**4 Ways Christians Have Understood Communion**

**Transubstantiation**

The inner substance of the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ

*Held by*

Roman Catholics

*Big idea*

When priest consecrates, inner substance of bread and wine change into body and blood of Christ

*Official quote*

“After the consecration of bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ,

true God and true man, is truly, really, and substantially contained in the august sacrament of the Holy Eucharist under the appearance of those sensible things.” (Council of Trent)

*Anglican take*

Not accepted. “Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.” (39 Articles)

**Sacramental Union**

Christ is present in the bread and wine (but without the bread and wine being changed)

*Held by*

Lutherans, high-church Anglicans

*Big idea*

Transubstantiation not sacrament and more philosophical than Scriptural; Jesus said, “This is my body”

*Official quote*

“The true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.” (The Augsburg Confession)

*Anglican take*

Accepted. “All the sacraments are Christ’s acts, the touch of the hand of Christ upon human lives through visible media.” (Michael Ramsey)

**Receptionism**

Christ is spiritually present in those who receive the bread and wine with faith

*Held by*

Reformed, low-church Anglicans

*Big idea*

Since Christ’s body in heaven, he is spiritually present—not in bread and wine but in hearts of those who receive with faith

*Official quote*

“The real presence of Christ’s most blessed body and blood is not to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament.” (Richard Hooker, early Anglican theologian)

*Anglican take*

Accepted. “The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and
spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the
Supper, is Faith.” (39 Articles)

**Memorialism**

The bread and wine are powerful symbols that help us remember Christ’s death

*Held by*

Baptists, nondenominational

*Big idea*

Christ doesn’t give us special grace in Communion; He already gave us grace when we came to him in faith. During Communion we remember that.

*Official quote*

“The members of the Church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.” (The New Hampshire Confession of Faith)

*Anglican take*

Not accepted. “The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a Sacrament … the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.” (39 Articles)