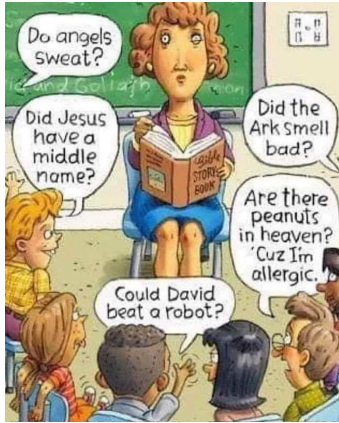


## Confirmation: Session I

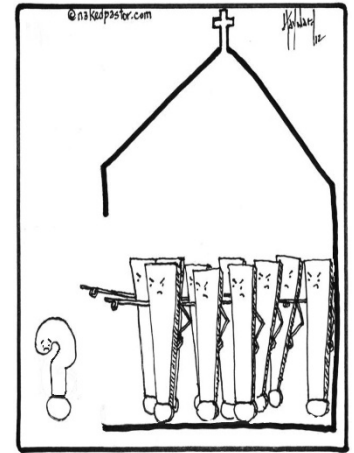
Purpose: General Survey of history, creeds, sacraments, and practices of the Episcopal Church.

### Questions?



Questions are allowed and welcome. Strong faith often arises from our struggle with deep-seated doubts and questions. Episcopalians are not afraid to ask difficult questions about how to live well or as God intends for us to live. You are encouraged to ask difficult questions until you can live into an answer.

‘Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.’ Matthew 7:7



Jesus said to him, ‘If you are able! —All things can be done for the one who believes.’ Immediately, the father of the child cried out, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’ Mark 9:23-24

The answers needed for our unbelief are not easy, simple “band-aid” but a process of discerning and learning how God has created us to be in life, often about finding meaning and purpose amid what seems meaningless or counterintuitive.

### Returning to Faith

“I went back to church thinking that it would be like an epidural, like it would take the pain away, like I would just replace research with church. And then church would make the pain go away... Faith in church was not an epidural for me at all, but it was a midwife who just stood next to me, saying, “Push, it’s supposed to hurt a little bit.” It was a completely new experience for me going back...

I believe God is love. It makes total sense to me that Jesus would have to be the Son of God because people would want love to be like unicorns and rainbows. And so then, people go, “Oh my God, love is hard, love is sacrifice, love is eating with the sick, love is trouble, love is rebellious.

“Brene Brown’s Return to Faith: Jesus Wept” Abundance Vs. Scarcity

<https://vimeo.com/164049575> October 27, 2016

### Church Identity

The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is part of the wider Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is the global fellowship of churches descended from the Church of England. The Corporate and legal entity is the Domestic and Foreign Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA. Each province of the Anglican has its own Book of Common Prayer, although all are much the same.

## Some Background

Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, to Augustine of Canterbury, 601 C. E.

My advice is that you should make a careful selection of anything you have found in the Roman, Gallic, or any other Church that may be more acceptable to Almighty God and diligently teach it to the English Church. Choose, therefore, from each Church those things that are pious, religious, and seemly; and when you have, as it were, incorporated them, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto.

**Common Prayer and Sacraments – The Glue That Holds Us Together.**

**Common Prayer- An Individual and Corporate Conversation with God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**

"O LORD, I BELIEVE;  
HELP MY UNBELIEF. IS THE  
MOST NATURAL AND MOST  
HUMAN AND MOST AGONIZING  
PRAYER IN THE GOSPEL, AND  
I THINK IT IS THE FOUNDATION  
PRAYER OF FAITH."

- Flannery O'Connor

**Lex Orandi, Lex Credenti (Latin)** - "The law of prayer is the law of belief" or "You are what you pray."

"I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us, and we, in turn, change things." **Mother Teresa**

I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless, I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God, it changes me. **C. S. Lewis**

Common prayers, scriptures, and worship were not held in a familiar and accessible form to people in their native language before the publication of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549; books of liturgy were reserved for clergy and monastics. These books were mainly written in Latin, a language spoken only by the educated elite.

**Via Media** - The Middle Way. In writing the first Book of Common Prayer, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury and martyr, sought to find a via *media*, a middle way, between Catholic and Protestant sensibilities.

Cranmer and his contemporaries sought a middle ground, a liturgy retaining aspects of Catholic thought and practice while being informed by the best of Protestant theology.

**\*Liturgy**- Greek "Public Work" Liturgy is an offering for the good of all people, for the public. Our Liturgies are meant to be public works, that is, offerings for the good of the whole world.

Via Media is the foundational principle in our *Book of Common Prayer* and our Episcopal/Anglican beliefs and practices.

The Book of Common Prayer has been revised several times, with each iteration striking a balance between the ancient and the modern, seeking a middle way between extremes.



When we gather to pray, we pray as a community. Our Liturgy—the words and actions of worship—is not about “each person for themselves” or about how “I like to pray” or even how the priest likes to pray. Instead, we uphold a tradition of worship that spans time and is shaped by a tradition of prayer passed down through generations.

Postures for Prayer and Worship — sit for instruction, kneel for prayer (as able), and stand for praise.

Crossing oneself or making the sign of the cross is a reminder of the Holy Trinity. It is common and appropriate to make the sign of the cross at mentions of the Trinity, at the absolution of sin, and at the final blessing. Genuflecting and bowing are forms of acknowledging Jesus’ presence.

## Sacraments

Sacraments are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace. In other words, a sacrament points us to the presence of Christ in the world.



The Seven Sacraments are:

Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, Confession, Ordination, and the Anointing of the Sick

Baptism and the Eucharist are the dominical (taught by Jesus) sacraments that Jesus commanded his disciples to continue, while the other five are sacramental rites taught by the church.

Everything can be sacramental. Saint Francis of Assisi believed everything spoke of God—the lambs in the field, the flowers, even fire and death. For Francis, the whole world became a sacrament pointing to God. The seven sacraments celebrated in the church mark turning points in a person’s spiritual journey.

## The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Holy baptism is the full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s body, the church. The bond which God establishes in baptism is indissoluble. *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) Page 298*

**Baptism** is a public declaration of faith, making the person a member of the Body of Christ and part of the worldwide Christian community. The word “baptism” comes from the Greek word, meaning “to dip” or “immerse” in water.

**Infant Baptism** - Infants are baptized with their parents and godparents, making two commitments.

1. Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present is brought up in the Christian faith and life?
2. Will you, by your prayers and witness, help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ?

The congregation, those who witness, also commit.

1. Will you, who witness these vows, do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

*Promises Made and Baptismal Covenant (BOC), Pgs. 302-305*



**The gift of water is the outward visible sign of baptism.**

God led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin and scarcity unto abundance and everlasting life.

What bondage are we being delivered from? Self-indulgent appetites, anger, envy, intemperate love, blindness to human need, false judgements, uncharitable thoughts.

Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you-- not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him. I Peter 3:18

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Galatians 3: 27

Please do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. Colossians 3:9-10

By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. Romans 6:2-6