

Please pass the bread... and the rice wafers

Perhaps you know someone who is on a gluten-free diet. This means s/he must avoid foods made with wheat, and a variety of other grains and ingredients. But you may be unaware that to remain gluten-free, these individuals cannot receive conventional (wheat) wafers at Holy Communion. Because of this, more and more Episcopal priests now include special gluten-free wafers when celebrating Holy Eucharist.

I believe this to be a sign of the radical hospitality and infinite respect that God offers everyone — a gesture of inclusivity and welcome to all people, without exception.

At Holy Trinity Church on Maundy Thursday, we began offering a gluten-free rice wafer to any person who requests one. This simple adjustment to the manner in which we celebrate Holy Eucharist means it can be generally assumed that parishioners with celiac disease* will be comfortable (and safe) if they accept *both* wine and a gluten-free wafer at Communion.

Any person seeking a gluten-free Communion experience at Holy Trinity is invited to tell the celebrant, simply: "*Rice wafer, please.*"

Alleluia! Amen!

Judith +

* Current research estimates say that about 1% of the U.S. population has celiac disease, which affects males and females across all ages and races. Celiac disease is an autoimmune digestive disease which interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. Between five and 22% of celiac patients have an immediate family member (first-degree relative) who also has celiac disease. *Source:*

<http://www.celiaccentral.org/ceciac-disease/facts-and-figures/>

To learn more, go to:

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/ceciac-disease/DS00319/TAB=resources>

Cleveland Clinic

http://my.clevelandclinic.org/disorders/ceciac_disease/hic_ceciac_disease.aspx