Policy on Welcoming Children to the Lord’s Table

Adopted by the New Hope Elders on September 12, 2017

New Hope’s policy regarding children at the Lord’s Table falls in line with the polity of the RCA:

To invite all baptized children, regardless of age or understanding, to participate in the Lord’s Table.

In the past, New Hope has had a policy of welcoming children to the Lord’s Table when they had reached a certain level of understanding of the meaning of the sacrament. The elders of New Hope, based on a recommendation from the Discipleship Team, have since changed this policy to include children who are too young to understand and profess faith, but have received the sacrament of baptism. Parents who would rather not have their children participate in communion are free to have their children abstain and should communicate their choice with the children, the Sunday school teachers, and the pastors.

From the RCA website:

 *“Although Jesus’ followers tried to keep children away from him, Jesus welcomed children to himself with open arms. He said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs” (Luke 18:16). Your church invites children to the Lord’s Table, the feast of the new covenant.*

 *“In 1988, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, “encourage[d] boards of elders of Reformed Church in America (RCA) congregations to include baptized children at the Lord’s Table.”*(Note: The General Synod is the highest decision-making body of the Reformed Church in America.)

 *“In its action, the General Synod reaffirmed the 1889 Children’s Catechism of the Reformed Church in America, which defined the duty of baptized children: ‘It is the duty of a baptized child to worship God and to come to the Lord’s Supper as soon as he is drawn to it by love for the Savior.’”*

*https://www.rca.org/resources/promise-and-covenant-god-surely-keeps*

 “*The Lord’s Supper, like baptism, is a means of grace for nourishing and strengthening disciples of Christ. In the Reformed Church in America baptized children are welcome at the Lord’s Table because they are members of the church, recipients of God’s grace, and able to offer their love and thankfulness to Jesus. Thus, baptized children should be encouraged to participate in the Supper of grace. The Lord’s Supper is a means of grace that nourishes faith. Children can experience the richness of the Lord’s Supper long before they can verbalize its meaning.”*

*https://www.rca.org/resources/coming-table*

From the Belgic Confession, Article 34:
*“And truly, Christ has shed his blood no less for washing the little children of believers than he did for adults.”*