

Welcome to St. John's Church



ST JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

**A traditional Anglican parish in the
Diocese of Fort Worth**

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Thank you for your attendance and interest in St John's Church. Please fill out a Visitors Card. They are found in the pew rack and also on the table in the Narthex where you entered the church. Be sure to join us in the Parish Hall for refreshments. We look forward to meeting you there.

Anglican Worship of Almighty God

Worship of the Triune God: The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is our way at St John's to love God and listen to Him and be fed by Him.

Historic worship, such as St John's is called "liturgy." This word comes from two Greek words, *laos* (people) and *ergon* (work). It was a secular word at the time of the Apostles that the primitive Church incorporated into their language to indicate that Christian worship of God is the primary *duty and activity* of the *people of God*.

Over the centuries various liturgies that guide and instruct the worship of God in various settings have grown up. The *Book of Common Prayer* brought many practices and liturgies together into a common book of worship beginning in 1549. The 2019 *Book of Common Prayer* of the ACNA is the 10th book.

Anglicans exercise a variety of protocols and postures during worship. For example,

- ✠ We *sit* so to be instructed by the Word of God declared in the sacred Scripture and in the Sermon.
- ✠ We *stand* as an act of solemn prayer or praise.
- ✠ We *bow* and *kneel* and *genuflect* in profound reverence for the awesome majesty, love and closeness of God.
- ✠ We *receive* Holy Communion on our knees at the Altar Rail as a sign of profound reverence and respect to God for the gift of receiving His Son, sacramentally.
- ✠ Our worship opens with a liturgical *procession* to the Altar and at the conclusion of worship there is a *procession* from the Altar. We have various processions during the liturgy itself, such as the Gospel procession, when we bring the Book of Gospels out into the center of the congregation led by a crucifer and two candle-bearers. Processions are done with

music and include choir members and laity serving with the clergy. Processions build a sense of joy and hope as the liturgy begins, is in process, and is concluded.

Anglicans follow various disciplines and customs that aid our worship of God.

Such as,

- ✠ Making the *sign of the cross* at various times during the service as a reminder of Christ to whom we belong and what price our salvation cost Him.
- ✠ *Bowing one's head* as the processional cross passes by or the Book of the Gospels.
- ✠ *Genuflecting or bowing towards the Altar* as you enter or leave the Altar in profound respect for the real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.
- ✠ The *elevation of the consecrated Body and Blood of Christ* acknowledges that our Lord's promise to be with us in the Holy Eucharist (see John 6) is fulfilled at our Altar.
- ✠ The *ringing of bells*, including the *Tower Bells*, as a joyful call to important parts of the service and solemn moments and words spoken or sung.

Fasting

Throughout the year our Church acknowledges days of fasting and special disciplines. These days are listed in the Prayer Book and noted in the Sunday bulletin.

Fasting is not eating or drinking. Fasting before receiving Holy Communion is one of the most ancient and hallowed practices of the Church. Its motive is love and adoration towards our Lord, Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion we receive and our desire to offer to Jesus the sacrifice of ourselves in making Him the first Gift received on Sunday morning. Anglican custom is to fast at least one hour before receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Please remember, the elderly, and those with medical and dietary needs are exempt from fasting.

Beauty

God is Beauty! God is Beautiful! All beautiful things reflect in some way the splendor and beauty of God. Just a look at creation will confirm this. God has created this amazingly intricate and balanced world for our enjoyment and wonder, and, still, He has prepared for us, not just a home in this world, but an everlasting home in Heaven where beauty surpasses even the loveliness of this world or our imagination.

You will notice in St John's many beautiful things. Stained glass, handmade kneeling cushions, sacred vessels made with silver and gold, handmade vestments and linens, carved wood, an extensive pipe organ, Stations of the Cross, our beautiful Tabernacle and our lovely altars. All these precious things help communicate how precious is our worship of God. This is also true for the physical shape and architectural style of the building itself.

Christian Signs and Symbols

Anglicanism makes abundant use of "symbols." They teach us and present Christian truths in ways that words sometime cannot. Words can fail us where symbols succeed in a beautiful way. It's often true that when words and symbols are combined, they frequently explain spiritual things at a very deep level.

Musical notations illustrate on a page what lies in the soul and mind of the composer. Notations then push us to listen and think and seek what they stand for. This is similar to how Christian symbols work for us. They too illustrate and teach what may lie in the mystery of our faith; speaking as it does of an unseen and supernatural world.

A few examples found at St John's are:

- † The Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Used together they symbolize the eternity of God, who, without beginning or end, cannot be conceived of except under the limited human language of words and ideas and symbols.
- † Thee Circles, intertwined, forming a triangle, symbolize the Three Persons of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity.
- † The Dove represents the Holy Spirit often descending upon the Second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ.

- † The Eye which symbolizes God the Father, telling that He sees and knows all that we do and think. No secrets are hidden from God. The Father is often represented by a Hand.
- † The Flames of Fire signify the Holy Spirit as He descends upon the Apostles and the Church at Pentecost and upon Christians as they receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- † Flowers and plants like lilies for purity, and the pomegranate for immortality, and the rose for love.
- † A Fish, which is a symbol for our Lord, Jesus Christ and also the Holy Eucharist. The Greek word for “fish” is spelled from the first letters of Greek words meaning, “**J**esus **C**hrist, **S**on of **G**od, **S**avior.” Archeologists have discovered the fish was used as a secret symbol by the early Christians in the days of persecution.
- † The Twelve Apostles which are imaged in stained glass and on sacred vessels for Holy Communion. Jesus Christ is the Foundation of the Church which He instituted through the lives of these twelve men. In addition to the twelve, St. Paul and St. Barnabas are considered apostles. The apostolic Twelve and St. Paul and St. Barnabas are the first bishops of the church. All bishops properly consecrated in apostolic succession down to the present day are sacramentally linked to one or more of the above.
- † St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John are the four Apostles and Evangelists who authored the Gospels in the New Testament. They are often symbolized by the figures of a winged Man = Matthew (because his gospel narrative focuses on the humanity of Christ), a winged Lion = Mark (Mark’s gospel narrative focuses on Christ as King. An Ox = Luke (the ox is the sacrificial animal. Luke’s gospel narrative focuses on the atoning sacrifice of Christ), and a Eagle with outstretched wings = John (John’s gospel narrative focuses on the spread of the Good News to all corners of the world).
- † Jesus, the Good Shepherd is one of the very earliest of all Christian images of Christ. Often you will see Jesus with a lamb in His arms and a flock gathered around Him.
- † Monograms of Jesus. Like the “Alpha and Omega” noted above, there is also, “I.H.S.” which are the first three letters of

“Jesus” in Greek, and the “Chi Rho” which are the first two letters of “Christ” in Greek.

✠ Agnus Dei, which is Latin for “Lamb of God”. This is a name for Jesus Christ. The “Agnus Dei” as the “suffering lamb” is shown with a cross, the “triumphal lamb” has a waving banner, and the “enthroned lamb” is seated on the Book of Seven Seals (Rev 5:6-14). The Agnus Dei comes from the words of John the Baptist (Jn 1:29, 36).

The Holy Eucharist

Anglicans take the Holy Eucharist seriously! Historically the Holy Eucharist is our principal service of Christian worship on the Lord’s Day, and on other appointed Feasts and Holy Days. This has been true since apostolic times. This service of worship is known by several names. Examples are the Lord’s Supper, the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Mass, the Holy Sacrifice, and the Great Offering.

Why such attention to this particular way of worship? Jesus explained in the synagogue in Capernaum that *it is necessary* for a person to receive His holy Body and precious *Blood for salvation*. *The Holy Eucharist is the sacrifice of Christ made present in our day and time, and it’s how He unites us to His one offering of Himself to the Father for our salvation.* (Is 53:5, John 6:33, John 6:35, Luke 24:30, Luke 22:19-20, Matt 26:26-28, John 6:48-51, Acts 2:42-46, John 6:53-58, 1 Cor 11:17-34).

St. Paul reminds us that the “Lord’s Supper” is not simply a “Christian Passover Rite” nor is it merely a symbolic and commemorative meal. In 1 Cor 10:16 we are challenged to see more deeply into this sacrament to find Present the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and to know that at the Altar Rail we are receiving such.

So, a right attitude towards the Sacrament of the Altar is very necessary. St. Paul reminds us of this. “Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord *in an unworthy manner* will be guilty of sinning against the Body and the Blood of the Lord.” (1 Cor 10:27)

God’s plan is to bring “*all things in Heaven and earth together under one head, even Christ...*” (Eph 1:10). The Church’s baptismal

Font and her Eucharistic Altar are the two primary places where this great Plan of Reconciliation is to occur. If we deny the reality of the Body and the Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, we are closing the very door that God opened on the Cross where He will *“draw the whole world to Himself.”* (Jn 12:32) Think about this when the consecrated Host and the Chalice of consecrated wine are both elevated at the words of institution said by the celebrant! *“This is My Body...” “This is My Blood...”* Holy Communion is the celebration of our union and reconciliation with God in Christ and it is our celebration of reconciliation with one another and all of creation.

Here we are dealing with a deep penetrating intimacy with God. The Prayer Book liturgy proclaims in this service the central fact of God’s love for us in Christ.

It also brings regularly to our mind a fresh appreciation of the cost of our forgiveness. The unlimited power of the Cross. This will puncture any false pride within us. It gives us fresh assurance of the reality of our forgiveness, which will cast off any doubt. At the Altar Rail we receive fresh anticipation of God’s forthcoming forgiveness as we live transparent before Him and continue to grow and mature as a Christian. By faith and grace despair can be avoided.

All of this is but a foreshadowing of the Great Eschatological Banquet Feast that lies ahead in the age to come! (Lk 14:14,15; Matt 25:10; 24:31; Mk 13:27)

Holy Baptism

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that, *“unless one is born anew, by means of baptism in water, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.”* (Jn 3:315) So, the sacrament of Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity (Matt 28:18-20), in water (Matt 3:13-17), is necessary for our salvation. Being baptized is the way God makes us a Christian. (Gal 3:26-27, 1 Pet 3:21, Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, John 3:5, Romans 6:3, Acts 22:16, Luke 3:21-22, 1 Cor 12:13, John 1:33, Acts 19:4, Acts 19:5-6, Acts 2:41, Acts 10:47, Titus 3:5.

So, we say each week in the Nicene Creed (A.D. 381), “We believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.”

Anglicanism takes baptism seriously. Jesus made it the center of His “Great Commission.” (Matt 28:18-20). Baptism embodies the divine promise to make all things new. In this case it is the human soul that is born anew in Christ.

Baptism unites us to Christ. St. Paul says that by baptism we now reign with Christ. God’s grace overcomes the reign of sin and death in our life. In Colossians, St Paul refers to this as a spiritual “circumcision.” (Col 2:11-13)

Baptism unites us to the Church: the Mystical Body of Christ. Baptism gives us sanctifying grace so we may receive the sacraments and begin living the sacramental life.

Baptism gives us our identity, telling us who and whose we are! Our identity as a Christian/Anglican is to be formed by our relationship to Jesus Christ as our Savior, Lord and God. He is our primary teacher, our brother and friend.

Baptism calls us to discipleship living. As disciples of Jesus, we are saved sinners into whom grace has been infused. So, we are to live with our eyes wide open, looking with gratitude into the creation God redeemed in Christ. We should look at our present and future in anticipation of encountering the glory of God in many ways. We should look around, and ever so close, to see how to love and serve others for Jesus’ sake.

Baptism calls us to holiness. God calls us to holiness and empowers us to live a holy life. Baptism proclaims the supernatural reality of union with Christ’s death; which means that, though sin and the devil remain present in the world, their dominion over us is broken. By faith and by grace we can overcome sinful temptations. (Rom 6:6)

What we must understand is that our personal life has been super-naturalized. The resurrected Christ, He is Lord of our life and decisions. The indwelling Spirit, He is our comforter and enabler. The Holy Spirit leads us into the disciplines of mortifying, that is dying to self and selfishness, resisting and progressively killing off, sin and dependence on sinful ways and appetites. (Rom 8:13, Col 3:5). Growing out of a disciplined life will be new habits, practices, and principles that exemplify the life of Jesus. (Gal 5:22-23, Eph 4:20-5:2). This lifecycle of “mortification and new life” is

how we live daily into our baptism by the super-natural power the Holy Spirit offers.

Baptism calls us to loyalty. For Anglicans loyalty to Jesus Christ is the driving force in our lives. Loyalty involves gratitude, admiration, a sense of indebtedness to the Cross, and an appreciation of ongoing love and care by our heavenly Father and His Church. This kind of loyalty is basic to discipleship. The knowledge that we have of being baptized, grafted into the mystery of God's own life, what should emerge within us is our irrevocable commitment to Jesus and His vision of the salvation of the world!

In our baptismal service we call for an uncompromising faithfulness to Jesus in opposing the sinister things in the world promoted by our fallen nature and the devil. Standing steady and strong, in faith by grace, with Jesus in all situations. This is what our baptism requires of us.

The High Altar

For Anglicans, the Altar is the most important furnishing of the church, which makes it the church's focal point. It is often explained that the church building is constructed for its Altar and not the other way around. Altars are consecrated by the Bishop and used exclusively as the "Lord's Table" to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. The top of the Altar is called the *mensa*, (Latin for "table") and is incised with five crosses, one on each of the four corners and one large one in the middle. The *mensa* is covered by an altar cloth called the "fair linen" which is made from pure Irish linen and is hand woven. It symbolizes the burial shroud Jesus was wrapped in after He was taken down from the cross.

The Tabernacle. The Tabernacle is the beautiful bronze "box like" structure with a dome and cross that is attached to the Altar and the Gradine (shelf immediately above the Altar with the six Office candles) and is used exclusively to hold the reserved Sacrament. The word tabernacle comes from the Hebrew meaning residence or dwelling place or tent. According to the Bible, God promised to "take up residence" or "dwell" with His people always. For Anglicans this is a most sacred truth. Next to the Altar is the Sanctuary candle. It is lit all the time. It remains continuously lit

to remained us that God is always Present in the holy Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle. "I will be with you always, until the end of the ages" Jesus promised. (Matt 28:20)

Our bronze Tabernacle was designed by Fort Worth sculptor and parishioner, Michael Pavlovsky. He also is the artist of our "14 Stations of the Cross." The interior of the Tabernacle is lined with olive wood from Jerusalem.

Candles

At St. John's we burn a lot of candles. They are lit at all Church services, all with a wide variety of spiritual and symbolic meanings. God said, "Let light shine out of darkness", [and] "He has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (1 Cor. 4:6)

Lit candles serve many purposes.

- † Altar Candles. The two large candles that sit on the Altar represent the two Natures of Christ: His humanity and His divinity. These Altar candles are lit only when celebrating the Holy Eucharist.
- † Office candles. The candles placed behind the Altar sitting on the Gradine can be lit for any service, but they are required when the Offices of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer and Evensong are offered for Public worship.
- † Bishop's Candle. This is an extra candle placed usually on the Gradine when the Diocesan Bishop visits and presides at the Holy Eucharist.
- † Paschal Candle. The Paschal Candle is a large white candle symbolizing the Risen Christ. It is placed on the Gospel-side of the Altar, and first lit at the Great Vigil of Easter. The paschal Candle burns at all services in Eastertide, which concludes on Pentecost Sunday. It is lit for all baptismal, marriage, and funeral liturgies to emphasize that Christians are enlightened by Christ in a special way in these three liturgies.
- † Processional candles. There are two processional candles that are carried by acolytes who walk with the acolyte who carries the Processional cross. In the church the cross is always illuminated by candles to emphasize that Jesus Christ is the light of the world and the Triumphant of the Church.

- † Sanctuary candle. This “eternal light” is kept burning permanently close to the Tabernacle reminding all of God’s Presence in the Blessed Sacrament reserved. The use of a “sanctuary candle” is a practice we inherited from Judaism. In Judaism, an “eternal light” was kept burning in the Temple in the “Holy of Holies” to remind worshippers of the Presence of God in His Temple. (Ex 27:20-21 and Lev 24:2-4)
- † Votive candles. In the baptistery area is a metal stand holding votive candles in red glass cups. These three-hour candles are lit often for special intentions and prayers. Here, as in early Christian times, we light a candle to signify that our prayers and intentions offered in faith come into the light of God. By faith we petition our Lord in prayer to hear us and answer our prayer according to His will. The light of the candle shows a special reverence and our desire to remain present to the Lord as we depart and go about our daily business. Prayer is our coming into the light of Christ, allowing our souls to be filled with His light, and letting that light burn in our souls even though we may return to other activities.
- † Taper candles. These are small handheld candles that are used during Midnight Mass and the Great Vigil of Easter. The Light of Christ illuminates the world on the celebration of His holy Birth and His glorious Resurrection.

The Christian’s way of life

Let’s dive deeper into the topic of sacraments for a moment. Jesus gave to the Church a total of 7 sacraments. Why? They explain what Christianity is about.

Sacraments help us live the Christian life. Christianity is a way of life that our mind and heart chooses to follow to God. This way is detailed in the person of Jesus Christ and understood through the Holy Spirit.

You really should commit this to memory. In the fullest understanding of the Christian faith, the faith is a journey that we walk each day with God, in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This understanding explains why the Church was first known as “the way.” (Acts 9:2; 19:9; 24:14, 22)

“Prayer Book Spirituality” is called “the Anglican Way.” Anglicanism covers 2,000 years of Christian history and its future is only limited by someday, the end of time. Even after time is concluded as we know it and Christ fully reigns in His glory, we shall be part of the awesome and eternal new Age. (Rev 22:8-21)

The principle ingredients of the Anglican Way are the Holy Bible, Prayer, the Sacraments, the Church, the apostolic structure and ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, and finally our sense of Authority securely based on the Holy Scriptures, the living Tradition, and the application of reason with faith.

So, Anglicanism is a journey of our heart to God, along with our studies of the faith. The *Book of Common Prayer* helps us become aware of God, and most importantly, how to commune with His love. *Over our lifetime our earnest search for God transforms who we are and how we are called to live.* It can be said that this journey of love and growth is at the essence of Anglican spirituality.

Anglicanism teaches that the *love of God poured into us* is a good definition of what grace is. God’s divine love, which comes to us through Christ by the Holy Spirit is a “transforming grace” that is given to save us for Heaven. Sacraments are given by Christ as a primary means of receiving God’s eternal love. That is the role they have had through-out Christian history.

So, our Catechism defines a sacrament as an “*outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given to us; ordained by Christ Himself, as a sure and certain means whereby we receive grace.*” Grace is key to making progress in the Christian life. The seven sacraments are divinely given means of knowing and receiving such grace.

God is the giver of all truth and goodness. His grace enables us to worship Him and live as He calls us to do. He provides all that we need both for our souls and bodies. His mercy is unending, and He always forgives the truly penitent.

He defends us from all that will hurt and even destroy both our soul and body! But, do we choose to stand behind His shield and wear His spiritual armor? (Eph 6:10-18) He will keep us from all wickedness, from our spiritual enemy, and from everlasting

death. As Christians, we are called to trust in His mercy and goodness. (Rom 1: 16,17)

The sacraments have their roots in the life of Christ. We see in the Gospels how Jesus often used signs and performed actions that illustrated His mission. But His true divinity was purposefully hidden and discretely revealed at times such as the glorious Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.

The divine power of the sacraments remains invisible, yet, like a seed planted deep in the soil, the sacraments too are fully at work accomplishing their purposes.

For example, we see only water being poured at Baptism, or bread and wine on the Altar after the Prayer of Consecration; and yet in these visible signs the divine power of Christ is invisibly at work.

In some of the sacraments both the fact that Christ instituted them and how He did so are obvious. For example, He gave the apostles the commission to go and baptize; and, on the night before He suffered and died, at the “Last Supper”, He instituted the Holy Eucharist. The other sacraments, being Confirmation, Absolution, Ordination, Marriage, and Anointing for healing, each were *established by Christ through His Church* in order to empower the Church’s mission and ministries in the world.

Sacraments are used by the Holy Spirit to touch important aspects of our lives. They refresh and nurture our soul. This comes as a result of the powers of regeneration we received in Baptism. We have all we need, all the qualities and spiritual powers to be victorious in our Christian life. This is detailed by St Peter, “*His [God’s] divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness... [that we may live in this world, and escape corruption] and become partakers of the divine Nature.*” (2 Pet 1:3-8)

What we so often lack is discipline. Yet, even in our struggles, so long as we submit to the work of the Holy Spirit we will grow in holiness and become over time transformed into the life of Christ.

God works in different people in different ways. The Anglican Way helps Christians to grow slowly, but steadily. When the Holy

Spirit dwells inside of you (Jn 14:16-17) you are, in the eyes of God “a new creation” in Christ! (2 Cor 5:17) Your old nature, dominated by sin, is reborn to *a new nature* that is under the influence of grace received from the Holy Spirit. (Rom 6)

Grace allows us to live our life to its fullest and allows our heart to stay connected to God in Christ.

This sacramental connection is deepened over time if we devote everything we are and all that we do to God and openly live a life worthy of that connection.

So, it’s easy to see why receiving the Holy Eucharist is so beautiful. It is our sacramental connection, our “holy Communion” with God in Christ. In receiving, we commune with Jesus. The Holy Eucharist is our highest worship of God.

In our worship we celebrate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And, whether we realize this or not, receiving Holy Communion is the greatest way in which we participate in the mystery of salvation that God calls us to. The Holy Eucharist is God’s greatest gift to us because it is *the gift of Himself*. When we can truly look forward to receiving Holy Communion each Sunday, we have grown deeply in a spiritual way and we can receive this wonderful gift and blessing that the Lord is.

The Spiritual Life

For Anglicans, living the Christian life is living “sacramentally.” To understand what is meant by “sacramental living” we must know that we live in a world where created things point us to the reality of God and things spiritual and unseen. Created things help us to have communion with the spiritual world that surrounds us.

To live sacramentally is seeking God in all things, at all times, in all places, and in all ways. It is in seeking God that we find Him and grow in faith and love. (Deut 4:29)

Maintaining a healthy spiritual life is not easy. We will struggle with the powers of darkness that are in the world. Temptation comes to all of us. *But temptation comes to test and help us grow to be true soldiers and servants of Christ.*

Temptation becomes sin *only* when we yield to it. Whenever we face temptation *God will make for us a way of escape*. We just need the moral courage to follow His way.

Conclusion

This pamphlet began with our Eucharistic worship at St John's. But that discussion led us to several topics. Each topic reinforced our soul's need for God.

At St. John's you are invited to dig deeper to obtain a growing knowledge of Anglican spirituality. Our life together will call you to take the Christian faith seriously and to take your future seriously.

The "soul" purpose in "serious living" is to bring Christ-like transformation to our mind, body and soul. I believe God is pressing on His Church in this age to rediscover the transformative faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. Please join us as we walk with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Fr David F. Klein, Rector