

Holy Baptism

Holy Baptism is normally administered in public worship to infants, young children, and adults by affusion, pouring water over their heads, and anointing them with the Oil of Chrism, from which we sometimes speak of Holy Baptism as "Christening." Baptisms may be arranged usually at four times each year: The Great Vigil of Easter, Easter Even; The Day of Pentecost; the Sunday after All Saints' Day, November 1st; and the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Sunday after The Epiphany, January 6th. When necessary, baptisms may be scheduled at other times, preferably at a Sunday service.

Open Communion

Anyone, of any age, who has been baptized with water in the Name of Trinity, regardless of church affiliation, is invited to receive Holy Communion, the Sacramental Body and Blood of Christ.

Getting Married

To be married in the Episcopal Church it is required that at least one of the parties be baptized, that the marriage conform to the laws of the state, and that the intention be for it to be a lifelong union of a man and a woman. The requirements for a remarriage are the same, with the added requirements that the bishop of the diocese give his or her consent and that the former spouse and any children are being properly cared for.

Adult Education

Adult education takes place through worship, Advent and Lenten programs, special events, and outreach. All adults are invited to grow in faith through these and other means.

Children's and Youth Activities

Our children and youth are fully included in all aspects of parish life. We have a Church School program from 9:15-10:15 a.m. on Sundays, and a Nursery for infants and toddlers. At 10:30, toddlers and older children may join their parents for Holy Communion or a blessing. The Youth Group is ably directed by Jennifer Short and meets on Sundays from 6:30-8:30 during the academic year.

Prayer and Healing Ministry

Our spirituality is corporate, liturgical, and practical. The Book of Common Prayer is a treasury of services and individual and family devotion. In addition, we have a weekly Holy Eucharist, with the Laying-on-of-Hands for Healing, on Mondays at 2:30 p.m.

Mission Outreach

Our primary outreach is carried out by our pledge of financial support to the Diocese of New Jersey. We also provide food for the hungry every Wednesday from 12-2 p.m., clothes to aid the community through our Thrift Shop on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and a summer Vacation Bible School.

Looking for an accepting Christian community? Your search may have ended,

for we strive to welcome all people as if Jesus Christ. We are a bi-racial, multi-ethnic, and inclusive group of seekers and followers of the Son of God. We invite you to share in the love of God for all people in our Spirit-filled Christian community.

Come and visit us at 8 and 10:30 a.m. on Sundays, and at 2:30 p.m. on Mondays. Our summer Sunday schedule is services at 8 and 9:30 a.m., beginning June 6, 2010. We worship in Word and Sacrament, with a rich heritage of preaching, and music. We have child care, educational programs for all ages, fellowship activities throughout the year, and mission to our area, and beyond.

Please contact us at 856-665-4117, or visit us at GraceChurchMerchantville.com.

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey M. Kirk, Priest-in-Charge

Our Parish's History

Grace Church was organized as a congregation in 1873. The main church was erected in 1894, and later expanded. The congregation began new missions in Maple Shade in 1890 and Cherry Hill in 1961. Many lay leaders and clergy have served the congregation and our diocese with distinction for almost 140 years.

The Episcopal Church

The word “Episcopal” is from the Greek word in the New Testament, *episcopos*, bishop. In short, the Episcopal Church is governed by bishops. The bishop serves as the spiritual leader of a number of congregations in a geographic area called a diocese. Our current bishop is The Right Reverend George E. Council.

The Episcopal Church in the United States began in 1785 when Anglican Church representatives of the former colonies met in Christ Church, Philadelphia. These representatives continued many of the worship forms and theology of the Church of England, but with a distinctively American style. Our governing structure is a representative democracy, patterned after the United States Constitution. Today, we are a church of 2.4 million members and one of thirty-eight autonomous provinces of the 80-million-member Anglican Communion.

The Anglican Middle Way

The Anglican middle way, is a unique blend of the Roman Catholic Church embodied in the Church of England until the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation of Continental Europe. Like the Roman Catholic Church we have: bishops, priests and deacons, our Church has the two Gospel Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and five Sacramental Rites: Confirmation,

Marriage, Ordination, Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick. We are an apostolic church: we believe our bishops are successors to Jesus’ first twelve disciples. We also say we are a “catholic” church, where catholic means “universal.” The titular leader of Anglican Communion is the Archbishop of Canterbury.

As a Protestant church, we view The Bible as the Word of God containing all things necessary to salvation. Our clergy may marry, and since 1976 we have allowed women to be ordained as bishops, priests, and deacons. Our worship includes an important place for preaching and singing. Our theology comes in part from the 16th century Protestant Reformation whose guiding principle is “salvation by grace, through faith,” irrespective of “works.” We believe that Jesus Christ is God’s once-and-for-all means of our salvation through his life, death, and resurrection.

Our Worship

Episcopalians worship with *The Book of Common Prayer*. Its sources are Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox. Music is from *The Hymnal 1982, Lift High Every Voice and Sing, II*, an Afro-American Hymnal, and other sources. The central act of our worship on Sundays and other feasts is The Holy Eucharist, also called The Holy Communion, and The Lord’s Supper. Grace Church is blessed to have a beautiful church seating over 300, a magnificent organ, and a fine Organist and Choirmaster in Bob Faussett.

Ministry Opportunities

The ministers of the congregation are all its baptized members, Jesus Christ being the Head of the Church. Our mission is to carry on His work of reconciling the world to God. Ministry opportunities abound: *to* the church in assisting in leading worship as Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Choir Members and Acolytes ; *for* the church in fellowship, education, fund raising, and governance; and *by* the church in mission to the local community, nation, and world.

Becoming a Member

A member is any child or adult who has been baptized with water in the Name of the Trinity and has asked to have his or her baptism recorded. Others are encouraged to ask Fr. Kirk about Holy Baptism.

Confirmation and Reception

Christians who join the Episcopal Church as infants through Holy Baptism, in which parents and godparents promise to raise them in the faith, are expected to make a mature, public Confirmation of their own faith before a bishop. Baptized adults from other Protestant churches are also invited to present themselves before a bishop for Confirmation. Persons confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church or baptized as infants in Eastern Orthodox churches are brought into this Communion by Reception