‘synodality’**
- 11) Authentic celebrations of the Eucharist open us more deeply to the God who always exceeds our grasp; for that reason, **the Eucharist draws us to where we have not yet been**
- 12) **The Eucharist embraces the whole of time**: the gift of God unites past, present, and future, ensuring that our faith, hope, and love will never be in vain

[In the Eucharist], the community of faith is able to acknowledge its incompleteness, fracture and hope for a new time. It can do this precisely because the Eucharist bears witness and embodies the true and abiding life of the [community of faith], which is Christ the Lord in its midst ... The fullness of the church’s true life lies ahead or in what is coming from the future.

- Stephen Pickard, *Seeking the Church: An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 228-29