

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS . . .



What's your worship service like?

We use a "liturgical" style of worship, which allows everyone to participate in some way. Our ceremonies recall worship practices that have existed in Christian worship since the earliest times. While at first our worship may seem strange by American Protestant standards, our services have a solemnity and dignity which our members find moving and beautiful.



What are the books in the pew racks?

We generally use two books. Our prayer book, which contains the prayers and responses and the outline of the services, and the hymnal book with hymns and service music.



Why do you use a prayer book?

The prayer book contains many different worship services we use both at church and at home. To provide a variety to our worship, there are several alternative forms for most of the services. We believe worship should be done by the people, not just for the people, and the prayer book helps us all participate in the worship services.



How do we follow the prayer book?

Either by a written bulletin or a verbal announcement, we are told where the particular service begins. Then, during the service, there are little italicized directions that help us keep our place and know when responses are appropriate.



What's with the standing, sitting, and kneeling?

We believe our worship should involve all of the senses, and should also involve motion with our bodies. An early Christian hymn quoted by Paul says "at the name of Jesus every knee should bend." Generally, we stand up to sing or proclaim and we sit to receive instruction. We used to kneel to pray for every prayer, but recent research into the practices of the early church suggests that standing is also a proper prayer posture. So, some people stand to pray, while others kneel. Even those who prefer to stand will generally kneel for penitential prayers, such as the confession. We also stand at certain times in the service to acknowledge the sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ, such as when we read the Gospel lesson.



How about bowing and making the sign of the cross?

These are acts of personal piety that some people practice and others do not. It is a matter of personal preference that again reflects the desire to pray with the body.



Why don't you use Bibles?

We do use the Bible. In fact, at most services we read four different lessons from the Bible: one from the Old Testament, a psalm, one from the New Testament epistles, and one from the one of the four gospels. The lessons we read are governed by a calendar in the back of the prayer book which helps us make sure we cover all the Bible and not just our favorite parts! The reason we don't have Bible in the pews is because we believe during worship the living Word of God should be read aloud and heard.



Why do some hymnal numbers have an "S" in front of them?

The hymnal has two kinds of music. The service music selections, which contain part of the words of the services set to music, are designated by the "S" in front of the number. The regular hymns don't have an "S." The reason we have service music is because we have a choice of either saying or singing the words of our worship services.



What's with the vestments?

The vestments give us a link to our heritage. They help identify different roles in the worship service, and they keep us from the temptation to judge others by the clothes they wear.



I'm not a member here. Should I take communion?

This is the Lord's Table, not just ours. All baptized Christians are invited and encouraged to participate with us.



What is the "proper" way to receive communion?

Come up to the altar rail, and either stand or kneel. Place one hand on top of the other, both with palms up to receive the bread, and then eat it. When the cup comes, reach out your hand to the bottom of the cup to help guide it to your lips to take a small sip. If you would prefer not to drink from the cup, you may hold onto the bread until the cup comes, and then "intinct" or dip the edge of your bread in the wine and then eat the bread.



What if I'm not baptized?

You may still come up to the rail and receive a blessing. Just cross your arms in front of yourself to signal the celebrant that you don't want communion. If you decide you want to be baptized, talk to the priest.