

The Alien Episcopalian - Episcopal Customs A to Z

Anglican; any national church which grew from the Church of England; now often used more narrowly, and incorrectly, for a breakoff church which holds other theological beliefs than the Episcopal Church: *1928 BCP*, no women clergy, LGBTQ+ exclusion, etc.

Bible version; *New Revised Standard* at most parishes; the Episcopal Church allows 16 versions for public worship; use any version you want in private; the best one is ...

Crossing oneself, bowing to cross or altar, kneeling or standing for prayer; all personal preferences to be used as, and if, meaningful to you

Deacons; an ordained order of servant ministry; per *BCP* deacons have special functions in worship; in Dio. VA their primary ministry is outside of parishes

Episcopal; means “having bishops;” we stopped calling ourselves The Church of England after the Revolutionary War, for obvious reasons

Family pews, not reserved; get here early; be kind, especially to visitors

Gender; we encourage hiring men, women, and transgender persons as clergy and in lay positions, unlike many other denominations, and unlike some Anglican churches

Hymnals; official Episcopal hymnals: *The Hymnal 1982, Lift Every Voice and Sing II, Wonder Love and Praise, El Himnario, Voices Found, My Heart Sings Out*; others used

Infant Baptism is not necessarily the norm; we do not sprinkle water, we pour it

Jesus; often symbolized by IHS, its first three letters in Greek: iota, eta, sigma

Kneeling; formerly: “kneel to pray, sit to listen, stand to sing;” but also stand for important things, like the Creed and the Gospel; now, follow prayer book instructions, which often gives option to “stand or kneel;” per *BCP*, stand for entire Eucharistic Prayer C

Liturgical colors used for the changing church seasons and Holy Days

Membership is by having your baptism recorded in the parish; is transferred at your request when you move to another parish; not removed due to inactivity, but not counted

Nuns and monks are found in Episcopal convents and monasteries; The Order of St Helena (Psalter and Breviary), The Society of St John the Evangelist, and others

Open Communion; means allowing those not baptized to receive Communion; found in some Episcopal parishes (St Paul's RVA); in practice, no one is turned away from altar

Prayers end with "amen;" no amen after the sermon; amen after Creeds; don't miss the "Great AMEN" in caps, at the end of every Eucharistic Prayer; "we" prayers

Queen, the; the nominal Head of the Church of England, where there is no separation of church and state; Parliament must vote changes to *1662 BCP*, so alternatives used

Remarriage and divorce are accepted; no annulment process; 1st remarriage requires the Bishop's approval; 2nd remarriage requires professional counseling and Bishop's approval

Stained glass is found in most Episcopal churches; colonial era, rural parishes, and some modern architecture churches tend not to use it

Table, Holy or Altar?; yes, both; each conveys a somewhat different eucharistic theology

Unction, anointing with oil for healing; one of our seven sacraments; not the same as Extreme Unction/Last Rites of the RC Church; Min. at Time of Death *BCP* 462

Vestments; typically worn by all who lead worship, clergy and laity, so our clothing will not be a distraction to worshippers; stoles distinctive of ordination

Wine; usually port; higher alcohol content prevents spoilage and kills germs

X (chi) is the first Greek letter of "Christ," and may substitute entirely for it, as in Xmas; XP (chi rho) adds the 2nd Greek letter of "Christ"

YAHWEH; the name of God; not spoken aloud by Jews; most Bibles replace it with LORD; *BCP* uses it in Psalms 68 and 83 and in The Song of Moses (p. 85); no "Jehovah"

Zebra Book; a trial usage prayer book, in striped black and white, before the *1979 BCP*; trial usage book now is *Enriching Our Worship* and online forms: *Expansive Language*

For more explanations and many other topics, see the online Episcopal Glossary at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary>