

The Episcopal Church welcomes you

The Episcopal Church today is made up of more than 2.2 million worshipers in about 7,679 congregations across the United States and elsewhere, including Europe, South America and the Caribbean.

We organize ourselves in geographic groupings of congregations called dioceses. Haiti is the largest of our 110 dioceses. We Episcopalians also call ourselves Anglicans to describe our roots in the Church of England.

Our congregations range from thousands gathering to worship in venerable cathedrals to small groups worshipping in storefronts. We pray with and for each other. We welcome all who come looking for God and a community of love. We work together to make our congregations strong for those who will come after us.



The Episcopal Church welcomes you
The 75th General Convention, Columbus

The church's complete name, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, describes our work together. We make Christ's mission our own by working in and sponsoring such ministries as food pantries, homeless shelters, mission trips, rummage sales, parish nursing programs, vacation bible schools, church camps, retreat centers, and after-school mentoring programs.

Our ways of worshiping are as varied as our ways of doing mission. Some of us always use incense, others never do. Some of us sing only from *The Hymnal 1982*, others use music from many sources. Most of us have Holy Eucharist every Sunday while some have Eucharist less often.

The Book of Common Prayer grounds us all. It explains Christianity, describes the main beliefs of the Episcopal Church, outlines the



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requirements for the sacraments, gives the patterns of our worship together and serves as the main guideline of the Episcopal life.

Just as we hold these prayers and rites in common, we also hold some common beliefs. We look back to the beginnings of the Christian church for statements of those beliefs and we find the Apostles' Creed (formed in the very early years of the church) and the Nicene Creed (written during fourth-century gatherings of church leaders). Both creeds describe the God whom we experience in three ways: as the one who creates us, the one who redeems us and the one who continually guides us towards holiness.

We sometimes interpret the Bible differently, yet we find common ground in our belief that Holy Scripture is the Word of God. Using the text of the Bible itself and the tradition of what Christians have taught us about it through the ages, Episcopalians believe we must come to an understanding of it as it relates to our own lives. To do this work we use our "reason," that is our God-given intelligence and our experiences. Some people refer to our three-legged stool of Scripture, tradition and reason.

“ The mission of the church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. ”

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 855

Read more about it:

- “Anglican Identities” by Rowan Williams, Cowley Publications © 2004
- The New Church’s Teaching Series, Cowley Publications: “Anglican Vision” by James Griffiss © 1997, “Opening the Prayer Book” Jeffrey Lee © 1999, “Opening the Bible” by Roger Ferlo © 1997.
- “What is Anglicanism?” by Urban Holmes, Morehouse Group, © 1982
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