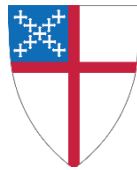


# Let's Get Acquainted

**A guide for worship at**



**Grace Episcopal  
Church**

401 Pendleton Street Waycross, Georgia  
[www.gracechurchwaycross.com](http://www.gracechurchwaycross.com)

# 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 Grace Church. Regardless of what anybody else is doing, don't do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

You are invited to simply enjoy the worship service. You can always take this booklet with you. It is normal practice at Grace 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...

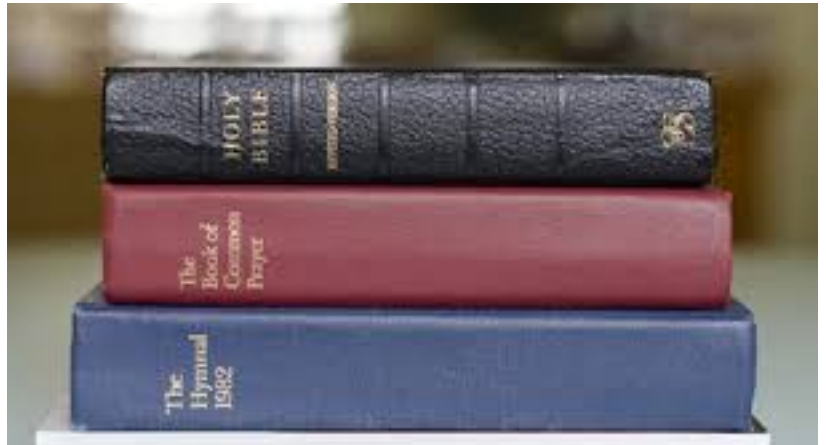
We want you to feel absolutely comfortable worshipping with us. Worship is a time to join with others in giving thanks to God for God's wonderful blessings

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...

## All those books

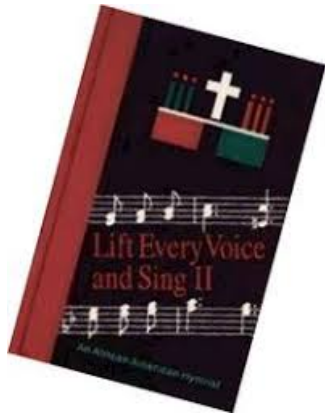
What are these books in the rack in front of me?

The smaller red 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 the prayer book.

The larger blue book is the *Hymnal 1982* which contains the majority of the songs we sing in our worship service.



We have another hymnal titled *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (or "Levas" for short). An "L" before the hymn number in the bulletin or on the hymn board indicates that the hymn is from Levas. Mike Taylor, our musical director, donated the Levas hymnals to Grace Church in honor of his mother.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, most racks will include a copy of the Holy Bible. We don't have church without the Bible.

# Let's get to know one another

We encourage you to complete one of the Welcome cards found in the pew racks so that we may know that you are worshiping with us. Just drop the completed card in the offering plate or hand it to the church ushers. This will help us connect you with the services and ministries of our church.

You will also find purple bookmarks detailing the history of our church in the pew racks, please feel free to take them with you.

# On the kneeling, praying and bowing

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

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, you are invited to simply sit quietly and "soak in" the marvelous beauty of Grace Church. Yes, we think it is a beautiful church building, both inside and out.

It surely 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.

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 some 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 to you and what helps you worship. None of these gestures of worship is 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 on 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 all 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.

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 friends. The

priest will greet the people and then our service will begin with an opening Processional Hymn. You may recognize this hymn, as they are sung by all Protestant congregations. If you love the hymn, belt it out, whether you are 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 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. You will see "acolytes" in white robes carrying a large cross and others to assist the priest. Sometimes the choir joins in the procession; sometimes the choir is already at their places.

**What about Holy Communion? How does that work?**

As we said 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 (called the "host") 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 made of unleavened bread. After receiving the host simply raise your hands to your mouth and consume the wafer or bread. This act reminds us that Jesus is the "bread of life."

Next comes the wine. It is real wine, not grape juice, and it is up to you to participate or not. Again, whatever makes you comfortable. An interesting aside is the fact that we believe no germs pass through the communion wine,

which to us represents the blood of Christ. When the cup, called the chalice, 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 host 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 to signify to the chalice bearer that you don't wish to receive the wine. This is totally acceptable. If for whatever reason (age or infirmity) you cannot walk to the communion rail, inform the usher and communion will be brought to you.

Those not wishing to receive Holy Communion are invited to 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. 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 then were in Latin. Many of these traditions still exist – such as 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, and sometimes incense at special services (Christmas Eve, Easter) 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 Grace Church today. We welcome all. We are a church of love, not judgment. We welcome you to return and worship with your new Christian friends. Remember, the service "continues" in the Parish Hall next door with coffee, refreshments and fellowship. The order of service is contained in the bulletin offered by the ushers. Simply follow along at your own level of

comfort. We believe the Episcopal order of worship to be a beautiful and inspiring liturgy, and we sincerely invite you to return to Grace Church.

## Connect with us

Website	gracechurchwaycross.com		
Telephone	912-283-8582	Fax	912-283-3060
Email	info@gracechurchwaycross.com		

### Social Media

Facebook	facebook.com/gracechurchwaycross
YouTube	Grace Episcopal Church- Waycross, Georgia
Twitter	@@waycrossgrace
Instagram	gracechurchwaycross

## Worship Schedule

Wednesdays	5:00 p.m.	Choir Practice
	6:00 p.m.	Supper & Service
Sundays	9:00 a.m.	Adult Education
	10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
	10:00 a.m.	Children's Church
	11:00 a.m.	Fellowship