

**A VISITOR GUIDE TO WORSHIP**  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY





*We believe God loves you – no exceptions.*

## **WELCOME TO EPIPHANY!**

We are so glad you are here. We were all newcomers once and we've all had questions—probably some of same ones you have. Our ushers and greeters are here to help if you have a question.

When you visit an Episcopal Church or any church at all for the first time it may feel a little intimidating. We want you to feel welcome and to be able to participate in ways that feel comfortable to you. Worship is a time to join with others in giving thanks to God for God's gifts to us. It is a time to allow yourself to enter into God's presence and be reminded of God's love. We hope this guide will answer some of your questions and help you know what to expect when you attend our worship services at Epiphany.



## AS YOU ARRIVE AT EPIPHANY

We recommend arriving a few minutes before the service so you can find a seat, pick up a worship bulletin, and get oriented. There will be ushers outside the church to welcome you and help with anything you need.

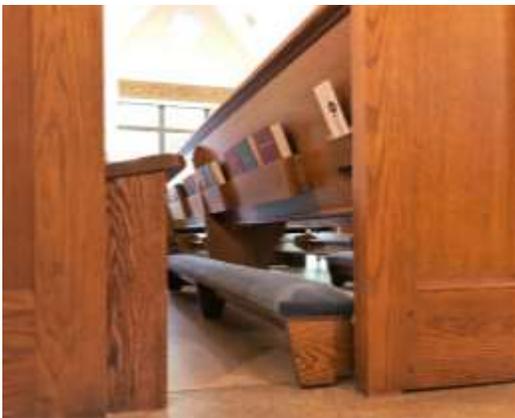
Once you are settled in your pew, you can find the order of service printed in your bulletin. You can also find the service in the blue *Book of Common Prayer*, (sometimes called the BCP or Prayer Book) in the pew rack in front of you. Hymn numbers for the music we will sing are marked in your bulletin and you can find those hymns in the red book, *The Hymnal 1982*, also in the pew rack in front of you.

You may notice some people kneeling or bowing before they enter the pew (reverencing the altar). Some people kneel and pray before the service begins as a way of preparing themselves for worship, and others do not.

During the service you may notice some people making the sign of the cross or crossing themselves. To do this, begin by touching your forehead, moving to touch the middle of your chest, then to your left shoulder, followed by your right shoulder, and finally back to touch the middle of your chest.

There are different points in the liturgy where we might cross ourselves: during the opening *acclamation*, beginning with the words “Blessed be God;” when we profess belief in the “resurrection of the dead” during the Creed; after we confess our sins, during the *absolution*; immediately before or after receiving the Eucharist; at the blessing from the priest at the close of the liturgy.

There is a wide spectrum in the Episcopal Church of how people embody worship. We invite you to practice what feels comfortable and meaningful to you.





## THE BEGINNING OF THE SERVICE

A few minutes before the service begins, the organist will play the Prelude to help us prepare ourselves for worship. You'll know it's time for the service to start because you'll see the Verger (who leads the procession) standing at the rear of the church.

Our service begins with an opening hymn as the verger, crucifer (cross bearer), acolytes, choir members and clergy process to the front of the church. You'll notice that some people bow when the cross passes their pew as a reminder of Christ's presence with us as we worship.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The service is divided into two parts: The Liturgy of the Word and The Liturgy of the Table. The Liturgy of the Word contains readings from the Bible, the sermon, The Nicene Creed, and the Prayers of the People. In the Episcopal Church, our scripture readings come from the lectionary, which is a three-year cycle of readings. People from the congregation read the first two readings.

The reading of the Gospel (meaning “good news”) has a special place among the scripture readings. The gospels contain the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and are central to who we are as Christians. We sing a hymn as the Gospel is processed into the middle of the church and read by a deacon or priest. Everyone stands for this reading and turns and faces the Gospel Book.



The sermon follows the gospel and helps us take what we heard in the scriptures and reflect on how they intersect with our lives.

After the sermon, we stand and affirm our faith using the Nicene Creed that which connects us with Christians throughout time and throughout the world. A member of the congregation then comes forward to lead the Prayers of the People where we pray for the Church, the nation, and the world, and for those who are sick and those who have died.

The Prayers of the People are followed the Confession where we kneel as a sign of our repentance and confess together that we have failed to love God and our neighbor. After the confession, the priest stands and says the absolution as a reminder of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

The priest then says, “The peace of Christ be always with you.” The people respond, “And also with you” and greet each other by shaking hands or saying “peace be with you” or similar words as a way of enacting God’s welcome and our desire to be in right relationship with each other.



## THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

### **Offertory**

The table is set for communion while the Ushers pass the plate down the aisles to collect the congregation's gifts and offerings as the choir sings an anthem. It is fine for you to put money in the plate or to put in nothing at all. You may also give online through our website or QR code instead.

During the presentation hymn, people from the congregation bring forward the gifts of bread and wine and give them to the priest or deacon at the altar.

### **Eucharistic Prayer**

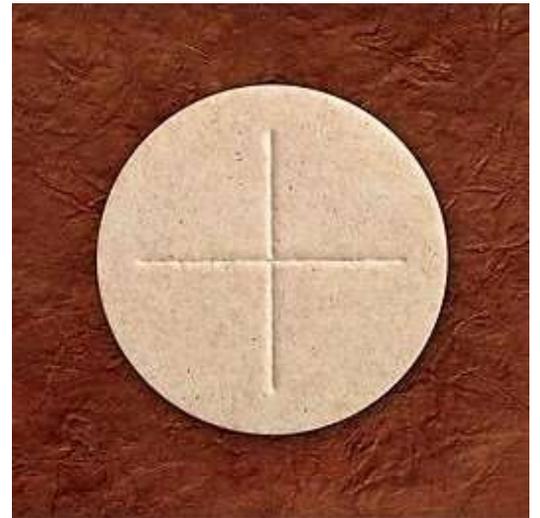
The people stand as the Priest prays the Eucharistic prayer. Eucharist comes from a word which means "to give thanks." It begins with an invitation to "Lift up your hearts" and continues with the story of the Jesus' last meal with his disciples. The priest asks the Holy Spirit to be present in the bread and wine and in us. After we sing the Sanctus (Holy, holy, holy Lord) the people kneel or stand. You may do whichever feels comfortable to you.

At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, we pray the Lord's Prayer together and then the priest breaks the bread into two pieces, symbolizing Christ's death on the cross. The Fraction Anthem is sung or spoken as the bread is broken into pieces and the priest invites people to the altar with the words, "The Gifts of God for the People of God."

### **Receiving Communion**

At Epiphany, everyone is welcome to receive communion. People come forward and stand or kneel at the altar rail to receive communion. Ushers will direct you to go to the altar. You can watch what others are doing and follow their lead. If you don't want to receive communion, you can remain in your seat, or you can come forward and cross your arms over your chest to receive a blessing instead of communion from the priest.

If you do want to receive, hold out your hands, one on top of the other with palms facing up and the priest will put a piece of bread in your hand. (Gluten free wafers are available. Just mention it to the priest when she comes to you at the altar rail.) Then another person serving at the altar will come with the cup of wine. You can eat the bread when it is put in your hand and then take a sip of wine from the cup. It is helpful for you to touch the cup and help guide it to your mouth. If you don't want to drink from the cup you can also leave the bread in your hand and dip the bread in the wine and then place it in your mouth. It is also fine to receive only bread or only wine. (During COVID-19, the priest will dip your wafer lightly in the wine before placing it in your hand.) Once you have received, return to your seat down the side steps. The choir or the congregation often sing a hymn during communion.



## THE CONCLUSION OF THE SERVICE

When everyone has received communion and returned to their seats, we say together the Post-Communion Prayer and the priest asks God's Blessing on the people. We sing a final hymn as the vergers, acolytes, choir, and priests process back down the aisle and out of the church. After the hymn, a priest or deacon gives the dismissal and sends us out into the world in peace.

If you are a newcomer, the clergy would love to greet you at the door on your way out. We are glad you have chosen to worship with us and would love to help you get connected here in a way that feels meaningful to you.



The Rev. Amy Dills-Moore,  
Priest in Charge



The Rev. Nicole Lambelet  
Associate Priest

## LEARN MORE ABOUT EPIPHANY

- Scan the QR Code to learn more information and details for newcomers to our parish. Explore the site to learn more about Epiphany and our ministries.
- Introduce yourself to us by an email to the clergy, or by filling out our online visitor card.
- Be sure to sign up for our weekly e-newsletter on the link in the footer of our site to stay up-to-date on everything happening at our parish!

