

What's the first thing I do?

When you enter the nave (the worship space), you will be greeted by a member of the parish, who will give you a copy of the worship bulletin. This bulletin has information about the service and upcoming events.

Where should I sit?

We would like you to sit wherever you feel most comfortable. We don't have "assigned" seating, so don't worry about that. As tempting as it may be to sit to the side of the space, we encourage you to sit in one of the center sections where you may feel more a part of the service.

Are kids welcome?

We love kids! Children are always welcome to worship with us *and* we know that sometimes their adults appreciate an hour without direct child care responsibilities. We have Nursery Care for toddlers and preschoolers and Children's Chapel for children in kindergarten thru 5th grade. The children in Children's Chapel join the service for Communion. Younger children are welcome, too, though we ask their adults to bring them in. The second Sunday of the month, Children's Chapel is part of the full service, with children invited to participate as ushers and greeters, readers, and with special blessings.

We know it can be hard to sit still and be perfectly quiet, and we don't expect that of anyone, young or not-so-young. We welcome quiet toys in church and have a few bags available to use. Children often enjoy the service more if they can see what is happening, so feel free to sit at the front. Know, too, that it is okay to leave for a few minutes to take a child to the restroom or to take some time to settle down if needed. We want kids to be kids and to know they are welcome in Church.

What if I'm not sure what to do?

No one is sure 100% of the time, which is one of the reasons we use books and a bulletin. If the bulletin does not have the prayer or the music, it will tell you where to find it. We use *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* and two hymnals. All three of these are in the pews.

The Episcopal liturgy is interactive, with the congregation responding to or praying out loud with the clergy. The bulletin and *BCP* include prompts about the traditional times to sit, stand, or kneel. We invite you to respond to these prompts as you are able and feel comfortable. Consider them invitations, not obligations.

Likewise, you may notice people bowing their heads or making the sign of the cross. These are ways of showing our reverence for God. You are invited to show your reverence in the ways that are comfortable and meaningful for you, as a way of bringing you deeper into the heart of God.

Am I expected to give money? What if I don't have cash?

No one is required to make an offering, though everyone is welcome to do so, with or without an envelope. Anything you give helps to fund the ministries of the parish. The easiest way to give is through the Tithe.ly app or on our website. If you'd rather, you may give with cash or a check.

Who receives Communion?

At St. Stephen's ALL are welcome to God's Table. We offer Communion in two forms: bread and wine. We have gluten-free bread for those who need or prefer it. You simply let us know when you are at the altar rail. It is okay to take just the bread. If you choose to take Communion in both kinds, you gently guide the chalice to your mouth to take a sip. Since the onset of Covid, we no longer *intinct* (dip the host into the wine). It is proven that drinking from the common cup with the precautions we have in place is the safest way to receive the wine.

If you would rather a blessing, that's fine, too. Simply cross your arms over your chest and the priest will be happy to bless you.

If you are unable to walk to the altar rail, please let us know and we will bring it to you. You can tell the greeter at the start of the service or the adult who is collecting the offering. They will let the priest know.

We know that parents often wonder if their child is old enough to receive Communion. Although we defer to the parents' decision, the answer to the

question: "Is my child old enough or ready to receive Communion?" is a resounding, "Yes!" We are happy to talk to your child (or anyone) about Communion, but it isn't necessary to take a class to learn to do it. Communion is grace - a gift from God, freely given and undeserved.

Are guests welcome at Coffee Hour?

We have Coffee Hour on Sundays after the 10:00 service. It's not fancy. Coffee, juice, snacks. ALL are welcome. This is a great time for us to begin to get to know each other.