

Let's Get Acquainted

A user-friendly guide for worship at Trinity

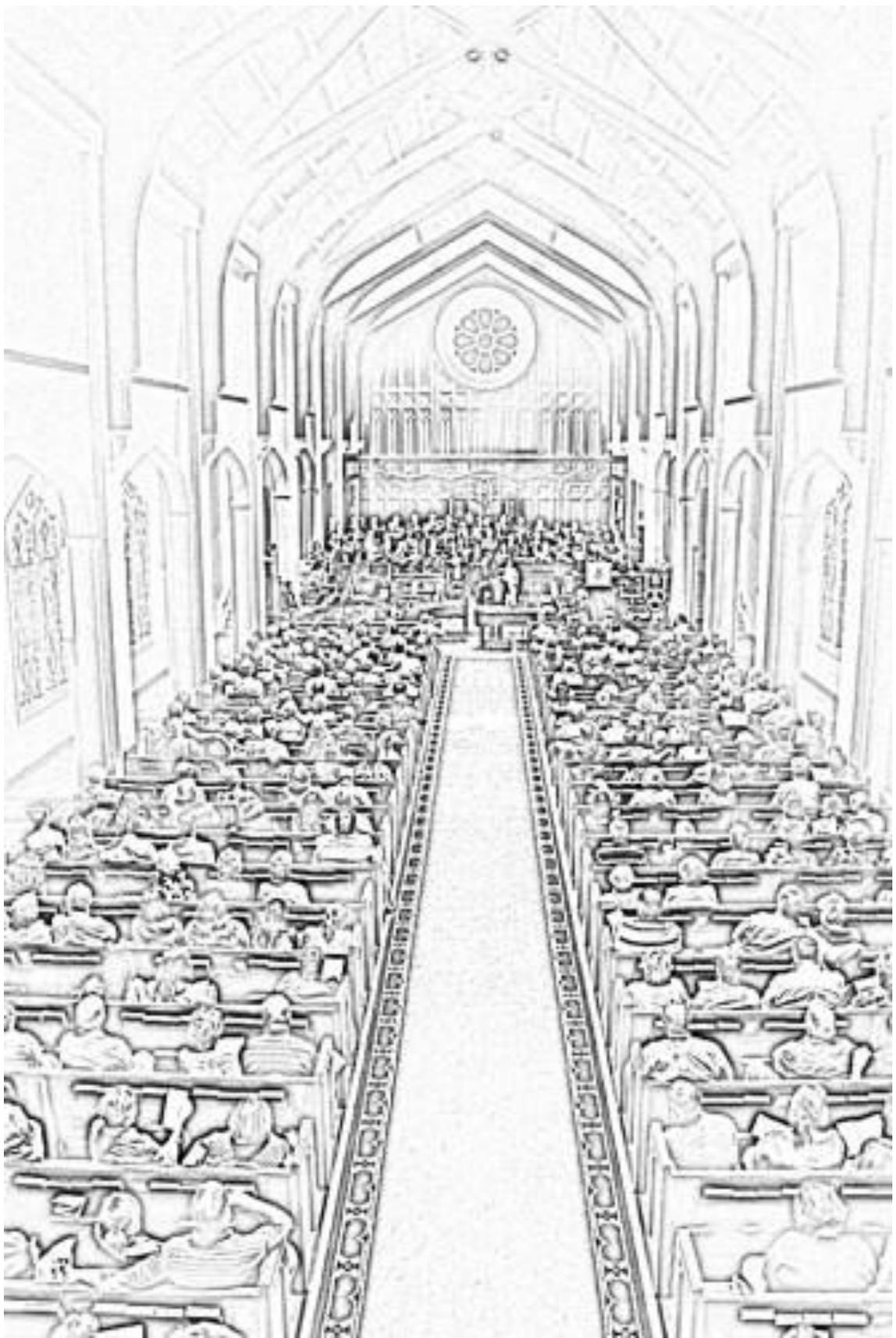


Trinity Episcopal Church

906 Padon Street

Longview, Texas

www.trinityparish.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....

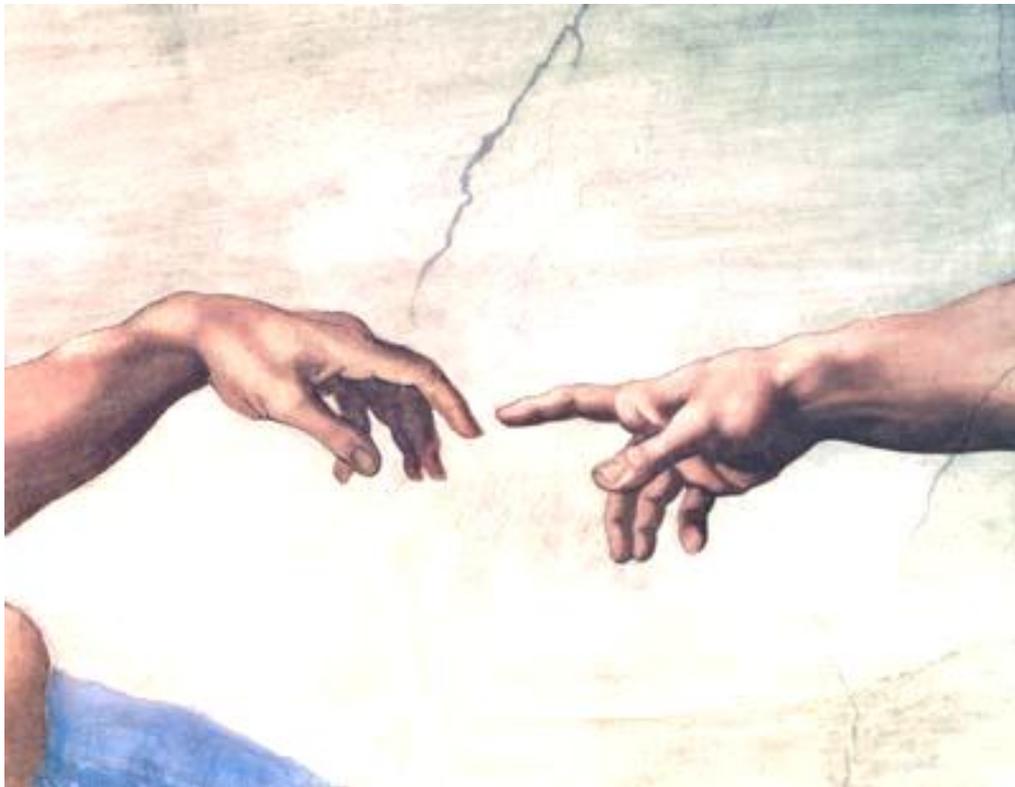
When you're worshipping God, you can't get it wrong! If you need help, ask the person next to you. We love guests here at Trinity. Regardless of what anybody else is doing, don't do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

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 though. You need to know that it is the normal practice of Trinity 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 communion the answer is not only "YES," but we hope you will. If you don't feel comfortable

receiving communion at this time we still invite you to our “family table” to receive a blessing from the priest. Simply cross your arms over your chest and that signifies to the priest that you wish to receive a blessing rather than communion.

Remember....

We want you to feel absolutely 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. We have put this morning's liturgy in your bulletin to make it easier for people to follow during our worship service. 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. At the 10:30 a.m. service we sing songs during communion that are printed in the bulletin.

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

It's an Episcopal thing. We take time before the service to say hello to God, to prepare our hearts for worship. If you're not sure what to pray in preparation for worship, personalizing the Collect for Purity is a good place to start. "Almighty God, to you my heart is open, my desires known, and from you no secrets of mine are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that I 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 strains of glorious music.

In die Natiuitatis Dñi. 37

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

Notū fecit dñs alleluia salutare suū alle-

luia. Cantate. 2. **B**eatus vēter qui te

portauit Christe & vbera quæ suxisti. Dñs reg.

Verū. N ois fecit dñs salutare suū. I n con-
peditu gratiæ reuelauit
sollicitam dñm. **A**ngelus ad pastores

iraſc. **R. quintū.**

a it annūtio vo bis gau dium

mag nū quod e rit ōni popu

lo quia natus est vobis hodie Salua tor

C11)

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 touch themselves on the forehead and shoulders?

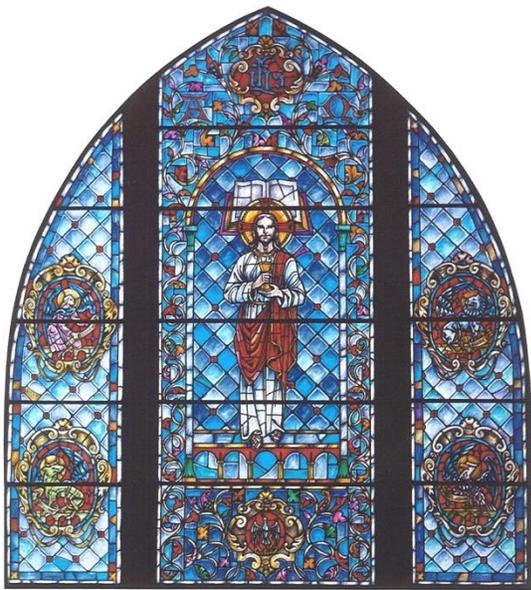
Again, this is a personal worship practice. This is called making the sign of the cross. Some people do it in remembrance of their baptism, others because it reminds them of the price Jesus paid (the cross) to enable us to respond to God's love; still others because it's their way of taking up their 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. Once again, do what is comfortable and meaningful to you and allow others the freedom to do the same.

This looks very Roman Catholic to me. Is this a Roman Catholic Church?

The simple answer is no. Our spiritual heritage is from both Roman Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation. We are affiliated with the Church of England or Anglican Communion. The Church of England originally was Roman Catholic but during the Reformation

in the 16th century separated from the Roman Catholic Church. The earliest English Reformers defined our church as the *Via Media*, the middle way between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation. One person has described the Episcopal Church as a church that is Catholic in worship and Protestant in our doctrine.

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 are greeted by the ushers. 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 opening bells the priest will greet the people and then our

service will begin with an opening Processional Hymn. 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?

Not very fashionable, are they? 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. Usually the opening procession will be led by a Verger. The Verger assists the priest in making sure the worship service goes off without a hitch. You'll see that he carries with him a staff. Long ago this staff was used to remove stray animals from the pathway of the procession.

Next you will see acolytes in white robes carrying crosses and torches. If you are at our 10:30 am service the choir comes next followed by our children as they make their way to Children's Chapel. After a short time in Children's Chapel they return to our worship service for Holy Communion. We believe children are an important part of our community and we find every way possible for them to participate. They serve as acolytes, read the scripture lessons for our worship and the older children sometimes serve at the altar. The children are then followed by the lay readers and the priest. When we are being visited by our Bishop he will be the last in the procession as a place of honor. You'll know the Bishop because he or she wears a pointed hat (called a mitre) and carries an ornate staff.

What about Holy Communion? How does that work here?

As we stated earlier, all 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 communion.

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 don't wish to receive the wine which is totally acceptable. If you are unable to navigate the stairs you may receive communion at the kneeler.

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 (listen for the chimes at the 10:30 a.m. service), incense to indicate prayers. These subtle reminders enhance the beauty of our tradition and enrich our worship service today.

God is glad you are here and so are we.
Thank you so much for worshipping at Trinity today!

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Diocesan Bishop: The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle
Bishop Suffragan - Austin: The Rt. Rev. Dena A. Harrison
Bishop Suffragan - Tyler: The Rt. Rev. Jeff W. Fisher

Trinity Staff

The Rev. Kevin Wittmayer, Rector
Gary Whitwell, Headmaster of Trinity School of Texas
William Bane, Director of Music Ministries
Tisha Grotemat, Director of Children's Ministries
Tim Baker, Director of Student Ministries
Donna Armstrong, Administrative Assistant
Leno Mancilla, Sexton
Billie Padgett, Office Volunteer Coordinator

