



# *Episcopal Worship*

## SEGMENT 2: EPISCOPAL WORSHIP

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### PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

*The Book of Common Prayer* is our guide to worship. The two Great Sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion, form the basis of our worship in the Episcopal Church.

#### OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.  
(BCP 215)

#### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is in *The Book of Common Prayer*?

What are the sacraments of the Church?

How do Episcopalians worship?

## VIDEO PRESENTATION



Episcopal Worship

*The Book of Common Prayer*

Sacraments

## USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The Calendar and Church Seasons

The Daily Offices

The Great Litany

The Collects

Special Day Liturgies

Holy Baptism

Holy Eucharist

Pastoral Offices

Episcopal Services

The Psalms

Prayers and Thanksgivings

Catechism

Historical Documents of the Church

Tables for Finding Date of Easter and other Holy Days

The Lectionary

Daily Office Lectionary

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Look at the Table of Contents in the front of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Depending on the amount of class time, you might want to simply thumb through the book, noting the various sections. The amount of material for this class may be given as a reference for further study or could be spread out over several classes.

### **The Calendar and Church Seasons, page 15**

The moveable date of Easter and the fixed date of Christmas determine the Church year. The Church Year reflects what God has done in Christ Jesus for all the people of all ages. We believe every Sunday is a “little Easter” and so our liturgy reflects Christ’s life and teachings.

The Church year begins with the first Sunday in Advent, which is the Sunday closest to November 30, St. Andrew’s Day. The four weeks of Advent serve as a time to prepare for the birth of our Savior. It is also a time of expectation and anticipation. The color for the season is either purple (royalty and kingship) or blue (reminding us of Jesus’ mother Mary and her faith and trust in God). The Catechism on page 849 tells us “the Messiah is the one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that with the help of God we may live in harmony with God, within ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.”

During Advent, we will find other changes in our church as well. You might have an Advent Wreath near the altar. The round evergreen wreath reminds us that God is eternal – never beginning, never ending. The four candles remind us of the four weeks of Advent. Each week an additional candle is lit. On Christmas we would light a white candle in the center of the wreath – the Christ Candle, representing Christ as the Light of the World.

The *Gloria* might not be sung but the *Trisagion* (Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us) may be sung or said. The readings will reflect the prophecies of the Old Testament, the ministry of John the Baptist, and the New Testament readings concerning Jesus’ coming again.

The second season of the Church Year is also the shortest. The season of Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, December 24, and continues for twelve days until January 6. The color for the season is white for joy and celebration. Your church might have a Festival of Lessons and Carols, a traditional English Christmas service in which Old Testament prophecies and New Testament stories surrounding the birth of Jesus (along with carols from the hymnal or

anthems by a choir) tell the wonderful story of God's gift to us – his only son. This season ends with a celebration of the coming of the Magi (Wise men) and their gifts on January 6.

The Season of Epiphany begins on January 7 and continues until Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. Since Easter is a moveable feast day, the season of Epiphany can be as short as four weeks or as long as nine weeks. The color for the day of Epiphany and up to the Sunday after Epiphany (when we remember Jesus' baptism) is white – the festival color. For the rest of the season, the color is green. Green reminds us of growth. During the Epiphany season we will hear about the growth of the early church, Jesus' ministry – the calling of the disciples, healing and the other miracles, Jesus' ministry and teaching. Great emphasis is placed on mission during this time and the living out of our baptismal promises. It is a time to think about our own gifts for ministry. The season ends with Shrove Tuesday, a day of great celebration before the penitential season of Lent begins the following day.

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and continues for forty days, ending with Holy Saturday. The color for Lent is purple, for penitence and royalty, or something called "Lenten Array," burlap or cream-colored, austere fabric to remind us of the sackcloth of Old Testament times of mourning. The crosses might have veils or coverings over them. On Ash Wednesday, we gather in church to have ashes placed on our foreheads in the shape of the cross to remind us of our mortality and sorrow for our sins. The *Alleluias*, the *Gloria* and other festive music disappear from our worship for Lent. Some churches will not have flowers on the altar during this season. We will hear readings detailing Jesus' temptation in the desert, his last days of ministry and events in the Old Testament that parallel Jesus' suffering and sacrifice.

The last week of Lent, Holy Week, begins with the Sunday of the Passion, (also known as Palm Sunday). During this week, the church dramatizes the events leading up to Jesus' trial and crucifixion. The Palm Sunday liturgy begins with palms and processions, joyful music and ends with the Passion Gospel and Jesus' death. The color for Palm Sunday can either be red (used in the church to symbolize a martyr's death or on the day of Pentecost when we remember the coming of the Holy Spirit) or purple.

On Maundy Thursday in Holy Week, we remember Jesus' command to eat the bread, to drink the wine, to remember him and to love and serve one

another. In many churches, foot washing may be a part of this service. After the service a solemn vigil may be held to remember Jesus' asking his disciples to wait and watch with him in the Garden of Gethsemane right before the Roman soldiers came to arrest him. The altar may be stripped of hangings. Flowers, candles, banners, Gospel books and other items are reverently removed. The altar may be washed with wine and water to remind us of Jesus' death. We leave the church in silence. Bishops often bless a supply of holy oil on this day for congregations to use during the coming year.

Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus' death. There is usually no Eucharist on this day, and if there is, it is given from the reserved sacrament (bread and wine consecrated at an earlier service and put in a special place for a future communion). Some churches may have services between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., the time Jesus hung on the cross.

On Holy Saturday, there is no Eucharist before sundown. Many churches have an Easter Vigil, a tradition that goes back to the earliest days of the Church. Converts to the faith were required to undergo several years of instruction in the faith before they were invited to be baptized. At that point, they were baptized and then received Communion. This event took place on the Saturday before Easter, beginning that evening and continuing until dawn on Easter morning, reminding us all of Jesus' resurrection appearance to the women on Sunday morning. Today, the service customarily begins in darkness and the new Paschal Candle, representing Christ as the Light of the World, is brought into the church. Worshipers may light small candles from this large candle. An ancient chant, The *Exultet* is sung or said and as many as nine Old Testament lessons, recalling God's saving acts in history, are read. There may be baptisms and the Eucharist celebrated. The service is a vivid reminder of Jesus' appearing to Mary and the disciples on Easter morning.

The Season of Easter begins after sundown on Holy Saturday and ends with the Day of Pentecost. It is referred to as "The Great Fifty Days." The date for Easter is determined by the secular calendar – the first Sunday after the first full moon that falls on or after March 21. It is the principal feast of the church year. The color for the season is white for festival and joy. We celebrate the Risen Christ. The new Paschal Candle is brought into the church during the Easter Vigil on Saturday night or in the service on Easter Sunday. It reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World. It also reminds us of the light in creation, the pillar of flame that led the Israelites out of Egypt through the

desert and the fire of Pentecost. The year's date may appear on the candle to remind us that the Good News is for every year. The Paschal Candle will remain near the altar until Pentecost. After that, it will be present at every baptism and at every funeral in the church.

Ascension Day is forty days after Easter, always on Thursday. It is a major feast day in the church's calendar. On this day, we remember Jesus' return to heaven and his promise to be with his disciples forever.

Ten days later, we celebrate the birthday of the church, Pentecost. The disciples had gathered in Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Pentecost, which was a harvest festival that occurred fifty days after Passover. After Easter, Pentecost is the most important day in the Church calendar. It is the first event in the church's history. On this day, the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit in the form of flames of fire on their heads. They went out into the streets and began preaching to all the people who realized, that no matter their language, they could understand the disciples. The color for Pentecost is red, reminding us of the flames that signify the Holy Spirit. Baptisms and confirmations are traditionally done on this day.

Following the Day of Pentecost, we enter the long season after Pentecost. The color is green – again reminding us of growth and new life. The season after Pentecost touches on four broad themes: being God's children, our relationship with Jesus and others, our relationship with the Holy Spirit and the Church's mission. The season can be as long as 29 weeks, depending on the date of Easter. The season ends on the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent.

On page 15 of *The Book of Common Prayer*, we find that the Principal Feasts observed in the church are Easter Day, Ascension Day, The Day of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Day, Christmas Day and The Epiphany. These feasts take precedence over any other day or observance, but all Sundays of the year are feasts of Jesus.

**The Daily Office, page 37**

The Daily Offices are to be read by lay people or clergy, for personal prayer or corporate prayer. The readings and Psalm for each day can be found in the Daily Lectionary, beginning on page 934, which provides a two-year cycle of readings. One of the lessons is from the Gospel and it is always read last. The readings are followed by Canticles, hymns whose words are taken from the Bible, which may be sung or said.

*The Book of Common Prayer* provides two settings for Daily Morning Prayer—one has more formal language, the other more contemporary language. Noonday prayers and two settings for Daily Evening Prayer follow. An Order of Worship for the Evening (page 109) is a shortened form. The Service of Compline is the last service of the day. It too can be read alone, by lay people, clergy or in a group.

The Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families can be found on pages 136-140. These are especially suitable for families and, because the Scripture is written out, can be said using the prayer book alone.

**The Great Litany and the Collects, page 148**

The Great Litany is read during Lent and other penitential times. The Collects are prayers for the seasons of the year, holy days, saints, and various occasions. The Collect ('kah-likht), in traditional language or contemporary language, is read in the Daily Office and in the Eucharist at the designated place. The prayer serves to tie together the readings for the day and help us collect our thoughts to better understand the readings. These collects have been used extensively in The Discovery Series printed materials.

**Proper Liturgies for Special Days, page 264**

Services are located in this section for Ash Wednesday (the first day of the season of Lent), for the Liturgy of the Palms (Palm Sunday), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday (the day before Easter) and The Great Vigil of Easter.

**Holy Baptism, page 299**

Baptism is one of the main sacraments of the Church; it is a sacrament instituted by Christ.

The service for Holy Baptism begins on page 299. We believe Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the Church. It is appropriate for baptisms to occur on Sunday within the Eucharist. The Church sets aside five great occasions for baptism – the Easter Vigil, Day of Pentecost, All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day, on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the first Sunday after Epiphany) and the visit of the bishop. Either a bishop or a priest can baptize, but in an emergency a layperson can baptize. The bishop ordained the priest and blessed the holy oil, so the bishop is in some way present even if not physically there.

In the Episcopal Church we baptize infants, children and adults. Young children and infants should have sponsors who will make the promises for them. The service begins with a hymn, readings from the Bible, a sermon and then the actual presentation and examination of the candidates, followed by the Baptismal Covenant. At this point, the entire congregation joins in and renews their own baptism by reciting the Apostles' Creed and making the five promises.

The Thanksgiving Over the Water recalls our biblical story – our history. The second portion of the prayer reminds us of what we do, and the last part of the prayer invokes the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the water, making the common holy. The person is baptized and then sealed with the chrism (holy oil). The priest or bishop may mark the forehead of the person baptized with this oil saying, \_\_\_\_\_ "Name," you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever."

The congregation welcomes the newly baptized into the household of faith. The Eucharist follows, beginning with the Passing of the Peace.

**The Holy Eucharist, Rites I and II, pages 323 and 355**

There are two main settings for the Holy Eucharist, Rite I or Rite II. An outline form for the Eucharist can be found on page 400 and is helpful to see the format of the service. Rite I is more penitential and traditional in language, Rite II is more contemporary. We begin with the Service of the Word in which we hear the Word of God read and preached. We profess our beliefs in the Nicene Creed, pray for the world, ask forgiveness of our sins and greet one another in the Name of the Lord.

The second half of the service is the Service of Holy Communion, or the Service of the Table. We obey Jesus' commandment to remember him and to serve. We come together offering our gifts – our oblations - the gifts of bread and wine and our alms (offering of money). We offer our thanksgiving to God, singing or saying an ancient hymn of praise. The priest continues with prayers remembering Jesus' suffering and death. Always included are the words of Jesus himself in which we remember the night he was handed over to suffering and death, how he took the bread and wine, blessed both and gave them to his disciples asking them to do this to remember him. We make a profession of faith in the death, resurrection, and coming again of Christ. We pray the Lord's Prayer, and the bread is broken and shared. We give God thanks for this meal and we receive our task for the coming week – to go and serve.

The family has come together, heard its story, prayed for one another, eaten and then is sent out to do the work it has been given to do.

The third segment of this course is an Instructed Eucharist which includes more detail.

**The Pastoral Offices, page 413**

The Pastoral offices begin with Confirmation. Confirmation is the sacramental rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage begins on page 423. In the Episcopal Church, marriage is one of the sacramental rites and therefore, a worship service of the church. The priest gives God's blessing to the couple.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

The Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child provides an opportunity for the community to welcome a new baby or child into the family and to give thanks to God.

The Reconciliation of a Penitent is the sacramental rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution. It is available for any who want it. It is not restricted to times of illness. Confession can be arranged with your clergy person at any time and is always private and confidential.

Ministration to the Sick, or Unction, can be done in hospital, at home or wherever the sick person is. Anointing with holy oil (Unction) may be done as well.

Lay or clergy can lead ministration at the time of death, as well as Prayers for a Vigil.

There are two rites for the Burial Office, traditional or contemporary language. Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church at a time when the congregation can be present. The casket is always closed and covered with a special cloth, called a pall, signifying our equality in the eyes of God. And, while floral arrangements may be used at the graveside, they are not present in the church. The casket is brought into the church preceded by the cross. The Paschal candle is placed at the head of the casket. The service opens with the words Jesus spoke to Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus died. "I am Resurrection and I am Life, says the Lord. Whoever has faith in me shall have life, even though he die." A brief homily is usually part of the service; however eulogies are not. The service may conclude with the Eucharist.

**Episcopal Services, page 511**

The Episcopal Services contain services for the Ordination of a bishop, priest and deacon, the Celebration of a New Ministry and the Dedication and Consecration of a Church.

In the ordination of a Bishop, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church or a bishop appointed by the Presiding Bishop presides and serves as chief consecrator. At least two other bishops serve as co-consecrators (BCP 511). Lay representatives are also present. The presence of three bishops required for consecration of another bishop is part of our apostolic work of leading, supervising and uniting the Church. Although tradition claims apostolic succession means tracing the lineage back to the Apostle Peter in Rome, we believe it to mean also the church's teaching and focus on Christ and his ministry, death and resurrection – the Good News. A bishop presides at the ordination of a priest, with at least two other clergy present.

In both the consecration of a bishop and the ordination of a priest, both persons state their belief in Holy Scripture and the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church. The bishop receives a crozier, a special staff symbolizing the authority of the bishop and may receive a cope and miter. The cope is a colorful cloak with biblical origins recalling the special vestments Aaron wore, Jesus' seamless robe for which the Roman soldiers cast lots at his crucifixion, and the symbol of authority that such a covering denotes. The miter is similar to a crown, denoting position. A bishop removes the miter for prayers, preaching and celebrating. A Bible is also presented. A priest receives a Bible and a stole, representing the yoke of Christ and a symbol of the priest's authority. The Bible is the Word of God.

In both a consecration and an ordination, hands are placed on the bishop or priest by other bishops and/or priests. In the ordination of a deacon, a layperson and a priest can present the ordinand. Questions are asked to ascertain belief in Holy Scriptures and the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church. The Eucharist follows in all ordination services.

The Celebration of a New Ministry institutes or inducts a priest as rector of a parish, or dean or canon of a cathedral, or a vicar of mission or as an assistant minister. A stole, a Bible, water, a Prayer Book, holy oil, keys to the church, a copy of the Canons (laws of the church), bread and wine and any other symbols of ministry are presented to the priest by the congregation.

The Consecration of a Church can be adapted, using portions of the service that are applicable. The bishop presides. The service begins with the bishop knocking on the door of the church with the crozier and making the sign of the cross with the crozier upon the threshold. The Eucharist is a part of the celebration.

**The Psalter, page 585**

The Psalter, or body of liturgical poetry, were the hymns of Judaism – the hymns Jesus would have sung. Portions of the Psalter are suggested for use in every service. The suggested reading of the Psalms is found in both the Daily Office lectionary and in the Eucharistic lectionary. The Psalms may be read, prayed or sung. Some Psalms are songs of praise, others are lamentations. Some deal with personal struggles, others with historical events.

**Prayers and Thanksgivings, page 810**

Here one will find prayers for the world, for the church, for national life, for the social and natural orders, for family and personal life, thanksgivings, and other prayers. These prayers were used extensively in the printed material of The Discovery Series: *A Christian Journey*.

**An Outline of the Faith, page 845**

Commonly called the Catechism, this portion of the prayer book is intended for use in instruction of matters of the faith. It is in a question and answer format and may serve as a starting point for discussion or to provide a brief summary of the church's beliefs.

**Historical Documents of the Church, page 864**

The Athanasian Creed, the Articles of Religion and other historical documents are also part of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

**The Lectionary, page 888**

The Lectionary for Sunday is arranged in a three-year cycle. Year A, in which we read mainly from the Gospel of Matthew, begins on the First Sunday of Advent in years evenly divisible by three. In Year B, we read mainly from the Gospel of Mark and in Year C, we read mainly from the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of John is read in all three years on important fast and feast days, especially during the season of Lent, Holy Week and during Easter every year.



## W R A P - U P

Jeffrey Lee wrote in *Opening the Prayer Book*, “Anglicans are people of a book. The words and form of *The Book of Common Prayer* define our corporate identity perhaps to a degree not true of any other churches – even those with strong liturgical traditions. And not only are the words important for us, the book itself has a tremendous influence on our sense of who we are. There was a time when many church members had their own personal copies of the prayer book and brought them to use in church on Sunday mornings. Walk into any Episcopal Church and you will most likely find a congregation worshipping according to *The Book of Common Prayer*. You will also probably see some individual members of the congregation holding copies of the prayer book as they worship. In the backs of pews the prayer books sit next to hymnals.”

## C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

### *The Hymnal 1982*

Because this is such an extensive amount of material, the hymns are broken into sections of the prayer book and are taken from only *The Hymnal 1982*.

### Daily Morning Prayer

#9 - Awake, awake to love and work

### Order of Service for Noonday

#18 - As now the sun shines down at noon

### Order of Worship for Evening and Daily Evening Prayer

#24 - The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended

### Compline

#43 - All praise to thee, my God, this night

### The Church Calendar

#### Advent

#67 - Comfort, comfort ye my people

#### Christmas

#109 - The First Nowell the angel did say

#### Epiphany

#135 - Songs of thankfulness and praise

Lent

#150 - Forty days and forty nights

Holy Week

#158 - Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended

Easter

#207 - Jesus Christ is risen today

Ascension

#217 - A hymn of glory let us sing

Pentecost

#225 - Hail thee, festival day!

Season of Pentecost

#400 - All Creatures of our God and King

Baptism

#297 - Descend O Spirit, purging flame

Eucharist

#304 - I come with joy to meet my Lord

Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

#351 - May the grace of Christ our Savior

Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child

#416 - For the beauty of the earth

Confirmation, Reception or Reaffirmation

#347 - Go forth for God; go to the world in peace

Ministration to the sick

#635 - If thou but trust in God to guide thee

Burial of the Dead

#355 - Give rest, O Christ

Ordination

#370 - I bind unto myself today

Celebration of a New Ministry

#517 - How lovely is thy dwelling place

Consecration of a Church

#518 - Christ is made the sure foundation

Psalms

#680 - O God our help in ages past



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