

A GUIDE TO OUR WORSHIP

ST. JOHN'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Welcome!

If you are a guest, please tell an usher – we have a gift bag for you. Also, please sign our guest book in the back of the church.

This brochure is a “crash course” on worship in the Episcopal Church. We want you to be comfortable, but remember that the most important thing is to worship, not to “get it right.” Relax!

In this brochure, we will cover:

- **The Bulletin** (do I need it?)
- **Postures** (kneeling, sitting, standing)
- **Music** (where do I find it?)
- **The Prayer Book** (how do I use it?)

- **The Shape of the Service**
- **Who can take Communion?**
- **How to take Communion**
- **And more!**

THANKS FOR COMING! We are delighted that you have joined us, but we know that if you have never worshipped in an Episcopal Church, you might be confused by our service. We'll try to help, but *if you find it difficult to follow along, feel free to just listen.*

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Worship in the Episcopal Church is not a spectator sport – it is interactive. You are invited to sing and give the indicated responses as part of your offering to God.

THE BULLETIN will “walk you through” the service. If something is not included in the bulletin, you will be referred to the Book of Common Prayer, hymnal, or an insert. All of the Communion Prayer is not in the bulletin. You can follow along in the Prayer Book, or just listen!

POSTURES (standing, kneeling, sitting) often confuse newcomers and even “old-timers.” In general, we stand to sing and pray, sit to listen (to readings and the sermon), and kneel to confess. Some people, however, kneel for prayer. Everyone does not have to do the same thing. Do what is comfortable for you. *The easiest choice is to follow the lead of those around you!*

OUR MUSIC primarily comes from the blue hymnal in the pew rack.

- **Hymns** are listed in the bulletin and on the hymn boards in front next to the choir stalls.
- **“Service Music”** is the music which is sung as part of the text of the service. It is in the front of the hymnal, in a section with an "S" before the numbers.
- **Communion music** often comes from *Songs of Praise*, which is located on the pew or seat near you.

THE PRAYER BOOK is in the pew rack. Our Book of Common Prayer is the treasure of the Episcopal Church. Lots of wonderful things are in it in addition to today's service, but for now you should turn to the pages listed in the bulletin and follow along. If you get lost, we've probably gone to another section for a prayer, so just hang on and we'll come back!

Please, please, feel free to ask someone sitting near you where we are in the Prayer Book. They'll be delighted to help!

THE SHAPE OF THE SERVICE

The Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion, The Mass, The Lord's Supper) is divided into two parts:

- **The Word of God** begins the service with Bible readings, the sermon, the creed, prayers, confession, and the peace (when we greet one another).
- **The Holy Communion** begins as we make our offerings of bread and wine, money, and our lives to the Lord. The Great Thanksgiving follows. Read along in the Prayer Book and listen for how the story of creation, fall, redemption, and expectation is told in the prayers.

Note that at one point, the priest will say a "proper preface," or special prayer for the season. Because you do not have the words to the preface before you, it might be a little disconcerting at first. Don't worry! Just listen to the preface and you will be able to pick up with the service after this short insertion.

The Dismissal ends the service from the back of the church to remind us that we are sent into the world to do God's work. We respond with a resounding "Thanks be to God!"

WHO CAN TAKE COMMUNION?

All are welcome to join us at the Lord's Table.

HOW DO I TAKE COMMUNION?

Follow those in front of you as they come to the rail. You may kneel or stand at the rail as is comfortable for you (spiritually and physically!). Place your right hand on top of your left hand, palm up. The bread will be placed on your palm. Lift it to your mouth and eat it. Next the chalice of wine will be brought to you. It is very helpful if you guide it to your lips.

You do not have to take the bread *and* wine; if you wish to receive only the bread, please cross your arms over your chest when the wine is presented, and the priest will say a blessing over you. If you do not wish to receive either you may so indicate by crossing your arms over your chest and the priest will say a blessing over you. After you have made your communion, return to your pew by the side steps. If you would prefer to receive the Sacrament at your pew, please tell one of the ushers.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR WORSHIP,

please pick up *An Explanation of the Eucharist*, by the Rev. James H. Pritchett, Jr. It is available free of charge in the narthex. There are also other mate-

other materials in the back of the church you might find interesting, including sermons for the past few weeks.

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU! *We hope you will fill out a pew card and sign our visitor's book in the back of the Church.* Please let the clergy know if we can answer any questions or help in any way.

PLEASE JOIN US AFTER THE SERVICE for fellowship and refreshments in the Parish Hall (down the stairs to the right just before you exit the Church). Because we receive many visitors, do not hesitate to introduce yourself to the clergy or the parishioners. *Hosting guests to this Church is a special pleasure, and we want you to feel welcome!*

We are glad that you have come to worship with us today. Please join us again soon!

-The Rev. Troy C. Beecham, Rector