

## Q&A

***Q: Fr. Alex, are we allowed to take Communion in other churches? Can people from those churches have Communion at our church? If not, why?***

This is a great question, and one that people ask me all the time. First of all, in our Orthodox faith, one of the most important concepts is to make people feel welcome, let the whole world know we love it, and see the eyes of God in everyone we meet. These are important ideas Jesus taught us. But even though we love and respect people of different churches, we are not allowed to receive Communion in their churches, and I am not allowed to commune them. This is simply because for us, Holy Communion is a celebration of unity (one faith family) and not a way to achieve or get to unity. And since we do not have unity with these other churches, it's sadly not the time to share Holy Communion. If we did, the problem would be that people could be coming to the Chalice with very different ideas about Jesus than those that we hold. This could undermine our faith, cause confusion, and really make liars of us all. But let's focus on what we can share: we can learn from each other, have exchange programs with guest speakers and youth groups, do outreach together, share special events (like our festival, "Pet Blessing Party," and spaghetti dinners), work together to help those who are homeless, hungry or sick, and a countless number of other possibilities. Through these efforts, we can express our mutual love for Christ, our brotherhood, and our shared concern for everything Christ told us to do. So in the meantime, let's do the things we can do together, and keep praying that someday the Holy Church of Christ is once again united. Great question—and keep them coming!