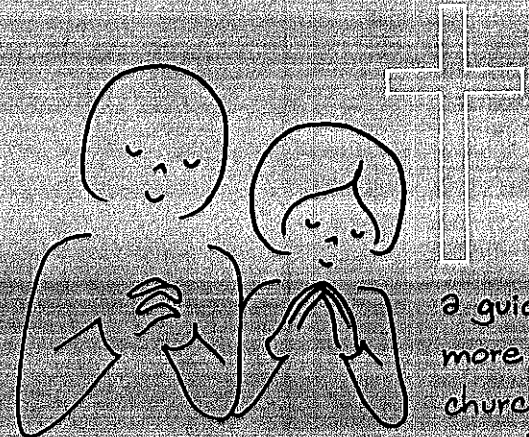


ABOUT BEING AN EPISCOPALIAN



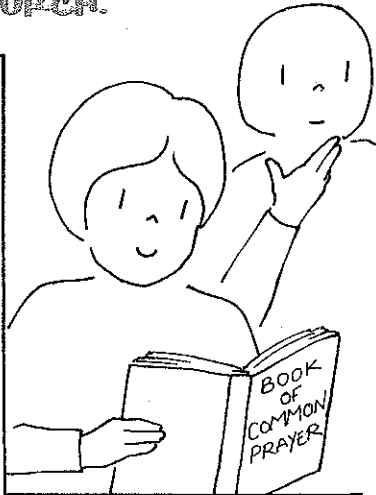
a guide to
more effective
church
membership

What
is an
EPISCOPALIAN
?

A PERSON WHO
BELONGS TO THE
EPISCOPAL*
CHURCH.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IS:

- a member of the Anglican Communion; derived from the Church of England and sharing with it traditions of faith and order as set forth in its Book of Common Prayer
- one whose traditions include attitudes that are Protestant and Catholic, ancient and reformed – liberal and conservative.



THE EARLIEST SETTLERS

brought the Anglican faith to the American wilderness. It spread rapidly as the country expanded westward.

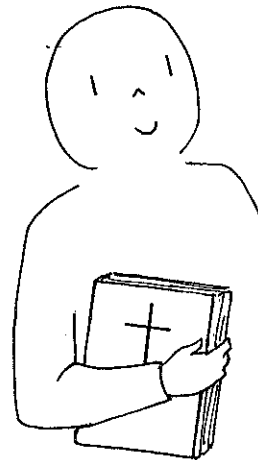
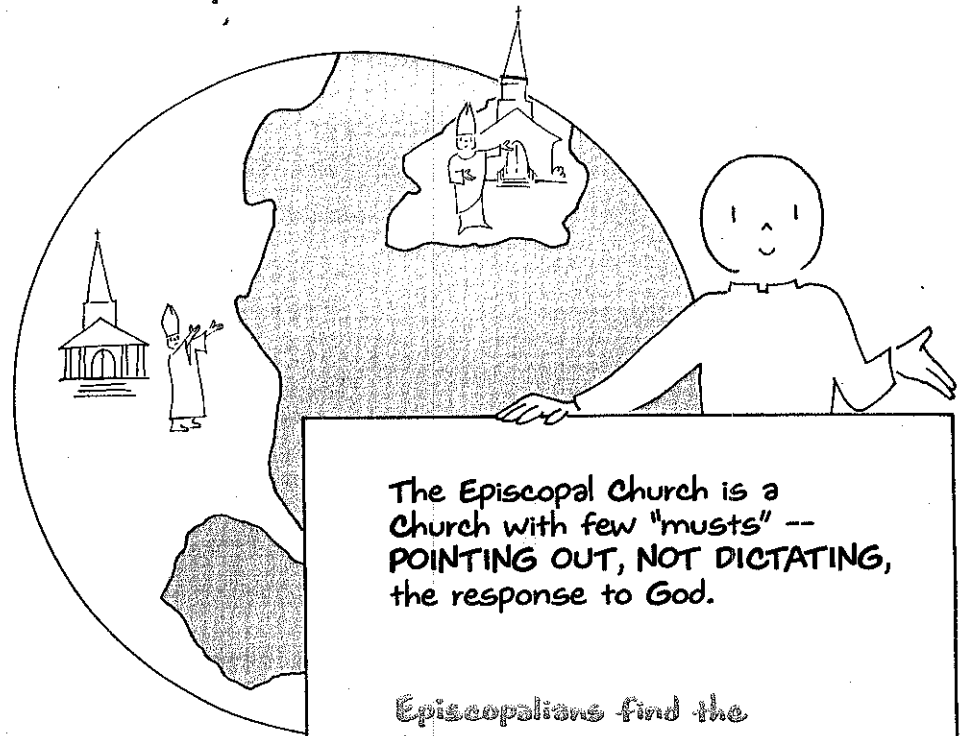
TODAY,

there are about 2.5 million members in the U.S.

The Episcopal Church is a Church with few "musts" -- **POINTING OUT, NOT DICTATING,** the response to God.

Episcopalians find the **FULLEST EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIANITY** in:

- **THE SCRIPTURES** – the Word of God at work among us. See p. 4 →
- **CREEDS** – ancient summaries of Christian belief. See p. 7 →
- **SACRAMENTS** – signs of grace, ordained by Christ. See pp. 8 & 9 →
- **MINISTRY** – the orders of ordained ministries. See pp. 10 & 11 →

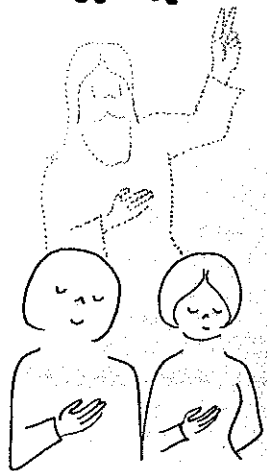


* "Episcopal" means "governed by bishops."



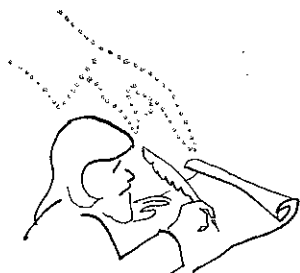
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FOUNDATIONS of FAITH



There are 3
BASIC SOURCES
of Episcopal Church
beliefs:

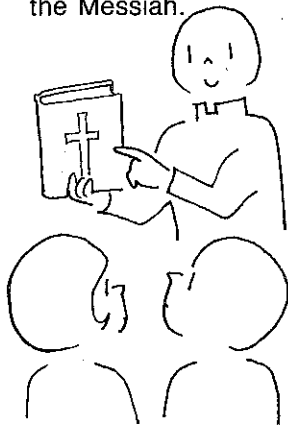
- ✓ Scripture (the primary source of doctrine)
- ✓ reason (gifts of the Holy Spirit)
- ✓ tradition (wisdom of generations past).



1 HOLY SCRIPTURE

- written by people inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Old and New Testaments contain the essence of Christian doctrine. They reveal God to humankind, and tell of our response to God in history. The Bible helps us to know God's will, revealed supremely through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The Scriptures are the word of God, proclaiming that Jesus – both God and human being – is Christ, the Messiah.



2 REASON

- helps us to penetrate the full depths of God's Truth.

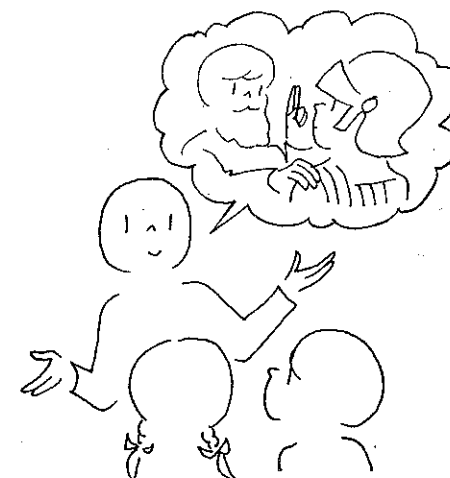
The Episcopal Church does not control interpretation and practice. Instead, members are encouraged to use reason to explore and comprehend God's works; to make responsible moral decisions under the guidance of Scripture, the ordained ministry and in response to sincere prayer.



3 CHURCH TRADITION

- development of the Church under the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Tradition helps us to interpret Scripture; lets us share experiences of early Christians and believers of every era; preserves hymns, prayers, etc., that keep our faith alive; strengthens our faith. Through its continuity and consistency, tradition helps preserve essential truths through liturgy.



BASIC EPISCOPAL CHURCH BELIEFS

I believe...

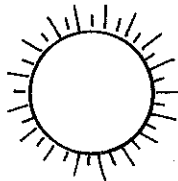
Interpretation of the faith varies somewhat from parish to parish, but within the framework of these basic guidelines:

THE HOLY TRINITY

God is 3 persons in one.

GOD the FATHER

- infinite, good omnipotent.



GOD the SON

- the joyous union of both God and human being; whose life, death, and resurrection set us free from bondage to sin and death.



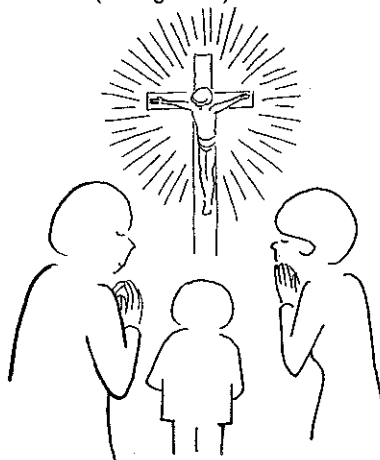
GOD the HOLY SPIRIT

- God's power of love moving within us in mysterious and unexpected ways.



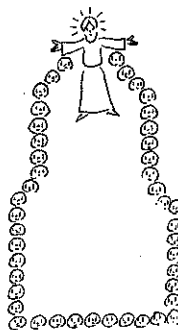
SALVATION

- the end of our separation from God; the beginning of a new life, lived according to God's will
- gained by us because of Christ's sacrifice
- every Christian should witness to Christ's sacrifice - and express the living truth of this sacrifice to the world (evangelism).



THE CHURCH

- the people of God; all baptized people are the members.



- ONE** - one Body under one Head, Christ.
- HOLY** - the Holy Spirit dwells in it and its members.
- CATHOLIC** - universal; holding the faith for all time, everywhere, for everybody.
- APOSTOLIC** - continuing in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship.

CREEDS summarize the Christian faith; they clearly express our faith in the Holy Trinity.

- **APOSTLES' CREED** --- creed of the early Roman Church, dating from the 2nd century.
- **NICENE CREED** --- Eastern in origin, dating from the 4th century.
- **ATHANASIAN CREED** --- sometimes called the "Quicumque Vult," meaning "whoever wishes" in Latin.



WORSHIP

- a joyous response to God's love
- an expression of hope for Salvation
- a chance to praise God and receive strength and forgiveness
- a way to share faith with other believers.

HOW EPISCOPALIANS WORSHIP

The Episcopal Church is liturgical, i.e., it has formal rites for public worship (drawn from past ages as well as from the present).

3 CENTRAL TEXTS:

- **BIBLE** - regularly read throughout the Church year.
- **BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER** - contains calendar of Church year, services, prayers, etc.
- **HYMNAL** - contains hymns and chants.

The texts vary little from parish to parish. Method of conducting services may vary greatly, from very plain services to those with great ceremony and splendor.



MORE...

The SACRAMENTS

"outward and visible signs
of inward and spiritual grace"



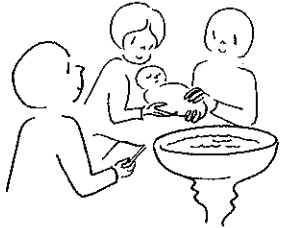
THE 2 SACRAMENTS of the GOSPEL

These sacraments were instituted
and ordained by Jesus.

BAPTISM

"Gateway to the
family of God."

Baptism is administered once to each person – usually as an infant. Water is poured on the head or the child is immersed in water, to symbolize the washing away of sins. The Holy Trinity is called upon to strengthen the new church member. Baptism is a pledge of repentance and obedience to divine will. It's a sign that a person has been reborn into a new family, the Church.



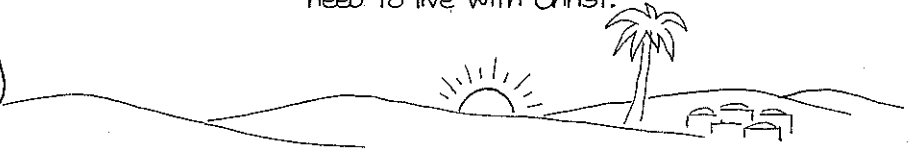
HOLY EUCHARIST

Remembrance of, praise and
thanksgiving for Christ's
death and resurrection.

In Holy Communion, ordinary bread and wine become the sacramental vehicle for Jesus Christ's presence within us, as he promised. When receiving Communion, Episcopalians offer themselves to God in repentance, love and faith – recall Jesus' death, acknowledge his sacrifice, renew hope in the heavenly banquet.



Through the sacraments,
God sustains the life of the Church;
gives us the love and strength we
need to live with Christ.



5 OTHER SACRAMENTS

— neither directly
commanded by Christ,
nor applicable to
everyone.

CONFIRMATION

Conferred by a bishop,
confirmation strengthens
the commitment made
to Christ at Baptism;
gives us courage to
witness Christ in the
world and to self-
lessly serve each other.



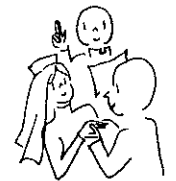
PENANCE

Sorrow for sinning,
with a sincere desire
to amend one's life;
assurance by a priest
of God's forgiveness
through absolution;
sinner's reconcilia-
tion with the Creator.



MARRIAGE

The sacrament of
marriage, in which
God joins together
a man and woman
in physical and
spiritual union.



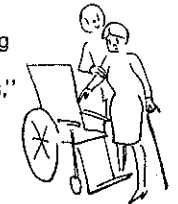
ORDINATION

The sacrament consecrat-
ing Christians in service
to God. Spiritual power
and grace are given to
help them devote their
lives to the good of the
community – teaching,
administering sacraments,
governing the Church.

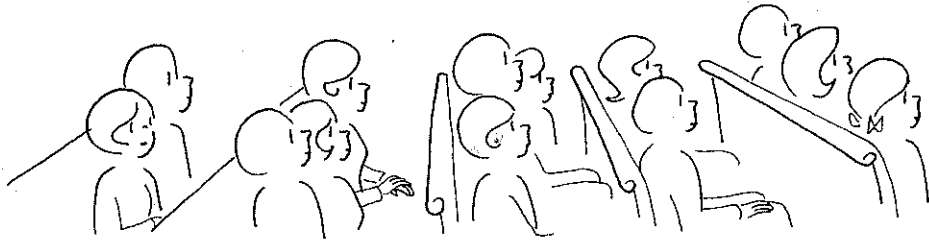


MINISTRY OF HEALING

Continuation of
Christ's work among
the sick; involves
"laying on of hands,"
anointing with oil,
and praying for
physical and
spiritual health.



The ORDERS of ORDAINED MINISTRY



BISHOPS

An unbroken line of bishops may be traced back to the early church commissioned by Jesus.



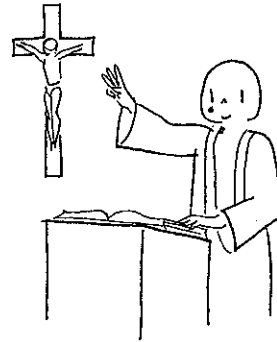
Bishops are spiritual overseers of their dioceses (groups of parishes, missions), which elected them to office. Bishops act as counselors to clergy; ordain priests, deacons; consecrate other bishops; administer Confirmation; are final counselors in church matters. Together, bishops share responsibility for the welfare of the church.

PRIESTS

Must meet high standards of personal integrity and judgment.



Priests are parish leaders. The full scope of their duties covers every pastoral, spiritual and educational activity. Specifically, priests celebrate the Eucharist, baptize, pronounce absolution, and perform many other duties.



To enter the ordained ministry, a candidate (male or female) usually must have a college degree, be physically and psychologically qualified and be recommended by the parish vestry, priest and diocesan ministries commission.

DEACONS

An order of special ministry of servanthood.



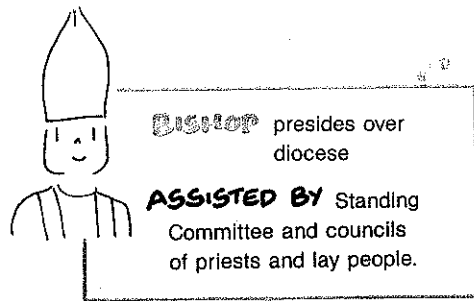
Deacons assist priests in parish work, or minister (under bishop's supervision) in missions or unorganized parishes. They cannot perform sacramental acts of the priesthood – e.g., though not allowed to celebrate the Eucharist, they may minister the consecrated Holy Communion at a service, to the sick, etc.

RELIGIOUS ORDERS

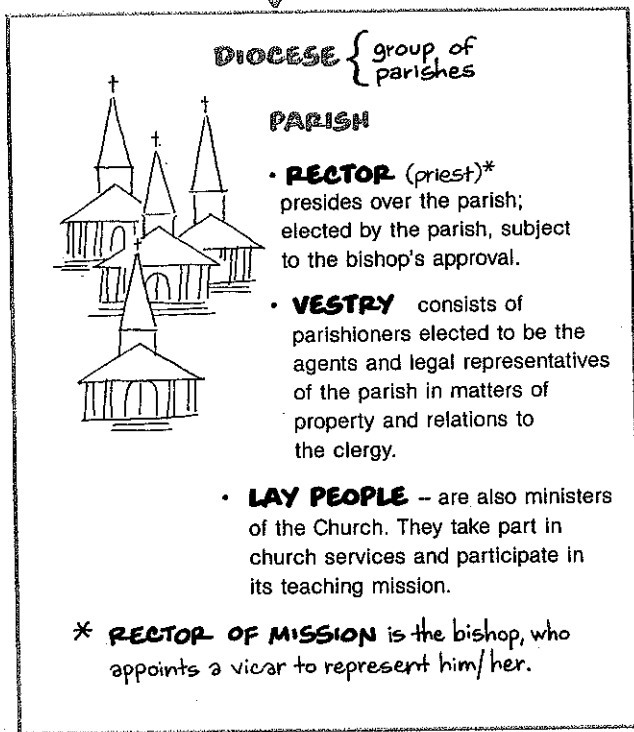
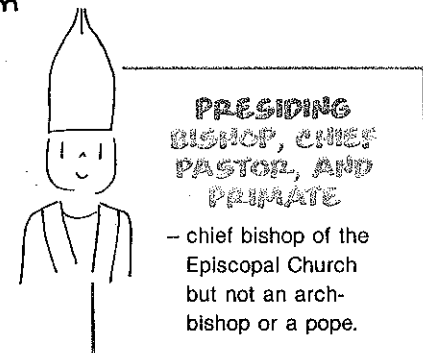
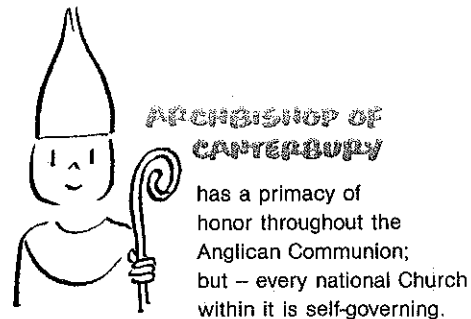
consist of men and women bound by the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Most monks and nuns live in communities; some are active in the world. Emphasis is on a life of prayer, but members also perform social, medical, and educational duties, as well as religious ones.



STRUCTURE of the Episcopal Church

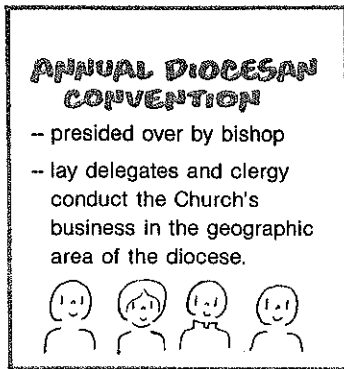


The Episcopal Church is a democratic church with a system of government resembling that of the United States.



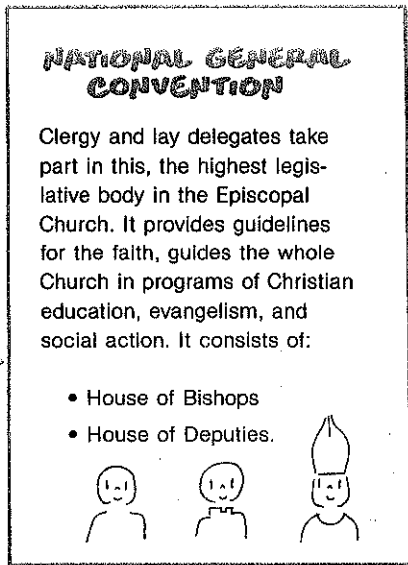
Parishes
ELECT

lay
delegates to...



Diocesan
Conventions
ELECT

clergy
and lay
delegates
to...



The Book of Common Prayer tells us that private worship alone is inadequate; religion is a fellowship. You relate to the whole Church through your PARISH — your local church community...



YOUR PARISH

-- it's guided by the priest;
nurtured by church ceremonies,
prayer, the sacraments; witnessing
to Christ in congregation and community.

Getting involved in your parish
HELPS YOU GROW
as a Christian witness and a person!
Participate in:

CHURCH SERVICES

- prayer and working together
- sharing our faith through Christian education.

COMMUNITY WORK

- performing acts of charity
- working for social justice and reform, Christian unity on a personal, day-to-day basis
- spreading the Good Word to people in the world community.

Through **GIVING OURSELVES**
we can:

STRENGTHEN
ourselves,
our beliefs by
helping others

FULFILL
spiritual needs

LEARN
more about the
mystery of God,
and how God
shares love with us

ANSWER
some of life's
questions, in
responding to the
needs of others

BETTER UNDERSTAND
how to keep our daily
life in tune with our
search for salvation

**BRING A SIGN
OF SALVATION**
to people outside
the community.

So...

Being an Episcopalian means
**STRIVING TO FULFILL
CHRIST'S MISSION**
of Redemption.

It means trying to:

- follow God's commandments
- raise children in Christ's love
- get involved in your parish.



Being an Episcopalian means
actively participating in the
world through Christ in the Church.

"The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God."

The Book of Common Prayer,
An Outline of the Faith