

A user-friendly guide  
for worship at St. Andrew's



St. Andrew's  
Episcopal Church

301 South Circle Dr. Rocky Mount, NC

[www.saint-andrews-church.org](http://www.saint-andrews-church.org)

## **First Things First**

We're delighted you're here, and we want you to come back. We suspect you may have some questions. Everybody you see was a newcomer at one time or another and we've all had questions – probably the very same ones. So, don't hesitate to ask a question! We want you to be comfortable so you can worship God and enjoy your visit today. You can't do that if you're wondering which book to pick up next or trying "to do everything right," which usually means doing the same things everybody else is doing.

## **So relax....**

When you're worshipping God, you can't get it wrong! If you need help, ask the person next to you. We love guests here at St. Andrew's. Regardless of what anybody else is doing, don't do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

You may want to stop reading at this point and just enjoy the worship service. You can always take this booklet with you. One last thing, you need to know that it is the normal practice of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church to celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday. It is the exception when we don't. So if you're wondering as a guest this morning if you are permitted to receive the Eucharist, the answer is "YES!" All baptized Christians are welcome to receive the blessed Sacraments. All guest, baptized or not, are welcome to come forward to receive a priestly blessing.

If you wish to receive a blessing, simply cross your arms over your chest when standing or kneeling around the altar rail.

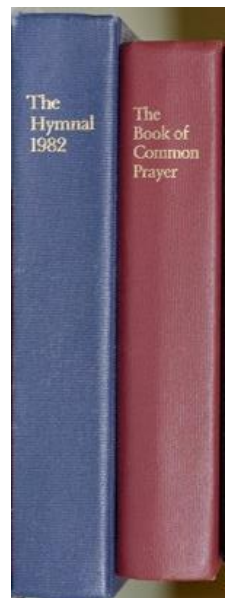
### **Remember....**

We want you to feel comfortable worshipping with us. Worship is a time to join with others in giving thanks to God for God's wonderful blessings in our lives. It is a time to allow yourself to enter into God's presence, to be touched by God's love.

### **Now, let's start with the basics....**

#### **What are these books in the rack in front of me?**

The smaller black book is the Book of Common Prayer. The words used in our worship service (the liturgy) are taken from this book. There are other special services as well as prayers found in this book. The larger blue book is the Hymnal 1982, which contains the majority of the songs we sing in our worship service. We have a second hymnal in our pew racks as well, it's called, "Lift Every Voice and Sing"



#### **Why are some people kneeling and praying before the service begins?**

It's an Episcopal thing. We take time before the service to pray to God, to prepare our hearts for worship.

If you're not sure what to pray in preparation for worship, the *Collect for Purity* is a good place to start. "Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

### **It sure seems like we stand up and sit down a lot.**

That's true. The general rule is that we stand to sing, sit to listen and kneel to pray. The Episcopal way of worshipping is to experience worship with all our senses – sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. We like to think that we involve our entire being in worship. We of course also engage our minds as well in worship, but at times our senses can deliver God's presence to our hearts in a way that is beyond our understanding. We are reminded in those moments that God is a mystery. That mystery is often communicated to us through the beauty of stain glass or beautiful music.

### **Why are some people bowing and some kneeling before entering the pews and others don't do anything at all?**

What you're noticing is called "reverencing" and people have different ways of doing it. Some bow in the direction of the altar, some "genuflect" (touch their knee to the floor), others reverence silently or without gesture.

What's important is that you do what feels comfortable and what helps you worship. None of these gestures of worship is expected or required of you to worship with us.

### Why do some people cross themselves?

Again, this is a personal worship practice. This is called making the sign of the cross. Some people do it in remembrance of their baptism, others because it reminds

them of the price Jesus paid (the cross) to enable us to respond to God's love; still others because it's their way of taking up their own "cross" and following him. You will see them doing this at times during the service, too. But you don't have to cross yourself just because others do.

### So what is going to happen next?

As you wait for the service to begin you will see people bowed in prayer, you'll probably hear people visiting in the back as they greet each other. You will first hear an organ Voluntary, which is an organ solo, that notifies people that in a short time our worship will begin. After the prelude, the priest will greet the people and then our service will begin with an opening Processional Hymn.

**In die Natiuitatis Dñi.** 37

sanctū suū in oculis ōnium gētiū. Dñs reg. ex.

**N**otū fecit dñs alleluia salutare suū alle-

luia. **C**antate. 2. **D**eatus vēter qui te

portauit Christe & vbera quæ suxisti. Dñs reg.

**V**erū. **N**otū fecit dñs salutare suū. In conf-  
pedit genitū. renouauit  
hominem suum. \*

irasc. **R. quintū.** **A**ngelus ad pastores

a it annūtio vo bis gau dium

mag nū quod e rit ōni popu

lo quia natus est vobis hodie Salua tor

cijj

If you love the hymn, belt it out, whether you're in tune or not. As the Scriptures say, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." If you don't know the hymn or don't want to sing, you can just read the words to yourself or look around and enjoy the beauty of the nave (worship space) and the music.

### **Who are the people in the robes?**



The wearing of these robes (vestments) is a reminder that what we do here today is different. We have left behind our everyday lives

and entered into God's presence, a wonderful and different reality.

Next you will see acolytes in Red cassocks and white surpluses carrying a Processional cross and Gospel Book.

Following the acolytes, are the lay readers and the priest. When our bishop is with us, he or she will be the last in the procession as a place of honor. You'll know the Bishop because he or she wears a mitre and carries an ornate staff.

### **What about Holy Communion? How does that work here?**

As we stated earlier, all baptized worshippers are invited and encouraged to participate at the altar rail for the reception of Holy Communion. Ushers will help guide people to the altar rail to receive Holy Communion.

You may kneel or stand to receive the Sacrament. Holy Communion is received by first eating the bread and then drinking from the cup. The normal custom for receiving the bread is to place one hand, palm up, into the palm of the other hand and lift them both to the priest to receive the wafer. After receiving the bread simply raise your hands to your mouth and eat the wafer or bread.



Next comes the wine. Beware; it is real wine, not grape juice. When the chalice (cup) bearer comes to you please help guide the cup to your lips and take a small sip. A second option, if you prefer, is to dip a portion of the bread into the wine as it is offered to you rather than drinking from the common cup. A third option is to cross your arms over your chest and that signifies to the chalice bearer that you do not wish to receive the wine.

Gluten-Free communion wafers are available for persons who have wheat allergies. Please inform the clergy of your desire to receive a Gluten-Free communion wafer once you kneel at the altar rail.

Those not wishing to receive Holy Communion may come to the altar rail for a blessing. Crossing your arms over your chest signifies to the priest that you wish to receive a blessing.

## A word about symbolism....

In the very earliest churches, most people could neither read nor write. So it became necessary to invent ways to teach people about religious matters and let them know what was going on, especially since all services and prayers were in Latin! Many of these traditions still exist – like different vestment colors to denote various seasons of the church year, stained glass windows to tell Biblical stories, Sanctus Bells to indicate the most solemn moments of Holy Communion. These subtle reminders enhance the beauty of our tradition and enrich our worship service today.

Welcome to *St. Andrew's!*

We are glad you are here!

