

No. 28: "We thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ...."



The photo above was taken at an exhibition held to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Holy Trinity, held in 1969. It shows some of the church's communion plate used in our worship. Recently we have experimented with using 'stations' for the distribution of the Holy Communion at our 10.00 joint service and in the Communion at 10.45. In order to do this we used a greater number of pieces of the church silver. This month's blog outlines the history of the various pieces and describes how the celebration of Holy Communion at Holy Trinity has changed over the years.

The sermons of February 10th were on the theme of worship in our 'Roots: The Spiritual Disciplines' series, and mention was made of the first question in the Westminster Catechism – 'What is the chief end of man?' to which the answer is 'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.' Both sermons are worth hearing – catch them here: <http://www.holytrinityhuddersfield.com/sermons/>

The church, as the body of Christ is the community of worshippers. In the Holy Communion, one of the acclamations sometimes used is:

***"When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
We proclaim your death Lord Jesus,
Until you come in glory"***

When Holy Trinity opened in 1819, the layout for worship was very different from today. The main focus of the services was the preaching of the word and a tall triple decked pulpit

stood in the centre of the chancel arch with a straight staircase to the top from behind. The chancel was just one step higher than the nave and was simply furnished with 3 pews along both sides and a communion table with a communion rail around three sides. Holy Trinity designed in a simple gothic style was quite unusual for the time in having a chancel at all, most church buildings of the Georgian period and the early 1800s were designed without them.

Evidence suggests that Holy Communion did not form part of the weekly worship for the majority of church goers and at Holy Trinity the chancel was largely used for teaching school-children and was hidden from the congregation by the tall pulpit.

The following is a report of the services in the 1840s: ***'The morning service in the church at that time was very long - the Litany and the Commandments along with the other portions were read, and the sermon took 40 to 45 minutes, so that it was generally 12.45 or 12.50 before we were released, and on Communion Sunday, about 1.15 p.m.'***

Holy Trinity still possesses its original silver communion set, comprising two chalices, paten and large flagon. One of the chalices is used at our 9.00 services for the distribution of the bread. The set is of an elegant, simple design with an engraved IHS emblem in a sun devise (*right*). The maker of this set is not known. I have often pondered how many people over the past two centuries have held these chalices, right back to Benjamin Haigh Allen, the church's founder himself and the number of clergy who have celebrated the Communion holding them. *The set is pictured below in the sanctuary.*



Worship practices changed dramatically through the Victorian period and this was reflected in the design and decoration of church buildings. The plain Georgian style in which Holy Trinity was designed (and which is reflected in the original silver communion plate) was considered seriously out-of-date. The church interior was re-ordered several times but the celebration of Holy Communion remained a marginal activity for few of the worshippers.

In 1874, Holy Communion was celebrated approximately once a fortnight with an average attendance of 60. The changes in worship patterns saw the introduction of a monthly 8.00 service in 1890 and the communion being celebrated 48 times a year, but without a significant increase in attendance. A communion service followed Matins at midday once a month which had probably been a long-standing tradition. There was also an evening communion service and communion was celebrated on holy days (Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day etc).

When St James's Chapel at the Parish Hall in Marsh was licensed for worship in 1914, a new gilt silver communion set was donated, with an insurance value of £30. Services were held each week at St James's until 1983 and communion was generally celebrated monthly. The St James's set moved to the church on the closure of the hall in 2002.

The photograph (right) shows the St James's set sitting on the credence table designed for the chapel at the Parish Hall. This table now sits beneath the war memorial.

By 1910 the main services at Holy Trinity were Matins and Evensong. Holy Communion was celebrated weekly, at 12.00 after Matins on the first Sunday, 8.00 on the second, fourth and fifth Sunday and in the evening of the third, possibly following Evensong.

The sanctuary was refurbished in the 1920s with new furniture and the reredos beneath the east window was installed to allow a better view of the priest celebrating the communion. Matching the reredos and furniture were ornately carved panelling and communion rails, designed in the fashionable 'arts and crafts' style. Much (if not all) of this work was by the local firm of Harry Percy Jackson & son, Coley, Halifax.



The photograph above shows carving on the 1929 credence table detailing grapes and heads of wheat.



To further enhance worship a new communion set was donated, the work of Omar Ramsden of Fulham (*pictured left*). Ramsden had been born and brought up in Sheffield and I had hoped to discover he had a Huddersfield connection with his local-sounding name, but sadly this did not prove to be the case.

The pair of 'arts and crafts' chalices with paten-lids are dated 1929 with the inscription '**Omar Ramsden Me Facit**' (Omar Ramsden made me). The patens were given in memory of William Henry Kaye, (at one-time churchwarden of Holy Trinity).

Ramsden also made the wafer box which was given by the Vicar's family: '*as a token of deep thankfulness for Deborah Christine Soole's [his daughter's] escape from drowning at Seascales.*' Records suggest that wafers were not regularly used at Holy Trinity until Rev Rex Clarke's time in 1948.

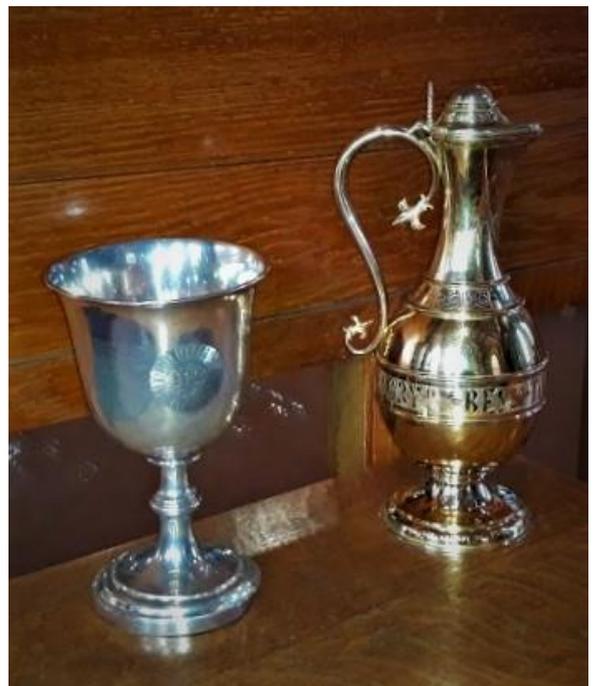
To complete the set a matching silver-gilt flagon was presented to the church in memory of Frances Mary Woodcock in 1937. This flagon, made by the Sheffield firm Roberts & Belk, is generally used for adding water to the wine for communion. Water is added to the wine as this was generally the custom at the time of Christ in the Passover when the Last Supper

was held; this was because the wine in those days was very strong. In addition water is added to represent the blood and water that poured from Christ's body when it was pierced on the Cross.



This photograph shows the Omar Ramsden communion set dating from 1929, with the slightly later flagon, set up for the 9.00 service.

The final major piece in Holy Trinity's 'treasury' is the flagon dated 1959, used to contain the wine for the communion. This was given by Jean Brook, whom many older members of the church will remember. Made by Cox & Sons of the Strand, London, it was donated in memory of Jean's mother, Elsie Yates. *It is pictured here ready for procession up to the communion table, together with one of the 'original' chalices used for the distribution of the wafers at the 9.00 service.*





The church also has two chalices made of pottery. The one on the left, featuring the Wakefield Cathedral cross was one of a set given to all the churches in the historic diocese of Wakefield in 2013 to celebrate its 125th anniversary, just prior to the formation of the new Leeds diocese. The chalice on the right was brought back from the Taizé community by a group of us in 1992 when we joined 1000 young people in the Archbishop of Canterbury's Youth Pilgrimage.

It was in the 1980s when Holy Communion became the chief act of worship in the Church of England and also locally here at Holy Trinity. New liturgies in more modern language became the norm using the Alternative Service Book and later Common Worship. At Holy Trinity a weekly 8.00 service of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer continued and there was a midweek BCP communion as well. The 8.00 service survived until 2004 becoming a monthly 9.00 BCP service. This was replaced by the weekly communion service using Common Worship in 2016 when we moved to the pattern of holding two services on a Sunday morning.

At our 10.45 service our worship has a more informal and contemporary feel, with the opportunity for extended musical worship led by the band. Preaching and teaching are the major focus of this service, as was the case back in 1819. Prayer ministry is an integral part of this service and opportunities are often provided for worshippers to respond to God. At 10.45 Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month.

In the communion we remember we are the body of Christ and are fed spiritually by His sacrifice. As the body we share 'The Lord's Supper' together. In reading about the vessels used for this most holy part of our worship together, I pray we may have a greater appreciation of our family here from past generations, the 'fellowship of the Saints'. Our worship and prayers are added to theirs. As it says in many of our Eucharistic prayers:

"... we join in the unending hymn of praise; Holy, holy, holy Lord....."

Andy Barber
March '19

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Ramsden

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIT9SmhAr-0>

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