



What it means to be an Episcopalian

The Scriptures and the Gospels, the Apostolic Church and the early Church Fathers, are the foundations of Episcopal faith and worship. The Episcopal Church is a part of the Anglican Communion, made up of 38 self-governing churches around the world with 70 million members. The basic tenets of being an Episcopalian are:

- We view the Old and New Testaments 'as containing all things necessary for salvation' and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- We understand the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith. (see [Creeds](#))
- The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself - Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, or Holy Communion - are administered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and the elements are ordained by him.
- The historic episcopate is a symbol of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and its operation symbolizes the people of God in unity with one another and connected to the ancient Church.



Episcopalians/Anglicans trace their Christian roots back to the early Church, and their specifically Anglican identity to the post-Reformation expansion of the [Church of England](#) and the formation of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America following the American Revolution.

Episcopalians uphold the Catholic and Apostolic faith. Following the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Churches are committed to the proclamation of the good news of the Gospel to the whole creation. In practice this is based on the revelation contained in Holy Scripture and the Catholic creeds, and is interpreted in light of Christian Tradition, Reason and Experience.

By baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a person is made one with Christ and received into the fellowship of the Church. This sacrament of initiation is open to children as well as to adults.

Central to worship for Episcopalians is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, also called Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper or the Mass. In this offering of prayer and praise, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are recalled through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacrament, in which we believe Christ is truly present. Other important rites, commonly called sacraments, include Confirmation, Holy Orders (Ordination), Reconciliation (Confession), Marriage (Holy Matrimony) and Anointing of the Sick (Unction).

Worship is at the very heart of being an Episcopalian. Its styles vary from simple to elaborate, or even a combination. The great uniting text is *The Book of Common Prayer*,

and it is this that enables a member of our church to feel at home wherever they may attend services---at Episcopal Churches in America or any Anglican Church in any part of the world.

Another distinguishing feature of the Episcopal Church is that it is a connectional Church, where parishes, dioceses and provinces help each other by mutual support in terms of financial assistance and the sharing of Mission and Ministry.

To be an Episcopalian is to be on a journey of faith in God supported by a fellowship of believers who are dedicated to exhibiting our love for God by reaching out in love to all people.

See also http://www.episcopalchurch.org/index_new.htm or <http://www.episcopalatlanta.org/>

