



A Guide to Worship at
NEW GRACE CHURCH

WHAT DENOMINATION IS NEW GRACE CHURCH?

We are an Anglican church and part of a new missionary movement in America. The word 'Anglican' simply means 'English.' We are a part of historic Christianity that came through the Church of England as it in the 16th century embraced reforms that restored much of the worship and practice of the early Church. That being said, we are most interested in being known as first, Christians; second, missionaries, and only then, third, Anglicans. We try to balance three streams, which flow as one river: evangelical (Bible), catholic (tradition/historic) and charismatic (Holy Spirit).

WHY DO WE WORSHIP IN THIS PARTICULAR STYLE?

We desire to offer worship in spirit and truth that honors God and blesses his people. We believe God has ordained certain patterns that the Church has used for centuries when gathering together for worship. This is the Great Tradition in which we desire to stand.

WHY ARE THE PEOPLE EXPECTED TO DO SO MUCH IN THE SERVICE?

We are all here to offer ourselves to God in worship. Our services are meant to be the heart offering of God's people and require everyone's participation. We understand our worship services to be offerings of the people not just the clergy and musicians. This is not a performance in the sense of a stage and an audience.

WHY DO WE KNEEL, STAND, AND SIT AT CERTAIN TIMES?

It is important that our bodies match what we are saying. In general we kneel to pray, stand to praise, and sit to listen. Worship is meant to involve our entire personhood, not just our minds. This can also be done through reverencing the cross with a slight bow or making the sign of the cross over oneself as a reminder that we live under the forgiveness and hope of the cross.

AREN'T WRITTEN PRAYERS INSINCERE AND IMPERSONAL?

Written prayers are very helpful for a number of reasons. Sometimes written prayers say what we want to say better than we can ourselves. They also suggest topics for prayer we might not have thought of, but which we are glad to make our own. They help us when we don't know what to pray and our own words feel redundant or uninspired. It is important that we also learn to offer prayers in our own words. We value the use of both kinds of prayer, written and spontaneous, and encourage everyone to offer prayer to God throughout the service. Our prayers may be very simple. The important thing is that we pray in faith. Christian prayer is addressed to God (our Father) through the Son (Jesus) in the power of the Holy Spirit. We may also address our prayers to Jesus or the Holy Spirit since God is One.

WHY DO LEADERS WEAR DIFFERENT CLOTHING?

In our tradition, clergy (bishops, priests, & deacons) are distinguished by sometimes wearing a clerical collar. They also are distinguished by their stoles, which are the long 'scarves.' Bishops and priests' stoles hang vertically and deacons' stoles hang diagonally. These are symbolic of a servant's towel and Christ's yoke of leadership. In some of our services the leaders, including chalice bearers, assistants, and choir members wear robes. The robes help draw attention away from the individual and mark them as set aside for a special task. Like any uniform, they also establish that a person has authority to perform that task.

WHAT DOES THE TITLE AT THE TOP OF THE BULLETIN MEAN? FOR EXAMPLE, "THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT."

The early church broke up the calendar into seasons to remember and celebrate the different parts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Some of these periods may

last for many Sundays. The titles remind us where we are in the church calendar. These seasons are also marked by the changing colors displayed on the communion table, banners, hangings, and stoles.

WHAT ARE THE NICENE AND APOSTLES' CREEDS?

Credo are formal statements of basic Christian beliefs that have existed for over 1,500 years. We use the Apostles' Creed at baptism services and the Nicene Creed on most other Sundays. We believe that truth is neither relative nor negotiable. By reciting the creeds, we remind ourselves of the unchanging truths taught by Jesus and the Apostles.

WHY DO WE HAVE COMMUNION EACH WEEK?

Holy Communion, along with Baptism, is one of the two sacraments that Jesus himself gave the church. It is also called the Eucharist, which means thanksgiving. Jesus didn't specify how often to do it; we choose weekly. This portion of the service is designed to focus our attention on Jesus and the great salvation he has won for us. This thanksgiving meal has at least three levels of meaning. First, it's about remembering Jesus' death and resurrection, by which we have forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. Second, it is about our union or communion with Christ and with other Christians. The sharing of a common cup is symbolic of our unity through Christ's sacrifice. We believe communion is a means of receiving his grace, which strengthens us to live a life of discipleship and mission. We believe that Christ is really present in a mysterious way by his Holy Spirit. Third, communion reminds us of the hope we all share in looking forward to Christ's return when we will live with him forever. We are participating in an earthly way in the heavenly banquet prepared for Christ and his followers for eternity.

WHO IS ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNION?

The Lord's Table is open to those who are baptized and are following Jesus, even if they are members of another church. However, each person is expected to do a serious heart examination in preparation for receiving Communion. Since we offer the sacrament every week, there is always a risk of treating it casually. We encourage the invitation given in the older prayer books. Consider these instructions for preparation: "If you truly and sincerely repent of your sins, are reconciled and at

peace with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from this day forward in his holy ways; draw near with faith, take this holy Sacrament to strengthen and comfort you, and make your humble confession to Almighty God.”

WHAT IF I CAN'T OR DON'T WANT TO TAKE COMMUNION?

No one is obligated to participate. If for any reason you do not want to participate, we still encourage you to come forward and cross your arms over your chest. We will say a simple prayer asking God to bless you. Of course, you are welcome to stay in your seat if you don't want to come forward.

DOESN'T THE COMMON CUP SPREAD SICKNESS?

No. We use fortified wine and the rim of the cup is wiped between uses. However, if you still feel uncomfortable, you can always choose not to receive the wine by either crossing your arms when it comes or leaving the rail after receiving the bread.

DO WE BAPTIZE INFANTS AND CHILDREN AS WELL AS ADULTS?

Yes we do, as long as they are the children of believing parents. This question requires more space than we have here. Please contact the church office for a copy of a short booklet that explains infant baptism. Once a baby is baptized, it is the parents' decision when to allow their child to take communion.

WHY DO CHURCHES ALWAYS ASK FOR MONEY?

The offering is a regular way that Christians worship God. We give a portion of our money back to the Lord as an act of faith and trust with gratitude for all he has done for us in Jesus. We acknowledge that all things come from him and truly belong to him anyway. Christians see themselves as stewards of God's resources. We uphold and teach the Bible's standard of giving 10% of our money back to God. This is not a limit on giving or a law but a good starting point. In choosing to give back to God through our local church, we are investing in and empowering its mission and ministry. This is for those who believe New Grace Church is their place of membership. Others are welcome to give, but we hope they will feel no obligation to

do so. If you are new to us, please fill out a visitor's card and place it in the offering plate.

To learn more about the church,
please visit us at
www.NewGraceChurch.com