

## **Fundamentals of the Episcopal Faith**

*Baptismal Covenant:* Used at baptisms and on Easter and other special occasions, the Baptismal Covenant opens with a question-and-answer version of the statement of faith that is the Apostles' Creed and adds five questions regarding how we, as Christians, are called to live out our faith.

*The Bible:* It is our foundation, understood through tradition and reason, containing all things necessary for salvation. Our worship is filled with Scripture from beginning to end. Approximately 70% of the Book of Common Prayer comes directly from the Bible, and Episcopalians read more Holy Scripture in Sunday worship than any other denomination in Christianity.

*The Book of Common Prayer* is a treasure chest full of devotional and teaching resources for individuals and congregations, but it is also the primary symbol of our unity. We who are many and diverse, come together in Christ through our worship, our common prayer.

*The Catechism:* Offered in a question and answer format, the Catechism found in the back of the Book of Common Prayer helps teach foundational truths of the Christian faith.

*Christ-Focused:* As Episcopalians, we are followers of Jesus Christ, and both our worship and our mission are in Christ's name. In Jesus, we find that the nature of God is love, and through baptism, we share in his victory over sin and death.

*The Creeds:* We will always have questions, but in the two foundational statements of faith—the Apostles' Creed used at baptism, and the Nicene Creed used at communion—we join Christians throughout the ages in affirming our faith in the one God who created us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us.

*Holy Baptism:* In the waters of baptism, we are reminded that we belong to God and nothing can separate us from the love of God. We also find ourselves part of an extended family, one with Christians throughout the

ages and across the world, what we call the “one, holy, catholic (meaning ‘universal’), and apostolic Church.”

*Holy Communion:* It goes by several names, Holy Communion and/or the Eucharist (which literally means “thanksgiving”), and/or mass. But whatever it’s called, this is the family meal for Christians and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. As such, all persons who have been baptized, and are therefore part of the extended family that is the Church, are welcome to receive the sanctified bread and wine, and be in communion with God and each other.

*The Sacraments:* Besides baptism and the Eucharist (Holy Communion), the church recognizes other spiritual markers in our journey of faith. These include:

- Confirmation (the adult affirmation of our baptismal vows)
- Reconciliation of a Penitent (private confession)
- Matrimony (Christian marriage)
- Orders (ordination to deacon, priest, or bishop)
- Unction (anointing with oil those who are sick or dying)

*Spiritual Growth:* The promises we make in our Baptismal Covenant are reminders that we are not yet perfect, that we are called to move deeper in our faith and make a difference in our world. We do so together as the Church, always professing that we will indeed live into our baptismal vows as followers of Christ, but always “with God’s help.”

*(from Episcopal Church Core Beliefs and Doctrines,  
The Public Affairs Office, Episcopalchurch.Org)*