

Gestures of Faith

Episcopalians often move as we worship. These gestures remind us of God's love and our own commitment to faith. They help us by involving our bodies as well as our minds and hearts in worship. They are not required or expected, but many people find them meaningful.

Remembering your Baptism at the Font

Water in the font at the entrance of the nave or chapel is blessed each week with the prayers we pray at baptism. You are invited to touch the water or make a cross on your forehead with the water as a reminder of your baptism.

Reverencing the Cross

Some people bow toward the altar cross as they enter or leave their pew or bow when the cross passes by in procession. This is a way to acknowledge Christ's self-giving love on the cross and submit our lives to that love.

Making the Sign of the Cross

To make the sign of the cross, use one hand to touch your forehead, heart, each shoulder, and return to the heart. It is customary to make the sign of the cross during the words of praise at the start of the service, during the Eucharistic Prayer when we ask the Holy Spirit to bless us, or when receiving the sacraments. Some think of it as a prayer - may God be in my mind, my heart, and everything I do.

Attending to the Gospel

We read the Gospel Lesson from the center of the congregation as a reminder that listening to Jesus is central to our faith. As the gospel reading is introduced, many use their thumb to make three small cross-motions on the forehead, lips, and heart to remind us to keep the gospel on our minds, in our words, and in our heart.

When to Sit/Stand/Kneel

We typically sit to listen (to scriptures other than the Gospel, the sermon or to scriptures other than the gospel), stand to praise (in words or in song), and kneel to pray (as you are comfortable). Feel free to sit if that is more comfortable for you. Kneelers can be moved down to use when kneeling.



Children and Worship

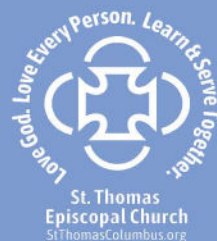
Children are welcome in worship and invited to participate fully. Worship bags in the narthex (outside the nave, as you enter) contain quiet toys that may help children concentrate, but our main goal is for them to be engaged with the service and feel like part of the worshipping community.

If your child needs a break, feel free to take them out and return whenever you feel ready. You can still hear the service in the narthex or watch the livestream in the parish hall. Nursery care is available for very young children, staffed by professional caregivers. A room for nursing parents is available near the nursery.

Children are always welcome at God's table, and we do not have a specific age for first communion. Many parents pick up children from the nursery and bring them to the altar for communion. Children's Chapel takes place during the sermon and gives children a place to talk about the gospel on their own level. Children also lead in worship as acolytes.

Joining St. Thomas

After worshipping with St. Thomas and meeting other members of Christ's body in this community, if you discern that this is where God is calling you to live out the vows of baptism, we invite you to become a member of St. Thomas. Baptism in any church in the name of the Holy Trinity marks you as a Christian, so you do not need to be rebaptized to become a member. If you have not yet been baptized, we joyfully invite you to do so here. We hope all new members will choose to be confirmed or received the next time our bishop is with us. Welcome Classes are a good way to learn more about St. Thomas and to prepare for confirmation or reception.

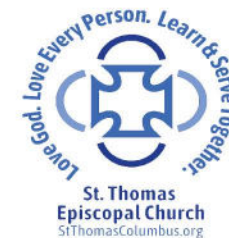


Services:

Sundays at 8:30 & 10:30am
Wednesdays at 5:30pm

Office Hours

9:00 a.m.-3:00p.m. Monday-Friday
office@stthomascolumbus.org
StThomasColumbus.org • 706-324-4264



A Brief Guide to Worship with St. Thomas Episcopal Church



Above the altar in the nave are the Latin words for "My Lord and My God," the words spoken by the Apostle Thomas when he first saw the risen Christ. May your experience of worship at St. Thomas bring you into the presence of the living Christ as well.

Whether you have worshipped with St. Thomas for decades or are here just for today, WELCOME! In the Episcopal Church, we are grounded in the teaching of scripture, guided by the wisdom of tradition, and led by the gift of human reason. We strive to respect the dignity of every person regardless of age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or political affiliation. Our worship reflects these values. ALL are welcome to worship, learn, and serve with us.

Holy Eucharist

We call our Sunday service Holy Eucharist. Eucharist comes from a Greek word for thanksgiving. It is our principal act of worship. The service of Holy Eucharist has two parts: The Word of God and The Holy Communion.

The Word of God

The first part of the Eucharistic service focuses on the scriptures. We read four lessons each week as assigned by a three-year calendar of scripture readings called the Revised Common Lectionary. The first lesson often comes from the Hebrew Scriptures (or Old Testament). This lesson is followed by a Psalm which we say or sing together. The third lesson is from the Christian Scriptures. A Priest or Deacon then reads a Gospel Lesson from the center of the congregation. This part of the service also includes the sermon, the Nicene Creed, the Prayers of the People, confession, absolution, and the Peace (an ancient Christian practice of offering welcome, love, and reconciliation to others).

The Holy Communion

The Word of God prepares our hearts and minds to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. This portion of the service includes the offertory, the Great Thanksgiving, the breaking of bread, communion, a blessing, and dismissal. At St. Thomas, all Christians, no matter their age or denomination, are invited to share in communion.



St. Paul writes, "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11.23-26)



The Book of Common Prayer & Hymnal

Worship with St. Thomas follows a pattern shared by all Episcopal churches. We call it "common" prayer, meaning that we offer these prayers in common with others. **The Book of Common Prayer** contains most of the prayers and instructions for our worship. Copies are in our pews and online at bcponline.org. It was last revised in 1979. Additional worship resources have been authorized since then. We sometimes use these in worship and print them in our worship bulletins.

The Hymnal 1982 is the most recent hymnal published by The Episcopal Church. Other hymnal supplements have been published since that time, and we often sing from those as well. When copyright laws allow, we print hymns for worship in our bulletins to make the service easier to follow.

Liturgical Seasons



The seasons of Church Year recall the life and ministry of Jesus and help us walk with him in our daily lives.

Advent

Advent is the first season of the Church Year. It begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continues through the day before Christmas. Advent, from a Latin word for "coming," is a time of expectation for the coming celebration of the birth of Jesus and for the final coming of Christ "in power and glory." We often offer a Service of Lessons and Carols near the end of Advent to tell the story of creation, the promise of salvation, and the birth of Jesus. During Advent, the altar is adorned in blue.

Christmas

The Christmas season lasts twelve days, from Christmas Eve through the night before the Epiphany. The season includes Christmas Day, the First Sunday after Christmas Day, the Feast of the Holy Name (on January 1), and sometimes a Second Sunday after Christmas Day. Festive services on Christmas Eve celebrate the birth of Christ. During the Christmas season, the altar is decorated with white and gold.

Epiphany

We celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany on or near January 6 with a visit from the Magi. Throughout the season after the Epiphany we recall many ways Christ was made known to the world. The color green is used on the altar during this season.

Lent

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Holy Week. The night before Ash Wednesday we often hold a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Holy Week services include Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. The season of Lent is 40 days, not including Sundays. Many Christians observe this season by fasting, self-examination, prayer, and repentance. During Lent, the altar is covered with unbleached linen.

Easter

Easter celebrates Christ's resurrection and the new life we share in him. We begin Easter season with an Easter Vigil on Saturday night and multiple services on Easter Sunday. Throughout the 50 days of Easter, the altar is adorned in white and gold.

Pentecost

The Feast of Pentecost celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. We wear red as a symbol of the fire of the Holy Spirit. The dove and wind are also symbols for the Holy Spirit.

The Season After Pentecost

The Season after Pentecost continues through most of the summer and autumn. On Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, the altar is adorned in white. After that, it is clad in green, to represent growth and life. All Saints' Day, November 1st, commemorates the Saints of God, known to us and unknown. On All Saints' Sunday, children dress as different saints and learn about their lives. A person from the Episcopal calendar of saints is often recognized at our Wednesday evening services of Holy Eucharist.

