

FAITH FACTS: EPISCOPALIAN

WHAT IS THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH?

The Episcopal Church is the American branch of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is the inheritor of 2000 years of catholic and apostolic tradition dating to Christ himself, rooted in the Church of England. These “sister churches” are autonomous in governance, but bound together by tradition, Scripture, and the inheritance they have received from the Church of England. The Anglican Communion is headed spiritually by the Archbishop of Canterbury and is the second largest Christian body in the world.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ANGLICAN?

This is simply a term which means “English.” The Episcopal Church is a part of the worldwide Anglican Communion – a group of Churches around the world that has their origins in the Church of England.

WHAT IS THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER?

The worship book of the Anglican Church since its inception in 1549. It is a collection of classic and contemporary prayers, devotions, services and psalms designed to allow the entire Church to worship in common union. Most recent update is the *1979 Prayer Book*, which includes traditional Episcopal liturgies and incorporates many more innovative forms of worship.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT A WORSHIP SERVICE?

- It is the custom to kneel in one’s pew for personal prayer of preparation for worship upon entering the church.
- In many churches it is the custom to bow to the altar on entering or leaving the church as an act of reverence for Christ.
- Episcopalians do not talk before the service, but silently prepare for worship.
- Every church varies regarding standing and sitting, but guidelines include: **Stand** to sing hymns, the affirmation of faith and for the reading of the Gospel in the Holy Eucharist. **Stand or sit** for the reading or singing of the Psalms. **Sit** during the readings from the Old or New Testaments, the sermon and the choir anthems. **Stand or kneel** for prayer to show gratefulness to God, and humility before God.
- Services are lead by Priests or Bishops.

EPISCOPALIAN CHURCH MUSICIANS

- John Newton – “Amazing Grace”
- Phillip Brooks – “Oh Little Town of Bethlehem”

TELL ME MORE....

- The Episcopal Church became an independent denomination after the American Revolution.
- Bishops in the American Episcopal Church are elected by individual dioceses and are consecrated into the Apostolic Succession, considered to witness to an unbroken line of Church leadership beginning with the Apostles themselves.
- The Church subscribes to historic Creeds (Nicene and Apostles), considers the Bible to be divinely inspired, and holds The Lord’s Supper to be the central act of Christian worship.
- The Church offers great latitude in the interpretation of doctrine. Stressing less, the confession of particular beliefs than the use of ***The Common Book of Prayer*** in public worship.

WHAT IS THE SAME ABOUT EPISCOPALIAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC BELIEFS?

Both profess the Catholic faith of the apostles and the early church fathers.

Both are liturgical and sacramental churches.

Both worship services might be similar.

Many practices of the Roman Catholic Church are observed by Episcopalians by choice.

ARE THEY LIKE LUTHERANS?

Like the Episcopalian Church, Lutherans have a range of liturgical practices, so services might be similar. The Episcopal Church is now in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA)

HOW DO I USE THE COMMON BOOK OF PRAYER?

You will find them in each pew, and they will guide your participation through a service. The large print is the actual service. The smaller print gives instructions to ministers and people who are conducting the service.

MANY FIND THE SERVICES OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH BEAUTIFUL IN THEIR ORDERED DIGNITY, GOD CENTERED, AND YET MINDFUL OF THE NATURE AND NEEDS OF HUMAN BEINGS.

WELL KNOWN EPISCOPALIAN WRITERS...

- C.S. Lewis – Chronicles of Narnia
- William Shakespeare – Romeo and Juliet
- Charles Dickens – A Christmas Carol
- Jan Karon – The Mitford Series

6 U. S. PRESIDENTS WERE, OR ARE, EPISCOPALIANS.

DO YOU KNOW WHO? George H.W. Bush, George Washington, James Madison, Franklin Pierce, FDR, and Gerald Ford.