

Worship

in the Anglican Tradition



Because the Anglican worship service may be new to you, this brief introduction to our worship service is designed to familiarize you with our service and facilities so that you can participate fully and comfortably.

The Service of Holy Eucharist

You are attending a worship service called in the Anglican tradition the “Holy Eucharist.” You may know this form of worship (or liturgy) by the more familiar terms “Holy Communion” or “Lord’s Supper.” The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament, an outward and visible action or sign that reflects and confers God’s grace in a special way.

This structure of the service derives from the earliest forms of Christian worship. The early Christians would gather, hear the stories of Jesus, his teachings and his work in the world, share a meal that included the breaking of bread and drinking of wine, and depart with the mandate to go forth to love and serve God empowered by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the service of Holy Eucharist here at Holy Nativity Anglican Church – and at all Anglican Churches around the world – consists of four main segments:

≡ **The Gathering of the Community** – The service begins with a time of “gathering” and preparation that may include welcoming and announcements, a time of silence, a formal procession of ministers to the altar, accompanied by a hymn, followed by a formal greeting, and prayers of praising God and entreating God’s mercy and forgiveness. This time of gathering and preparation acknowledges our common identity as Christians, our life as a community, and our shared participation in the service.



≡ **The Proclamation of the Word** –The focal point of this part of the service, the “Liturgy of the Word,” is the Holy Scripture (the Bible). Three or four readings from scripture are prescribed for each service, usually consisting of a reading from the Old Testament, a Psalm, and two readings from the New Testament, always including a reading from one of the Gospels. Immediately after the Gospel is read, the priest or another ordained or authorized minister gives a sermon, proclaiming the Gospel and addressing it to the circumstance and needs of the congregation and the world. The liturgy of the Word concludes with a recitation of one of the creeds of the church, the “Prayers of the People” (prayers for the particular needs and intentions of the congregation, which may be global in scope), prayers of confession and forgiveness, and an exchange of peace – reflecting respectively the common substance of our faith, the priestly role of all Christians, our own imperfection, and our need for and acknowledgement of reconciliation with God and our neighbor.

≡ **The Celebration of the Eucharist** – The bread and wine are brought to the altar, and offerings are collected from the congregation. *(Please, do not feel obliged to make a contribution at the offering. Today, you are our guest, and we are grateful for the gift of your presence among us.)* Usually a hymn is sung, and the gifts are offered to God. Then we give thanks to God in “The Great Thanksgiving,” recalling Christ’s meal with his apostles the night before he died, the priest’s “remembering” Christ’s words and actions and

invoking the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we recall Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, express our solidarity with Christ's sacrifice, and our embrace of and thanksgiving for our redemption. We then pray "The Lord's Prayer" as a climax of The Great Thanksgiving and final preparation for communion. Then we share the meal – and all baptized Christians are welcomed at the Lord's table – receiving the bread and wine, the outward signs of the inward grace imparted by the Holy Eucharist.

≡ **The Dismissal of the Community** – We depart with a blessing and sure knowledge that we are forgiven, renewed and strengthened, and sent into the world in peace to love and serve God, our fellow humans, and all of God's creation. We pray that grace of God that pours out upon us in this celebration of the Holy Eucharist will touch your life and remain with you as you go out into the world to love and serve God and God's creation.

Communion. During the service, you will have the opportunity to receive communion in the form of bread and wine. All baptized Christians, regardless of denomination (including children, at their parents' discretion), are welcome to receive communion at Holy Nativity Anglican Church. The bread (usually in wafer form) is taken in the hand and consumed directly. Gluten-free wafers are available. Please, inform the priest or communion minister when you come to the rail. To receive the wine, you should tip the chalice to your lips while it remains in the hands of the communion minister. Dipping the host in the wine with your fingers no longer is an acceptable form of receiving wine. However, if you are concerned about sipping the wine, you may just touch the base of the chalice. And in the Anglican tradition, communion is full and complete if received only in the bread or the wine. If you wish only a blessing at the communion rail, cross your arms or carry a book as a signal.

Getting Comfortable...

First, Relax! Do not worry if you are a bit confused or even overwhelmed at times. Be patient with yourself as you learn to juggle a bulletin and several books, while alternating among postures. And never hesitate to seek guidance from a nearby member of the congregation.

Standing, Sitting, Kneeling. You will notice that the congregation assumes different postures, sitting, standing, or kneeling, during various parts of the service. The proper postures are shown in the right margin of the order of service. Sometimes they offer a choice (*e.g.*, kneeling or standing). You may even see different members of the congregation in different postures in the same part of the service. Follow along as well as you can and do nothing that is in any way uncomfortable to you. You also may observe members of the congregation making various hand motions, the most common of which is the "sign of the cross." These acts of personal piety are beautiful traditions, but, again, you should feel free to stay in your comfort zone.

Prayer Books, Hymnals, and Music. You will find a Bible and the *Book of Alternative Services* (BAS) in the pew rack in front of you. At the 8 a.m. service, we use the *Book of Common Prayer* on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. You will be handed a copy as you enter. Entering the 10 a.m. service, you will be given a hymnal, *Common Praise* (blue). The particular prayer book to be used in the service and the name of the priest presiding at the service are listed at the head of the order of worship. The bulletin, prayer book, and hymnal are designed to enable you – and the entire congregation present – to participate actively in the service. Whereas a priest presides at the service and may be assisted by other ministers, you and everyone present are fully a part of a community in worship.

Responses. In many parts of the service, you will hear the congregation respond to various prayers. You will find the responses in the prayer book and/or the bulletin

The Bulletin. When you entered the church, you were handed a bulletin. The bulletin includes the "program" for the service, usually referred to as the "order of worship." The order of worship is a sequential list of the various parts of the service with page number references to the prayer book that will be used at the service. It also includes references to the hymnal and hymn numbers of hymns that will be sung. Sometimes, the full text of various prayers and parts of the service and/or music and lyrics are included as well. The hymn numbers also are posted on hymn boards visible on columns at each side of the altar.

Priestly Attire. You also might find the attire or vestments worn by the priest novel or archaic. They are a custom carried over from earlier times. Still, their beauty can serve to remind us that God is the source of all truth, beauty, and goodness in the world.

Quiet, Please. Talking and conversation in church before service should respect the needs of others who seek a few moments of recollection and repose prior to worship. After the announcements, we observe a time of silence immediately before the service begins. And, please, turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices that might cause a disturbance or interfere with the sound system.

Proper Attire. You will have to observe no dress code here beyond wearing attire respectful of the surroundings and the church community.

The Welcome Brochure. Please, take a "Welcome" brochure. They are available in the narthex (vestibule), in the Friendship Room, or from a sidesperson (usher) or member of the clergy or staff. And, please, fill out a blue welcome card so that we can keep you apprised of happenings here at Holy Nativity Anglican Church. You also will find a wealth of information about events and activities at Holy Nativity Anglican Church, as well as links to resources on Anglicanism and the Anglican Church of Canada, on our website: www.holynativity.ca.