

Anglicanism

Frequently Asked Questions about who we are and how we worship God.

What is an Anglican?

Anglicans are the third largest group of Christians in the world, born out of the English Reformation. Two of the most essential pillars of our faith are the authority of Scripture and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, that Jesus is both fully human and fully God, and that salvation is available only through Him.

Our liturgical style of worship is based on worship being “the work of the people,” meaning that those who come to worship are participants in the service through active worship, praise, prayer and in receiving Holy Communion and not just spectators. Anglicans are connected to the Church of England through the global Anglican Communion, with roots in the Protestant Reformation. In public worship, we pray together as a community and follow an ordered service that is divided into two parts: the *Ministry of the Word* (reading and teaching Scripture) and the *Ministry of the Sacrament* (receiving Holy Communion).

Are you Catholic?

Anglican worship is the middle way between Roman Catholicism and Protestant Reformation theology. By way of *catholic*, we embrace the faith and traditional order of the early Church; by *reformational*, we uphold the foundation of Scripture and the faith declarations of the Reformation, evangelical revivals, and renewal movements.

The combination of Word and Sacrament in Christian worship began in the earliest days of the Church, and the formula of our liturgy remains an important aspect among many distinctively Anglican customs.



Archbishop Foley Beach

What is Ordered Worship?

This is a prescribed format of songs, prayers and readings that focuses on unity in Christ rather than individual expression. The renowned Anglican scholar, C. S. Lewis, compared ordered worship to learning to dance. At first, we focus on the steps, conscious of each movement and thus, initially, we are not yet really dancing. As we learn the steps, we begin to be free to dance, because we know the steps by heart and can enjoy both the movement and the moment. The pattern we have learned for dancing helps us to coordinate with others dancing with us, and move in one motion.

Having a routine of worship is not created to stifle the Holy Spirit or to limit us; instead it frees us to join together as one voice in praise to God. It gives us a pattern by which we can together “dance” in God’s presence. Ordered worship, when shared, is a visible sign of unity with other Christians around the world and even from the past, in the “dance” of the liturgy. The service becomes the work of the people that draws all who are present into the act of worshipping the one, true, holy God.

While there are specific roles for bishops, priests, and deacons, all God’s children are invited to engage in prayer and worship as one voice and one heart. Although a priest usually coordinates and leads worship, he does so as the “presider” who guides, not as the “performer” who presents. As we, the Body of Christ, gather to worship, it is in all of our prayers, songs and readings, and sacraments that we offer ourselves to God for His glory!

What do you do on Sundays?

Each of our Sunday services integrate historical and Biblical Anglican liturgy, customs and expressions of praise. The Thursday Morning Prayer service is a shorter version that follows the Daily Office. In all services, however, the schedule is divided into two parts: the *Ministry of the Word* (reading and teaching Scripture) and the *Ministry of the Sacrament* (receiving Holy Communion).

Part 1: Ministry of the Word

The first part of the service centers on the reading of Scripture and the teaching of the Gospel. The early Church patterned this after their Jewish synagogue services. The sequence for Part 1 is:

The Prelude & Processional

At our 9 a.m. service, an instrumental prelude calls us to prayer, followed by a hymn of praise to focus our hearts and minds on God Himself, as we ...*come before His presence with a song* (Psalm 100:1). During this hymn, the ministers formally enter to start the service in what looks like a parade, or procession.

The Acclamation

The next step is to acclaim the blessedness of the triune God, whom we acknowledge in worship specifically as “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Before we focus on our needs and desires, we remind ourselves that God is the source of our life, the focus of our community, and the object of our worship.

The Collect

A *collect* is a prayer meant to gather (collect) the intentions of the people and the focus of worship into a succinct prayer to God, addressing His righteous character and seeking His provision in the world. It includes an invocation and doxology, and closes with a corporate *AMEN*.



The Scripture Lessons

A calendar of Scriptural texts, called a lectionary, is used to determine the passages a minister will read from the Bible each week. The readings include a selection from the Old Testament, a Psalm (sometimes sung), an Epistle, and a Gospel lesson. The Lectionary unites our worship with others as the scheduled readings are used by many other Christians throughout the world.

The reader leads the faithful to acknowledge that the Bible is God’s Word, by concluding the reading with a bidding: “The Word of the Lord,” to which the people respond in gratitude: “Thanks be to God.” The preacher reads the Gospel passage “among the people” as a reminder that Christ came into the world to live and minister among us.

The Sermon

The sermon is a message of the Gospel as expressed through the personality of the preacher and addressed to God’s people in a specific time and place. It serves to teach God’s people through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who inspires us to apply the Word to our individual, present-day lives.

The Creed

Next, we recite in unison our statement of beliefs. Our version, the Nicene Creed (a product of the Nicea and Constantinople Church Councils of the 4th century), is an expansion of the Apostles Creed.

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the People are a sequence of public prayers, generally led by lay ministers (volunteers) and span the range of expression and human concerns given to us in Scripture. Worshippers are encouraged to add their own prayers either silently or aloud.

Confession & Absolution

Following teaching and prayer, we are led to a moment of humble repentance and confession of sin. This confession statement is both personal and corporate, and concludes with the priest or bishop proclaiming absolution, God’s forgiveness in Christ Jesus, so we may experience spiritual freedom from guilt, shame, and condemnation.

Passing the Peace

Passing the Peace is a physical enactment of the spiritual reconciliation of God's love and forgiveness through Christ, which we are called to pass on through our reconciliation with others. You may choose to shake hands or embrace people around you, exchanging greetings of "The peace of the Lord" or "God's peace be with you."

Part 2: Ministry of the Sacrament

The second part of the service centers on prayers and Holy Communion, patterned after Jesus' words at His Last Supper with the disciples before His crucifixion. The sequence for Part 2 is:

The Offertory

The offerings given to our local church are a partnership both in the work of the parish mission and ministry and an act of obedience recognizing God's ownership of all our resources. A song is sung during the collection, followed by our *Doxology*, as the priest presents the offerings of money as well as the Communion bread and wine in thanksgiving to God for His blessings.

We believe that giving a tithe (10% of income) is an historical Christian discipline, based on the biblical practice of Israel. One's ability to tithe is not the focus as much as one's willingness to do so as a lifestyle of exercising faith, gratitude, and Biblical stewardship.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Great Thanksgiving is the name of a group of prayers that surround the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. The celebrant (an ordained priest or bishop) leads the prayer while the whole congregation joins in by responding as prompted.

The priest recites a summary of our salvation history and Jesus' institution of Communion when He ate the Passover meal with His disciples the night before His crucifixion. The Sanctus (or *Holy, Holy, Holy*) is a song inviting us to join in with the celestial choir of saints and angels worshiping God in heaven before His throne of grace as we are spiritually lifted into the Lord's presence.

Jesus' words from the Last Supper, *this is my body....this is my blood,... do this in remembrance of me*, are those recorded by the Gospel writers Matthew (26:26,28), Mark (14:22,24) and Luke (22:19,20) and the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:24,25).

The Lord's Prayer is said in unison just before receiving the bread and the wine (the symbolic Body and Blood of Christ). It is offered in obedience to Jesus, who taught it to His disciples; it reminds us that God provides for our needs as we pray *give us this day our daily bread* (Mt. 6:11; Lk. 11:3).

Receiving Communion

Anglicans believe in the *real presence of Christ* in the Eucharist, meaning that the Holy Spirit makes Jesus' life and power present to us in the consecrated bread and wine, which we receive by faith.

Since Baptism is the Christian initiation rite that Jesus commanded of us, we require people to be baptized before receiving Communion. Furthermore, we believe that the Communion Table is the Lord's and not exclusively the Table of the Anglican Church. Thus, all baptized believers are welcomed by Jesus, and us, at the Lord's Table.



Those who are not baptized, or are not receiving Communion for personal reasons, may still receive God's blessing through a priest or bishop. They simply cross their arms over their chest to indicate to the priest that a blessing is desired.

At the Altar

Ushers will guide you to the front where a priest will serve you a piece of bread. A second minister will follow with a chalice of wine. If you wish to receive the wine, kindly guide the chalice to your lips, or you may hand your bread to minister who will dip (intinct) the bread into the wine and place it on your tongue.

After receiving the bread, and the wine, it is customary to say "Amen." Before returning to their seats, many choose to make the sign of the cross as a reminder of Jesus' personal sacrifice for them.



The Post-Communion Prayer

Following Communion, we say a prayer of thanksgiving for the blessings received through the Lord's Supper and to seek God's empowerment as we follow His lead into the world as faithful servants of Christ Jesus.

The Blessing

Proclaimed by a priest or bishop, the blessing is an ancient custom in which we are assured that the comfort, protection, and presence of God are upon, and remain with, His people. Many hold their hands out, palms upwards, as a sign of receiving this blessing from God. Others prefer to make the sign of the cross in receiving God's blessing.

The Dismissal

Just before we depart from the church and enter the "mission field," we are dismissed with a charge to "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord..." Worship has no end; it continues as we go where we are sent in the name of the Christ we love, who first loved us and calls us to love others through word and action.



Why do we use rote prayers?

We incorporate both written and spontaneous prayers. Neither is meant for mere speaking, and both involve the faithful intent of those praying. We value the depth, rich language, and biblically grounded nature of the historic prayers, while rejoicing in the expression of a lively faith through extemporaneous prayer.

Why do we make the sign of the cross?

Making the sign of the cross upon oneself is to identify with Christ's sacrifice. By bearing His cross, Jesus won for us our salvation, protection, healing, and victory. By crossing ourselves, we signify that we live in a reality where His cross is upon us in both Spirit and truth. People often sign themselves in rhythm with the formula of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Some worshippers sign with a "little cross" just prior to the Gospel reading by marking small crosses on the forehead, lips, and heart. This action symbolizes a prayer that the Gospel may be present in our mind, upon our lips, and in our hearts.

Why do some people raise their hands in the air?

While worshipping our Lord, some people raise their hands to Him as a sign of adoration or submission. The posture is one of honoring King Jesus in praise and thanksgiving for His unconditional love and the continual outpouring of His goodness and grace into our lives. It is a personal choice and understood to be the free expression of one's praise and response to God.

*Used and edited with permission from The Rev'd Greg Goebel, Anglican Diocese of the South.