

## **How to Look Like You've Been Here Before !!**

### **(or: Hints about the Service)**

#### **The Act of Worship**

Participation of members of the congregation is emphasized in the Episcopal Church. In the pews you will find copies of the Book of Common Prayer (red). We print the full service, except for hymns, in the service booklet you were given when you arrived. Hymns are listed on the insert, in a box at the top. The hymnal is the large dark blue book in the pew rack. Hymn numbers preceded by an "S", in the front of the hymnal are service music. Regular hymn numbers begin after that section.

It may seem confusing to know when to sit, stand or kneel. Practices vary, even within the Episcopal Church, so do what seems best for you. As a general rule, stand to sing, sit to listen, and kneel or stand to pray, as able. We stand for the reading of the Gospel and sit or kneel for the hymn at communion time. After a couple of visits this will probably seem easier, and you will feel more at home.

#### **Before and After the Service**

It is customary, on entering the church, to kneel in the pew for personal prayer, as a preparation for worship. You may notice that some around you, at one time or another, will bow, make the sign of the cross on themselves or "genuflect" (dip or kneel on one knee momentarily) as they enter or leave the pew. We are a wonderfully diverse and free denomination concerning such ceremonial matters.

We encourage our parishioners to remain silent during the time in church before the service starts, and to use this time for personal devotion and meditation – becoming quiet on the inside, too, in order to prepare ourselves for the worship service.

At one point in the service, we exchange the Peace of our Lord, by shaking the hand of our neighbor. Some of us use the greeting "Peace" or "Peace be with you", while others may use the Hebrew greeting "Shalom". We encourage this to be a time to greet each other in the name of our Lord.

#### **Who May Take Communion ?**

All persons who are baptized Christians are encouraged to come forward to the altar and receive the Communion bread and wine. Those not baptized are invited to come forward for a blessing.

The congregation comes forward, pew by pew, and forms two lines in the center aisle. When you reach the front of the line, if you wish to receive communion, place your hands palm up, and the priest will place a piece of bread in your hand. After you receive and consume the bread, step to the side, to receive wine, if you wish, from the chalice bearer. Help to guide the cup to your lips by touching the base of the cup. Those choosing to receive only the bread or the wine receive the full benefit of the Sacrament.

If you prefer bread and wine without drinking from the common cup, you may ask the priest for a wafer which you may then intinct (dip) in the wine before consuming the wafer. For a blessing only, fold both arms, crossed, on your chest. After the blessing, bypass the chalice bearer and return to your pew.

Parents are encouraged to have even very young children participate. If they are baptized Christians, they, too, have a right to be fed at the Lord's Table. Their level of understanding will grow as they participate in the worship and education of the Church.

### **Arriving and Leaving**

Our ushers will greet you, give you a bulletin, and be glad to answer any questions you may have about the service. He/she may also invite you to fill out a visitor card. If you wish, fill this out and place it in the collection plate or give it to an usher or the priest after the service.

Following the service, the priest will greet people in the parish hall. Please be sure to sign the guest book, which may be found in two locations: at the main entrance to the church, or in the parish hall. We usually have coffee and donuts in the parish hall following the service, and we hope that you will feel welcome to come and join us. In order to get to the parish hall, leave by way of the door near the front of the church.

If you wish to know more about the Episcopal Church, or about St. Mark's parish, the priest will be happy to talk with you about that.

We are so happy you decided to visit us today, and hope you will return.